
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
SOLDIERS' AID COMMISSION
2019-2020

JULY 2020

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

**The Honourable Todd Smith
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services**

Dear Minister Smith:

**I am pleased to present this Annual Report on
behalf of the Soldiers' Aid Commission.**

**This report outlines the history and mandate of
the Commission and summarizes its activity
throughout the 2019-2020 fiscal year.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Rowe', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Colin R. Rowe
Chair**

The Commission is committed to ensuring that it provides an appropriate mechanism for applications for financial assistance required by Veterans in need who enlisted in the Canadian armed forces (or in an allied nation) and served overseas in a theatre of war or served with the armed forces in Canada during WWI, WWII and the Korean War. This assistance is also extended to any dependent relative of any Veteran of these wars. Members of the Commission are dedicated to providing a relevant and useful service to aging Veterans and their families in an effective and efficient way.

HISTORY, ORGANIZATION AND MANDATE

HISTORY

The Soldiers' Aid Commission is an Operational Service Agency, established in 1915, "to take care of and to find employment for members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force...". This has since been expanded to now include Canadian and allied Veterans who served in the Second World War and the Korean War. In November 2006, the Commission's mandate was extended to include Veterans who served with the armed forces in Canada and in 2011, those who saw service with the Merchant Navy.

The Soldiers' Aid Commission receives its legislative authority from the *Soldiers' Aid Commission Act, R.S.O. 1960*, and the *Soldiers' Aid Commission Amendment Act, 1970*.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), through the Service Delivery and Supports Branch, is responsible for the administration of the legislation under which the Commission operates.

ORGANIZATION

The Commission operates at arm's length from the government with respect to the provision of assistance. The members are appointed by Order-in-Council and do not have fixed terms of appointment. It is stipulated in the legislation that "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may add such persons from time to time as members of the Commission as he/she deems advisable or may appoint a member in place of any member dying or retiring or becoming incapable of acting". The Commission selects candidates for Commissioners, recommends appointees to the Minister and elects its Chair. These members serve without remuneration but may claim out-of-pocket expenses for travel and meal expenses.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Ministry and the Commission was signed by the Minister and the Chair in December 2016.

The eight-member Commission comprises an elected Chair (Colin Rowe), Vice-Chair (John Stapleton), and six other Commissioners.

MANDATE

The mandate of the Soldiers' Aid Commission is to administer applications for financial assistance made by Veterans and their dependent relatives. The Commission accepts applications for financial assistance made by Veterans in need or their dependents by way of the Royal Canadian Legion, Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) and the Royal Canadian Naval Benevolent Fund (RCNBF). The Royal Canadian Legion or Veterans Affairs Canada receives applications for assistance and completes an initial screening to confirm Veteran's status, obtain financial/income documentation and quotes for services being requested. These applications are then forwarded to the Commission for review.

FUNDING, ELIGIBILITY AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

FUNDING

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services provides the Commission with annual funding up to \$253,200 for payments to **Veterans** and/or their dependent relatives. This funding also includes expenses related to the Commissioners travel and meal costs.

ELIGIBILITY

An eligible Veteran is a person who resides in Ontario, enlisted in any branch of the Canadian military (or with an allied nation) and served overseas or in Canada during WWI, WWII or the Korean War and is in financial need.

Veterans who served in the Merchant Navy during WWII or the Korean War, are eligible for assistance from the Commission.

An eligible dependent is the spouse of an eligible Veteran with whom the Veteran lived at the time of the Veteran's death, or as a spouse in a common-law union.

Assistance may also be extended to a natural or adopted child who at the time of the Veteran's death was financially dependent on the Veteran or, unable to manage his or her affairs and was a responsibility of the Veteran.

The applicant must have insufficient income and assets to pay for the service or the support he/she is requesting. The Commission employs a screening tool to assess financial need.

Financial assistance is available to resolve a specific problem when all other resources have been exhausted. Funding is provided on an individual basis and is not provided for long-term, ongoing assistance. Applications that are declined are usually due to a determination that the individual is "not in true financial need" or that the requested

assistance is to meet an ongoing debt.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Commission provides financial assistance under two basic categories:

- Minor Disbursement Assistance and
- Major Disbursement Assistance.

Minor Disbursement Assistance:

Minor assistance covers items up to \$300.00 in value. Any Commission member or designated employee may approve a request under \$300.00.

