

Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs

ANNUAL REPORT

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Honourable Kevin Murphy Speaker House of Assembly Province House Halifax, Nova Scotia

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, I am pleased to submit the Annual Report of the Committee for the period from September 2015 to July 2016 of the Sixty-second General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

Derek Mombourquette, MLA, Sydney-Whitney Pier

Chair

Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs

Halifax, Nova Scotia 2016

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INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, an all-party committee of the House of Assembly, was struck at the beginning of the First Session of the Sixty-second General Assembly, pursuant to Rule 60(1) of the *Province of Nova Scotia Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly*.

Although there is no written mandate for the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, this report was written with the understanding that the committee is established for the purpose of considering matters pertaining to veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Canadian Legion.

MEMBERSHIP

There shall be no more than nine Members of the Legislative Assembly appointed to this Committee. The current membership of the Veterans Affairs Committee is as follows:

Mr. Derek Mombourquette, MLA (Chair) Sydney-Whitney Pier

Mr. Keith Irving, MLA (Vice Chair) Kings South

Ms. Patricia Arab, MLA Fairview-Clayton Park

Mr. Ben Jessome, MLA Hammonds Plains-Lucasville

Mr. David Wilton, MLA Cape Breton Centre Hon. Alfie MacLeod, MLA Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg

Mr. Eddie Orrell, MLA Northside-Westmount

Hon. Dave Wilson, MLA Sackville-Cobequid

Hon. Sterling Belliveau, MLA Queens-Shelburne

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse, MLA, was replaced by Hon. Sterling Belliveau, MLA, September 2, 2015

PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONS

The Veterans Affairs Committee traditionally meets once a month. These meetings were usually held on the second Thursday of the month in the Legislative Committees Office, however, the committee decided at their February 11, 2016, meeting that all future meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of the month.

NOTICES, TRANSCRIPTS AND REPORTS

NOTICES

Notices of committee meetings are sent to all members of the committee, caucus office staff, legislative staff and Communications Nova Scotia. The notices are also posted in Province House and on the Nova Scotia Legislature web site at the following address: http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/calendar/

TRANSCRIPTS

Transcripts of all Veterans Affairs Committee meetings are available from the Legislative Library in Province House, the Legislative Committees Office, or on the Veterans Affairs Committee web page at the following address:

http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee hansard/C11/

REPORTS

All reports of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs are compiled by the Legislative Committees Office and forwarded to committee members for consideration. Upon completion of the review and approval of the report, the Chair tables the report with the Speaker of the House of Assembly or with the Clerk of the House of Assembly.

Distribution of the report is as follows:

To the Speaker and the Clerk of the House of Assembly; committee members; all witnesses who appeared before the committee; the Nova Scotia Legislative Library; the caucus offices; and the media. This report is also available to the general public upon request from the Legislative Committees Office and is available on the Veterans Affairs Committee web page at the following address:

http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/reports/veterans affairs

RESEARCH MATERIAL

Research material for the Veterans Affairs Committee is compiled by the Legislative Library in consultation with the committee clerk. Research material is compiled in an electronic format and is distributed by the committee clerk prior to the meeting to members, staff and witnesses.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The committee wishes to extend its gratitude to all witnesses for their time and co-operation. Special appreciation is extended to the Legislative Committees Office; Hansard Reporting Services; Legislative Television and Broadcast Services and the Nova Scotia Legislative Library.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

HELMETS TO HARDHATS CANADA (H2H) – PROGRAM OVERVIEW September 10, 2015

WITNESS

Helmets to Hardhats Canada (H2H)

Brigadier-General (Ret'd) Gregory Matte National Executive Director

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The Helmets to Hardhats program is a non-profit program that began three and a half years ago to help veterans with the transition into a civilian career and, in particular, a civilian career in the building construction trade industry. The program initially received seed money from different levels of government but are now almost entirely funded through industry itself.

There are over 4,200 vets who have registered into the program. On average, there are about 100 veterans a month who subscribe to the program. The program has 14 different building construction trade unions registered in Nova Scotia and over 170 union-owned training establishments across Canada. Additionally, there are over 275 local unions that are involved all across the country.

The Helmets to Hardhats program is a win for all concerned. A win for vets because it gives them a second lease on life to have a great career in the building construction trade industry, a win for the employers who say how much they appreciate the work ethic and the professionalism and the dedication that vets bring to the workplace, and it's a win for communities because it's eliminating that many more people who could otherwise end up in the streets.

