
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
SOLDIERS' AID COMMISSION
2021-2022

JULY 2022

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

**The Honourable Merrilee Fullerton
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services**

Dear Minister Fullerton:

**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 2021-2022 fiscal year.**

Sincerely,

John Stapleton

**John A. Stapleton
Chair**

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 was later expanded to 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. In January 2021, the mandate was revised and now includes all former members of the Canadian Armed Forces who have completed basic training and are released from service.

The Soldiers' Aid Commission receives its legislative authority from the *Soldiers' Aid Commission Act, 2020 and Regulations made under the Act*.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), through the Developmental and Supportive Services 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, members may be appointed to hold office for a term of up to three years at the pleasure of the Lieutenant Governor in Council and may be reappointed.

The Commission shall consist of at least three members and no more than 11 members, with the majority of the board comprising Veterans or individuals who are either the parent, spouse, child or sibling of a Veteran. The Lieutenant Governor in Council shall designate a member as the Chair of the Commission and another member as the Vice-Chair. The current Commission comprises a Chair (John Stapleton), Vice-Chair (presently vacant), and seven other Commissioners.

Members are not remunerated but are entitled to such reimbursement for reasonable expenses as determined by the Travel, Meal and Hospitality Directive

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Ministry and the Commission was signed by the Minister and the Chair in January 2021.

MANDATE

The mandate of the Soldiers' Aid Commission is to administer a financial assistance program for eligible Veterans and eligible family members of Veterans who reside in Ontario. 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 **\$1.55M** for payments to eligible Veterans and/or their eligible family members. This funding also includes expenses related to the Commissioners travel and meal costs.

ELIGIBILITY

An eligible Veteran is any person who resides in Ontario, and a former member of the Canadian Armed Forces who has completed basic training and was released from service or has 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 are also eligible for assistance from the Commission.

- An eligible family member of a Veteran can be the spouse of a Veteran, the surviving spouse of a deceased Veteran or a child of a Veteran or Veteran's spouse who is financially dependent, or the child of a deceased Veteran or Veteran's spouse.
- The applicant must also demonstrate financial need and make a reasonable effort to access funds from other Veteran-specific programs and show that they cannot reasonably cover the cost of the service/support being requested.

The Commission reviews all applications and employs a screening tool to assess financial need before eligibility determination.

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

All applications for assistance are reviewed at the Commission's meetings. Financial assistance can be granted over a 12-month period up to \$2,000.

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 Commission will consider applications to support eligible recipients with financial assistance for essential expenses in the following categories:

- housing-related items, modifications or repairs that support mobility, accessibility or health and safety
- assistance to secure or maintain housing
- specialized equipment and assistive devices to support mobility, accessibility or health and safety
- health-related items and services to support physical and mental health
- personal items, services and expenses to support basic needs
- employment-related supports to remove barriers to employment or improve employability

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 approval 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 2021-2022 service data.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

As anticipated, in the 2020/21 fiscal year, there was a dramatic drop in the number of applications because of the COVID-19 pandemic sweeping across the province and the closure of Royal Canadian Legion branches as well as reduced operations in Veterans Affairs Canada offices. The fiscal year 2021-22 saw a continuation of this trend even though some recovery from Covid-19 was experienced

The number of applications received this fiscal year was only 31, compared to 40 in 2019/20 and the records show that in the 2015/16 fiscal year, the Commission had received 138 applications.

The Commission continued to work with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services during the year to implement the new legislation that enhanced and modernized the mandate of the Commission. This ensures that the Commission is able to continue to support Ontario's Veterans for years to come.

The Commission's existing Memorandum of Understanding will remain in effect until January 2026 or at such time that there may be a significant change to the mandate.

At present, the Commission may approve up to \$2,000 for 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 moved to a more streamlined online meeting and application review process which allowed the members of the Commission to meet virtually and approve applications.

The Commission has continued to maintain its liaison with the Royal Canadian Legion to ensure that applications can continue to be processed regardless of the pandemic and the closure of their branches. This included a meeting, in late 2021, with Ontario Command of the Royal Canadian Legion to discuss applications, intake processes and to determine how further the Commission could assist Veterans and their families.