On behalf of the Commission, counsellors in Veterans Affairs Canada offices may grant up to \$50.00 to eligible Veterans without prior authorization, and between \$50.00 and \$300.00 to eligible applicants with telephone authorization from the Commission. Veterans Affairs Canada bills to the Commission on a monthly basis for reimbursement of grants made on behalf of the Soldiers' Aid Commission. These grants are then reviewed and approved if eligible at the following Commission's Meeting.

Major Disbursement Assistance:

Major assistance includes items and services ranging from \$300.00 to \$1,500.00 in value but assistance may be increased to \$2,000.00 at the discretion of the Commission to avoid unnecessary hardship. All applications for major assistance are reviewed at the Commission's monthly meetings. Financial assistance can be granted over a 12-month period up to \$2000.

In the event of an application where funds are required immediately, two commissioners, after considering the eligibility and urgency of the application, may review and approve the application. The application is then discussed at the next Soldiers' Aid Commission meeting.

The Soldiers' Aid Commission provides funds for the following:

- Health related items such as hearing aids, glasses, prescription, and dental needs.
- Home related items such as rent, repairs, moving costs, furniture, replacement/repair of roof and furnace.
- Specialised equipment such as assistive devices, wheelchairs, and prosthetics, and
- Personal items such as clothing and other specialised support services.

The decisions to provide assistance to an individual are not subject to approval by the Minister or any official of the Ministry, nor are they subject to appeal.

The applications are reviewed at the meeting for approbation or rejection. Once the meeting has been adjourned, cheques are prepared for all approved applications and signed by the Chair and a Commissioner or by two Commissioners if the Chair is not

available.

Please see Appendix 1 for the Commission's 2019-2020 service data.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

The Commission's existing Memorandum of Understanding will remain in effect until November 2021 or at such time that there is a significant change to the mandate.

At present, the Commission may approve up to \$2,000.00 for major disbursements to individual applicants on an as-needed basis. This will be reviewed for possible increases in the cost of living and items that may be required by Veterans.

The Commission will continue to maintain the grant amount for Minor Disbursements at a level of up to \$300.00.

In December 2019, the Commission, met with the newly appointed Minister to present and discuss the options for an expansion to its mandate, considering the ever-decreasing number of Veterans and applications being received under the existing mandate. These options were the same as presented to the previous Minister in November 2018 by the Commission and included two proposals for expanding its mandate to cover modern day Veterans and their spouses/dependents. The Commission will continue to operate under its current mandate and remains committed to working with Ministry staff on any future redesign of its assistance program.

In the past year, the Commission continued its commitment to community outreach with the following initiatives, intended to foster a better understanding of the needs of the Veteran population for Commissioners and Ministry staff:

- Hosting a gathering of WWII Veterans from the Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre for a second year running.
- Facilitating a presentation to Ministry staff on "Challenges in Transitioning from Military to Civilian Life" by Dr Don Richardson, consultant psychiatrist and Physician Lead at the Parkwood Operational Stress Injury Clinic in London.
- Securing a temporary agreement with the Royal Canadian Legion, Ontario Command, to provide emergency financial assistance to SAC applicants while service and access to the Commission are restricted due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This agreement entails reimbursement to the Legion by the Commission, once regular operation resumes.

With the COVID-19 pandemic now sweeping the province, the Commission has been forced to cut back its day to day operation and will await directions from the Ministry to determine how best to move forward with meetings and review of applications.

APPENDIX 1

2019-2020 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED/FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

Month	Major Applications Received	Minor Applications Received	# Declined	# Approved	Financial Assistance Provided
Apr - 2019	1	0	0	1	\$1,500.00
May - 2019	2	0	0	2	\$3,989.00
Jun - 2019	10	0	0	10	\$16,076.49
Jul - 2019	1	0	0	1	\$1,000.00
Aug - 2019	0	0	0	0	\$0
Sep - 2019	9	0	0	9	\$14,656.12
Oct - 2019	5	0	0	5	\$6,659.50
Nov - 2019	4	0	0	4	\$4,938.00
Dec - 2019	2	0	0	2	\$2,700.00
Jan - 2020	1	0	1	0	\$0
Feb - 2020	5	0	1	4	\$6,221.49
Mar - 2020	0	0	0	0	\$0
TOTAL	40	0	2	38	\$57,740.60

2018 -2019 Disbursement

TOTAL	58	0	5	53	\$73,048.02
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Appendix 2 Other Expenses

Types of Expenses	Total
Bank Service Charges	\$79.80
Beck Taxi *	\$445.85
Commissioner Expenses *	\$600.54
Other	\$86.54
Total Other Expenses	\$1,212.73

*Commissioners are not remunerated for their time however they are eligible to claim expenses related to travel and meal costs for the monthly Commission meetings. All eligible expenses align with the guidelines of the Ministry's Travel, Meal and Hospitality Directive.