Some on-going initiatives of the Helmets to Hardhats program are: Teens to Trades, the DND 404 accreditation, and the Canada-Nova Scotia Job Grant.

In regard to the term "veteran", it should be noted that it is not just veterans who fought in World Wars I & II or Korea, the term "veteran" also applies to post- Afghanistan. As quoted by Brigadier-General (Ret'd) Gregory Matte, "We have an awful lot of young people out there seeking assistance because they left home early, they gave up university or college opportunities to serve their country, and have come home in Some cases broken and they need our assistance." 1. Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs Transcript, September, 10, 2015

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The following correspondence was received by the committee:

- The Royal Canadian Legion Re: Data on Caseload of Branches Information requested from the June 11, 2015, meeting
- Minister of Veterans Affairs Re: Access to Camp Hill for all veterans in Nova Scotia - Response to committee's letter from the May 14, 2015, meeting

MOTION

- To write to Minister MacLellan and request that he look into your request of recognizing the training and experience that veterans have in driving for potentially crediting Class 1, and Class 3 drivers' licenses here in Nova Scotia.
 - o Moved by Hon. Dave Wilson, MLA
 - Motion carried

DOCUMENTATION

No documents/information were requested

TRANSCRIPT

Further details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee hansard/C11/va2015sep10

VETERANS AFFAIRS CANADA RESIDENTIAL CARE POLICIES

October 22, 2015

WITNESS

Department of Health and Wellness

Ms. Paula English, Chief, Program Standards and Quality

Ms. Carolyn Maxwell, Director, Liaison and Service Support

Mr. Perry Sankarsingh, Director, Monitoring and Evaluation

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

Since 1992, Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) has negotiated agreements with the province to provide long-term care beds throughout Nova Scotia within nursing homes and some Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) facilities.

Currently, 334 VAC contract beds are covered under these agreements with the great majority in the NSHA facilities and Camp Hill in Halifax. The remainder are spread throughout the province in nursing homes. More recent agreements were made in 1996 to provide VAC with priority access to 20 agreement beds.

At this point in time, VAC has not changed their policies to include modern-day veterans. This is the decision of VAC and not of the province. Currently, these veterans are not eligible for contract or agreement beds. Modern-day veterans who are in receipt of the Veterans Independent Program may have the full per diem costs funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs. So even though they may not be in a veterans' agreement bed or a contract bed, Veterans Affairs may still pay the per diem for them.

The Department of Health and Wellness works collaboratively with Veterans Affairs with regard to continuing care to ensure that veterans have the required support at home. However, it is up to VAC to determine if the veteran wants to stay within a VAC facility. If a veteran indicated that they wanted to be in an actual DHW-funded facility, they would be eligible to be placed in any facility if it is deemed to be closer to their home.

The Department of Health and Wellness and the Department of Veterans Affairs will work with the veteran to determine what funding is available for DHW-funded facilities and what arrangements can be made.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

MOTIONS

- That this committee write to the Minister of Health and Wellness suggesting that the department engage Veterans Affairs Canada to find out and to make sure the utilization of the veteran beds is being done in such a way that it has the most impact and effect on the veterans that they're meant to serve.
 - Moved by Hon. Alfie MacLeod
 - motion carried
- To write to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to see if there is office space available that could be either loaned, given to or allow this group to use to work with our veterans who are in need.
 - Moved by Mr. Eddie Orrell, MLA
 - motion carried
- To approve the annual report.
 - o Moved by Hon. Alfie MacLeod, MLA
 - motion carried
- To write to the federal government requesting that they look at an expansion of the definition of a veteran in regard to VAC services.
 - o Moved by Hon. Dave Wilson, MLA
 - motion carried

DOCUMENTATION

The following information was requested and received:

- A breakdown of what the cost of paying for the vacant beds at Camp Hill is and how much the province has paid so far?
- The number of post-1953 veterans that would not fall under the current definition of what a veteran is to get the access to VAC support?

TRANSCRIPT

Further details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee hansard/C11/va2015oct22

THE PICTOU COUNTY MILITARY HERITAGE MUSEUM

February 11, 2016

WIITNESS

Pictou County Military Heritage Museum

Mr. Vincent Joyce, Founder/President Mr. Wayne Vacheresse, Director

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

Representatives of the museum were invited to appear before the committee to discuss the Pictou County Military Heritage Museum. Officially, the museum opened its doors to the public in July 2006, and is registered with the Registry of Joint Stocks of Nova Scotia and the Association of Nova Scotia Museums. The two main purposes of the museum was, first, to document, protect, and preserve all military artifacts and pictures as possible; second, to honour and document as many military personnel as possible who served throughout the many years.