As part of its strategic direction, SAC is reaching out to as many Veterans groups as possible, to promote the program and at the same time, obtain a better understanding of the new demographic of younger Veterans and their needs. This included conversations with the True Patriot Love Foundation, Homes for Heroes, Military Family Resource Centres etc.

Although there is a continued anticipation that the province will soon return to normal activity, uncertainty remains over the lingering effect of the COVID virus and its impact on applications for the program,

The current term for the Order-In-Council appointments of the Commissioners, have been extended. To facilitate a smooth transition to a reconstituted Commission in January 2022, a new Chair was appointed on this date.

APPENDIX 1– Total Disbursements

2021-2022 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED/FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

Month	Applications Received	# Declined	# Approved	Financial Assistance Provided
Apr – 2021	0	0	0	\$0
May – 2021	7	0	7	\$10,200.00
Jun – 2021	4	1	3	\$3,804.50
Jul – 2021	1	0	1	\$2,000.00
Aug – 2021	3	0	3	\$4,948.00
Sep – 2021	4	0	4	\$8,000.00
Oct – 2021	1	0	1	\$2,000.00
Nov – 2021	2	0	2	\$4,000.00
Dec – 2021	0	0	0	\$0
Jan – 2022	3	0	3	\$4,515.00
Feb – 2022	5	0	5	\$6,368.00
Mar – 2022	1	0	1	\$1,496.17
TOTAL	31	1	30	\$47,331.67

2020-2021 Disbursement

TOTAL	5	0	5	\$5,677.00
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APPENDIX 2 -Other Expenses

Types of Expenses	Total
Bank Service Charges	\$79.80
Commissioner Expenses *	\$0
Other	\$0
Total Other Expenses	\$166.34

**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 - SOLDIERS' AID COMMISSION BIOGRAPHIES

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.

FRANCIS (CHRIS) COLTON

In 1965 Francis (Chris) Colton joined the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and graduated as a pilot in 1967. Over the next 36 years he served in a number of locations including Trenton, Ottawa, Edmonton and an exchange tour with the United States Air Force (USAF) in Oklahoma. During his career he flew the Tutor, Twin Otter and Hercules totaling 8,000 hours. His command appointments included operations in Norway, Djibouti, Kuwait, Cyprus and Australia. He was also appointed as the Commanding Officer of 440 Transport and Rescue Squadron in the late 80s. He retired as a Lieutenant Colonel from the RCAF in 2001 as the Wing Operations Officer at CFB Trenton.

In 2002, he accepted the position as the Executive Director of the National Air Force Museum of Canada. As the National Air Force Museum, the responsibilities included processing, handling, archiving, and preserving Canada's Air Force artefacts which included 44 aircraft and over 10,000 smaller size artefacts. Some of these are permanently on display or in safe storage. Visitors to the museum totaled over 50,000 per year. He oversaw a staff of seven, and 110 volunteers with a budget of 500K annually. As the pre-eminent Air Force Museum, we were visited by a wide range of celebrity and high-ranking military VIPs from around the world. We were also able to host many social events and organizational meetings including weddings, large receptions (max 500 people), and other similar events. He was appointed as Commissioner in 2021.

G. ROBIN COOKE

G. Robin Cooke, CD was born in Windsor, Ontario. Mr. Cooke attended St. Clair College, the University of Windsor, University of Guelph, and Queen's University, Kingston. He was employed as a Technological Education teacher and department head for the North Shore, Norfolk and Grand Erie District Boards of Education. Mr. Cooke was commissioned an officer in the Canadian Forces in 1986 and joined the 56 Field Regiment, RCA where he held several Regimental appointments. In 2006, Captain Cooke entered full-time service with the Canadian Armed Forces as G3 Plans with Task Force 3-06. In September 2006, he filled the G3 Plans position at 31 CBG in London. Captain Cooke joined 3rd Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment Battle Group, Task Force 3-08 in April 2008 deploying to Afghanistan in September 2008. Mr. Cooke enjoys recreational flying, kayaking, reading and gardening. He is an active member of Branch 79, Royal Canadian Legion assisting other veterans as the branch Service Officer.

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. 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.

JOHN STAPLETON

Mr. Stapleton is a writer, instructor, and former Innovations Fellow with the Metcalf Foundation. He worked for the Ontario Government in the Ministry of Children, 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 Chair.