APPENDIX 3 BIOGRAPHIES

SOLDIERS' AID COMMISSIONERS

SUSAN BEHARRIELL

Lieutenant Colonel (Ret'd) Susan Beharriell served in the Canadian Forces for more than 35 years at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. Key posts included running intelligence for the Air Force, serving in NORAD HQ in Colorado, with NATO in Germany and a secondment to the Privy Council Office on Parliament Hill. Her community involvement includes being a member of The Memory Project Speakers' Bureau and contributing to various environmental and sustainability committees in King Township. LCol. Beharriell holds an Honours BA from Queen's University and is an Officer of the Order of Military Merit, the military version of the Order of Canada.

HOMER R. BROOKS

Mr. Brooks served in the Canadian Army Regular Forces and the Reserve Unit, 50th Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery. He was also employed for over 30 years by The Government of Ontario, during which time he served in the Ministries of Mines and Northern Affairs, Correctional Services and the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Brooks was born in Omemee, Ontario. His educational background includes Military Police Training at the Canadian Provost Corps School, (Canadian Army Reg.), Certificate in Correctional Services and Certified Northern Affairs Officer.

Mr. Brooks' community and professional involvement include long standing membership in The Royal Canadian Legion, Past President of the Moosonee Lions Club and Fenelon Falls Rotary Club, and a former member of the Ontario Real Estate Association.

Mr. Brooks and his wife Helen live in Oshawa Ontario and he was appointed a Commissioner on the Soldiers Aid Commission in 2008.

JOHN C. GREENFIELD

Mr. Greenfield was born in Toronto July 23, 1935 in the west end of the city. He was employed by the Municipality of Oshawa for 40 years and has been a member of the Royal Canadian Legion since 1983. He served as President of the Bowmanville Legion Branch in 1997 and has been a Veterans Service Officer since 1998.

Mr. Greenfield's community service includes membership on the Executive of the Bowmanville Navy League since 2002 and he has been a member of Temple Lodge #649 since 1969 and is also a Life member. His busy schedule includes volunteering at the Bowmanville Older Adult Association, participating in the Outreach and Visitation Initiative for Veterans Affairs Canada, serving at numerous banquets for the Legion, Community Care Durham and the Older Adult Centre and providing used Legion magazines to the Nursing Homes in the Municipality of Clarington.

John and his Wife Lorraine live in Bowmanville and have 5 children, 10 grand-children and 9 great grand-children. When he is not volunteering, John enjoys golfing, skating and walking in the wintertime. He was appointed as a Commissioner in 2015.

ROSEMARIE MCGUIRE

In October of 2015, Rosemarie McGuire was appointed as a Commissioner to the Soldiers' Aid Commission. She served as a Member at Large for the North York Central Lions Club and has been a member of the Warriors' Day Council since 1978. In 1978, she joined the Royal Canadian Legion and over the years, Ms. McGuire has held many executive positions including Branch President. As Public Relations Officer, she produced a documentary, "Wills and Power of Attorney", for Rogers Cable Community Channel. She was awarded her Life Membership in recognition of community volunteer work over and above Legion responsibilities.

Ms. McGuire joined 709 (Tor) Communications Regiment in 1977. While serving with the Army Cadets she attained the rank of Captain and served as Commanding Officer, retiring from Air Cadet Service in 1992. Ms. McGuire attained her Law Clerk designation from George Brown College in 1999 and has been employed with the law firm Benson Percival Brown LLP since 1988. Ms. McGuire also brings to the Commission general medical knowledge.