The museum has over 2,000 military personnel profiles documented in the books of honour and remembrance as well as one of the best collections of military challenge coins in the world. Mr. Rod McLeod of Calgary, Alberta – whose company makes most of these coins - donated his complete collection to the museum. These coins consist of Canadian regular and reserve forces, Army, Navy and Air Force Cadet Corps, Royal Canadian Mounted Police Force units, the Afghanistan wars, forces and battles, and the Wall of Remembrance of the military personnel who were killed in Afghanistan.

Fundraising efforts for the museum are done through donations at specific events such as the Canadian Veterans and Military Awareness Day, military musical night, private donations and donations for admittance to the museum. The museum personnel also sell CDs which consist of military personnel and profiles, along with unit pictures and poems.

The biggest challenge is procuring funding. Currently, the museum does not receive government funding. Since the museum is a not-for-profit association, they are working with the federal government on an initiative to put not-for-profit organizations in a category that will enable them to accept donations from other organizations who can use it for tax purposes.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The following correspondence was received by the committee:

- Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal response to Committees' letter following the September 10, 2015, meeting
 - Helmets to Hardhats contact information for Minister of TIR Re: DND 404 Driver's Licences
 - Helmets to Hardhats NS Media Event inquiry
- Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal response to Committees' letter following May 14, 2015, meeting - Re: Office Space to VETS
- Minister of Internal Services response to committee's letter from the May 14, 2015, meeting - Re: Office Space to VETS
- Minister of Veterans Affairs response to committee's letter from October 22,
 2015, meeting Re: Expanding definition of veteran in regard to VAC services
- Department of Health and Wellness response to committee's letter from October 22, 2015, meeting – Re: Utilization of long-term veterans' beds

MOTIONS

- To set the agenda based on the topics that were put forward by all three Parties.
 - o moved by Ben Jessome
 - motion carried
- To move the committee meeting day to the third Tuesday afternoon from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm.
 - moved by Patricia Arab
 - o motion carried

DOCUMENTATION

No documents/information were requested

TRANSCRIPT

Further details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee hansard/C11/va2016feb11

CANADA COMPANY MILITARY EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION PROGRAM

March 10, 2016

WITNESS

Colonel (Ret'd) Kevin Cameron Director

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

Canada Company is a not-for-profit, non-partisan registered charity founded in 2006 by Mr. Blake Goldring Chair and CEO of AGF Management in Toronto whose mandate is to support the military community in any capacity with a connection into the business community.

The organization is connected with regional chapters in Montreal, British Columbia, and soon in Halifax, and is also connected to key stakeholders such as Veterans Affairs Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces. They work diligently and collaboratively with these organizations to achieve their collective objectives - all in the interest of helping the veterans and helping the military community.

Several programs initiated by Canada Company are the LAV Monument Program, and a scholarship program for children of fallen service members.

Established in 2012, the Military Employment Transition Program (MET) started as a project within Canada Company. The mandate of MET is to engage the corporate community and the private sector with an end state goal of 10,000 veteran hires by the year 2023. The idea was to recognize that some transitioning military members can have challenges coming out of uniform and transitioning into a second career path.

Recently Canada Company has launched a spouse program - a pilot project under the MET Program - that is linked into the Military Family Resource Centres across the nation. The MET Program is designed to create mobility options for the military family unit across the nation as members are moving from one base to another. Anyone who has served in regular or reserve, qualified in their occupation, and either honourably or medically discharged is eligible. Once registered, members have full access to the suite of tools that are in the program. Spouses can also apply as part of the new program but they must apply through the Military Family Resource Centres.

Employers are also certified and asked to sign a terms of reference acknowledging the program, with a commitment that they will give due consideration to ex-military skill sets and seek out opportunities for them when it arises. Employers are asked to commit to reporting back to the organization on a quarterly basis if they have hired any exservice members or reservists. Also, employers are asked to attend monthly teleconferences, participate in events and so on.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The following correspondence was received by the committee:

- Department of Health and Wellness Information requested from the October
 22, 2015, meeting Re: VAC beds at Camp Hill and access to VAC Support
- Tourism Nova Scotia Response to letter resulting from the February 11, 2016, meeting – Re: Pictou County Military Heritage Museum

DOCUMENTATION

The following information was requested and received:

- Information regarding the MET Atlantic Conference to be held in Halifax.
- The nine trades that have been certified by the Ontario College of Trades.

TRANSCRIPT

Further details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee hansard/C11/va2016mar10

CAMP HILL VETERAN S' MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

July 5, 2016

WITNESS

Nova Scotia Health Authority

Ms. Lindsay Peach – Vice President Integrated Health Services – Community Support and Management

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) was invited to appear before the committee to discuss Camp Hill Memorial Hospital with regard to long-term care. Although the NSHA is not able to speak to the policies of Veterans Affairs Canada or on their behalf, they can speak to the services and policies provided to veterans with the context of their relationship as a service provider and how those policies apply.

Veterans Affairs Canada financially supports veterans in long-term care facilities, this includes contract beds in facilities like Camp Hill or the Northumberland Veterans Unit, or in community nursing homes. Currently, there are 476 veterans in Nova Scotia receiving long-term care. Of those, 280 currently receive that care in contract beds and 196 are receiving that care in community long-term care facilities.

Veterans Affairs Canada determines the criteria and eligibility for long-term care, as well as provides financial support to individuals who require that service. Factors taken into consideration for eligibility include: the veteran's ability to be supported in the community or placement in a long-term care facility; their service-related disability; their income in order to determine any contributions that the veteran may make to the care; and their military service.

The benefit of enabling veterans to access beds in community facilities enables veterans to have choice in where they live, either to be as close to home as possible or to be colocated with a non-veteran spouse or another family member.

Camp Hill is a long-term care residence for veterans. While nursing and medical care is provided for certain veterans it is not a hospital. Camp Hill, itself, is comprised of 175 beds that provide priority access to veterans in need of long-term care. There is an annual operating budget of \$25.4 million which translates into a per diem of \$397 per day for those beds. While Camp Hill is not licensed as a long-term care facility by the Department of Health and Wellness, they do, however, hold to the long-term care standards established by Accreditation Canada.

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In addition to the nursing care, other services include a broad interdisciplinary team of support, including respiratory therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, recreation therapy, social work, psychology, and spiritual care. Camp Hill also enjoys an amazing amount of support from local Legions, military organizations, veteran support organizations, and volunteers.

Recently, the Nova Scotia Health Authority and Veterans Affairs Canada reached a new agreement to expand access to Camp Hill for modern-day veterans requiring long-term care. Veterans that are eligible under the Veterans Health Care Regulations for care in a community facility other than a contract bed would be eligible for accessing care under this new agreement at Camp Hill, as well as contract beds. It is also agreed that NSHA and VAC would work together to ensure that veterans admitted under this new agreement will receive the same high standard of care currently offered at Camp Hill.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The following correspondence was received by the committee:

- Tourism Nova Scotia Response to letter resulting from the February 11, 2016, meeting
- Military Employment Transition Program Information requested from the March 10, 2016, meeting
- Invitation Re: Enemy in the Ranks: Systemic Racism in the Canada Forces Discussion
- Department of Health and Wellness Information requested from the October 22, 2016, meeting
- Military Employment Transition Program Atlantic Conference information
- Hon. Alfie MacLeod Re: invitation to the Premier as Minister of Military Relations to appear before the committee to discuss access to Camp Hill Veteran's Memorial

MOTIONS

- To write to the Minister of Health and Wellness and the Premier to allow veterans in need of care to access veterans' services at Camp Hill while awaiting approval from Veterans Affairs Canada.
 - o Moved by Mr. Eddie Orrell, MLA
 - Motion defeated
- To ask for a follow-up report from the Health Authority in three months' time on how the new system is working with the new agreement that was put in place on June 24 with regard to expanding access to Camp Hill for Veterans requiring long-term care.
 - Moved by Hon. Alfie MacLeod, MLA
 - Motion carried

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- To approve the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research and have them present instead of the Injured Soldiers Network.
 - o Moved by Mr. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - Motion carried

DOCUMENTATION

No documents/information were requested.