KENNETH (KEN) OSBORNE

Mr. Kenneth Osborne served in the Canadian Forces for 24 years. As a lawyer with the Office of the Judge Advocate General, his key posts included roles with NATO, the Strategic Joint Staff, and as a Deputy Judge Advocate. He is a Veteran of peacekeeping operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and combat operations in Afghanistan. Deploying to Afghanistan on two occasions, he served as the lawyer to Canada's Special Operations Task Force, and subsequently deployed as legal mentor in a rule of law capacity with the US Forces. For service as a mentor in Afghanistan, he was awarded the United States Meritorious Service Medal. Mr. Osborne's community involvement includes service with the Town of Aurora Council Compensation Committee, and he has volunteered with the Government of Canada Charitable

Workplace Campaign. Following retirement from the military, Mr. Osborne now resides in Stoney Creek, Ontario, and works with the Law Society of Upper Canada. He was appointed to the Soldiers' Aid Commission as a Commissioner in November 2017.

COLIN R. ROWE

Mr. Rowe joined the Ontario Public Service in 1969 in what was then the Department of Social and Family Services. Through part-time studies, Mr. Rowe graduated in 1972 from the Social Service Administration program at the former Ryerson Polytechnical Institute. Until his retirement in November 1999, Mr. Rowe's entire public service career was in the Ministry of Community and Social Services and primarily in the Income Maintenance program. In 1997 he was appointed Manager in the Ministry's Information Systems Branch with responsibility for implementing systems changes in support of Social Assistance Reform initiatives, and the Year 2000 upgrade and retrofit of the Ministry's Social Assistance mainframe applications.

Mr. Rowe is a forty-six-year member of the Royal Canadian Legion and served for fifteen years in the Canadian Armed Forces Militia. He retired in June 2002 from his position as the Regimental Drum Major for the Band of the Governor General's Horse Guards, Canada's senior militia regiment, but maintains a busy schedule as editor of the Horse Guards Association's newsletter and responsibility for its website. Upon retiring from the OPS in 1999, he returned to academia and earned a Music Diploma at Humber College in the Jazz Studies program. He still performs as a free-lance musician (trombonist) and arranger in the Greater Toronto Area and is the current Drum Major of the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Association in Cobourg, Ontario.

Mr. Rowe and his wife Agnes have two adult sons and eight grandchildren. They enjoy the easy pace of rural life in Trenton, where they have taken up residence since December 2016. Mr. Rowe was appointed to the Soldiers' Aid Commission as a Commissioner in December 2002 and currently serves as the Chair.

JOHN STAPLETON

Mr. Stapleton is a writer, instructor, and Innovations Fellow with the Metcalf Foundation. He worked for the Ontario Government in the Ministry of Community and Social Services and its predecessors for 28 years, in the areas of social assistance policy and operations and was Research Director for the Task Force on Modernizing Income Security for Working-Age Adults in Toronto.

He is a volunteer with St. Christopher House and Woodgreen Community Services of Toronto, teaches public policy and is a member of 25 in 5. Mr. Stapleton also teaches a popular course on public policy for community advocates and has published op-eds in the Globe & Mail, National Post, and the Toronto Star. He has written reviews for the

Literary Review of Canada and written articles and studies for Ideas that Matter, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the C.D. Howe Institute, the Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation, the Caledon Institute, The Toronto Dominion Financial Group, the Metcalf Foundation, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, The Toronto City Summit Alliance and many others.

Mr. Stapleton serves on the Board of Directors of the Daily Bread Food Bank, West Scarborough Community Legal Services, and he is the President of the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame. He was appointed to the Soldiers' Aid Commission in May 2003 and is the current Vice-Chair.

WILLIAM EARL THOMAS

Mr. Thomas was born in Toronto Ontario. He joined the Army Cadet Corp in 1944 and served until 1947 as a Lance Corporal.

Mr. Thomas attended Ryerson Institute of Technology where he obtained his Diploma as an Engineering Technician. Over the next 48 years Mr. Thomas worked for four companies in both Technical and Management positions. Mr. Thomas has been a member of the Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists (CTE) since 1957. Mr. Thomas demonstrates his commitment to his community by serving as a volunteering with the Rockcliff Nursing Home, St Ninians Anglican Church, Scarborough Recreation and Parks, Wexford Baseball Organisation, and the YMCA.

Mr. Thomas is actively enjoying retirement he lives in Scarborough with his wife Irena and was appointed as a Commissioner of the Soldiers' Aid Commission in June 2008.