TRANSCRIPT

Further details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee hansard/C11/va2016jul05



STATEMENT OF SUBMISSION

All of which is respectfully submitted to the House of Assembly this / T day of January , 2017

Mr. Derek Mombourquette, MLA - Chair Sydney-Whitney Pier

I concur

Mr. David Wilton, MLA – Vice Chair Cape Breton Centre

I concur

Mr. Keith Irving, MLA Kings South

I concur

Ms. Patricia Arab, MLA Fairview-Clayton Park

I concur

Mr. Ben Jessome MIA

I concur

Hon. Affie MacLeod, MLA

Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg

Concur

Mr. Eddie Orrell, MLA

Northside-Westmount

I concur

Hon. Dave Wilson, MLA

Sackville-Cobequid

I concur

Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse, MA

Chester-St. Margaret's

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - MOTIONS

The following is a list of motions introduced by the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs:

September 10, 2015

- To write to Minister MacLellan and request that he look into your request of recognizing the training and experience that veterans have in driving for potentially crediting Class 1, and Class 3 drivers' licenses here in Nova Scotia.
 - Moved by Hon. Dave Wilson, MLA
 - Motion carried

October 22, 2015

- That this committee write to the Minister of Health and Wellness suggesting
 that the department engage Veterans Affairs Canada to find out and to make
 sure the utilization of the veteran beds is being done in such a way that it has
 the most impact and effect on the veterans that they're meant to serve.
 - o Moved by Hon. Alfie MacLeod
 - motion carried
- To write to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to see if there is office space available that could be either loaned, given to or allow this group to use to work with our veterans who are in need.
 - Moved by Mr. Eddie Orrell, MLA
 - motion carried
- To approve the annual report.
 - o Moved by Hon. Alfie MacLeod, MLA
 - motion carried
- To write to the federal government requesting that they look at an expansion of the definition of a veteran in regard to VAC services.
 - Moved by Hon. Dave Wilson, MLA
 - o motion carried

February 11, 2016

- To set the agenda based on the topics that were put forward by all three Parties.
 - o moved by Ben Jessome
 - motion carried
- To move the committee meeting day to the third Tuesday afternoon from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm.
 - o moved by Patricia Arab
 - o motion carried

July 5, 2016

- To write to the Minister of Health and Wellness and the Premier to allow veterans in need of care to access veterans' services at Camp Hill while awaiting approval from Veterans Affairs Canada.
 - o Moved by Mr. Eddie Orrell, MLA
 - Motion defeated
- To ask for a follow-up report from the Health Authority in three months' time on how the new system is working with the new agreement that was put in place on June 24 with regard to expanding access to Camp Hill for Veterans requiring long-term care.
 - o Moved by Hon. Alfie MacLeod, MLA
 - Motion carried
- To approve the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research and have them present instead of the Injured Soldiers Network.
 - o Moved by Mr. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - o Motion carried

APPENDIX B – DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation was received by the committee:

October 22, 2015

The following information was requested and received:

- A breakdown of what the cost of paying for the vacant beds at Camp Hill is and how much the province has paid so far?
- The number of post-1953 veterans that would not fall under the current definition of what a veteran is to get the access to VAC support?

March 10, 2016

The following information was requested and received:

- Information regarding the MET Atlantic Conference to be held in Halifax.
- The nine trades that have been certified by the Ontario College of Trades

APPENDIX C - CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence was received by the committee:

September 10, 2015

- The Royal Canadian Legion Re: Data on Caseload of Branches -Information requested from the June 11, 2015, meeting
- Minister of Veterans Affairs Re: Access to Camp Hill for all veterans in Nova Scotia - Response to committee's letter from the May 14, 2015, meeting

February 11, 2016

- Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal response to Committees' letter following the September 10, 2015, meeting
 - Helmets to Hardhats contact information for Minister of TIR Re: DND 404 Driver's Licences
 - Helmets to Hardhats NS Media Event inquiry
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- Minister of Veterans Affairs response to committee's letter from October 22, 2015, meeting – Re: Expanding definition of veteran in regard to VAC services
- Department of Health and Wellness response to committee's letter from October 22, 2015, meeting – Re: Utilization of long-term veterans beds

March 10, 2016

- Department of Health and Wellness Information requested from the October
 22, 2015, meeting Re: VAC beds at Camp Hill and access to VAC Support
- Tourism Nova Scotia Response to letter resulting from the February 11, 2016, meeting – Re: Pictou County Military Heritage Museum

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July 5, 2016

- Tourism Nova Scotia Response to letter resulting from the February 11, 2016, meeting
- Military Employment Transition Program Information requested from the March 10, 2016, meeting
- Invitation Re: Enemy in the Ranks: Systemic Racism in the Canada Forces
 Discussion
- Department of Health and Wellness Information requested from the October 22, 2016, meeting
- Military Employment Transition Program Atlantic Conference information
- Hon. Alfie MacLeod Re: invitation to the Premier as Minister of Military Relations to appear before the committee to discuss access to Camp Hill Veteran's Memorial

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