

Fall 2023

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

On Oct. 9, 2023, Ronald Dawson died in his 94th year. Ron was a successful businessman in London. Ron had been an active member of the GCC for many years. We will miss him.

Congratulations to BGen Joseph (Joe) Robinson on his recent promotion to the rank of Brigadier General. The Brigadier was a commander of the 31 Canadian Brigade Group. We wish him well with his new responsibilities.

The GCC was represented at two Remembrance Day Services in London on Nov. 11, 2023.

Sec. Randy placed the GCC wreath on the Cenotaph in downtown London prior to the start of the formal service. (Laying community wreaths before the official service has become the custom for the last few years.)

As part of the 4RCR Remembrance Service, Past President Geoff Hutton laid the GCC wreath at the Regimental Memorial in Wolseley Barracks. On parade were about 50 4RCR members and about 35 Association members. There were about 250 spectators.

The GCC Bursary Programme has announced the names of the bursary recipients. Congratulations to our deserving members of Primary Reserve Units who are enrolled in post secondary educational programmes. Thanks to Dr. Phil Dean, VP Bursaries.

The GCC has a new start to its General (Luncheon) Meetings with a Land Acknowledgement. The acknowledgement states that "We acknowledge that the City of London and Region is on the traditional territory of the Anishinabek, Haudenosaunee, Attawandron and Wendat peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties."

Our last meeting on November 8, 2023, was an attempt at a Hybrid Meeting (combining members in person and on Zoom). Unfortunately, this meeting did not go well due to a shortage of bandwidth in Beaver Hall. Your Executive will be reviewing this matter.

The GCC takes a holiday for December. Our next Meeting is Wed. January 10, 2024, when we are fortunate to have a speaker who will be joining us on Zoom from Trenton Ontario to speak about the new RCAF Space Division. Mark your calendar!

On behalf of the GCC Executive, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Remembrance Day 2024



On behalf of the GCC, Geoff Hutton participated in the Remembrance Ceremony at Wolseley Barracks last Saturday, November 11.



Members of HMCS Prevost marching in Remembrance Day Parade

2023 GCC Bursary Award Winners

Angel Abraham S3,
HMCS Prevost
Col (Ret) William Pettipas Award



Cpl Bryce Phillips,
31 Signals Regiment



Cpl Natalia Strots, 4 RCR
Professor Emeritus Don
Bondy Award

We'd like to thank General Dynamics Land Systems - Canada and MiliteX for their sponsorship of the Bursary Programme

Promotion - BGen Joseph Robinson, CD

Fellow Royal Canadians,

RHQ is pleased to announce that the CDS and CCA, Gen W.D. Eyre, CMM, MSC, CD, and LGen J.J.M.J. Paul, CMM, MSC, CD had the privilege to promote BGen Joe Robinson, CD on 20 October 2023.

Congratulations to BGen Robinson.



2023 GCC Executive

President	Tom Dean
Past President	Geoff Hutton
Vice President	Mike Leatham
VP Communications	Kevin Patterson
VP Bursaries	Dr. Phil Dean
VP Special Projects	Eric Thomson
Secretary	Randy Harden
Treasurer	John Martin

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Connections Editors

Kevin Patterson - VP Communications
Tom Dean - President and Editorial Consultant
All GCC screenshots provided by Gary Nash.
Photos of meetings on site taken by Eric Thomson



GCC's Mission to build a greater understanding, support and appreciation of Canada's military.

Our three fundamental tenets are
Support, Assist and Connect.

The Royal Canadian Legion names Canada's 2023 National Silver Cross Mother



The Royal Canadian Legion is proud to share the story of this year's National Silver Cross Mother, Gloria Hooper, of St. Claude, Manitoba. Mrs. Hooper will represent all Silver Cross Mothers when she places a wreath at the National War Memorial in Ottawa on Remembrance Day.



"This honoured action carries deep meaning," says Bruce Julian, Dominion President. "Mrs. Hooper not only embodies the legacy of her fallen son, but her presence comforts all Silver Cross Mothers and families, and reflects our collective remembrance of their loved ones' sacrifice."

Mrs. Hooper's son, Sapper Chris Holopina was a member of the Canadian Army and served as a Combat Engineer. Chris was killed on July 4, 1996, in Bosnia during Operation Alliance. He and his comrades were on their way to help rescue a group of British soldiers stranded in a mine field when their armoured vehicle left the road to avoid an accident. Their vehicle careened down a ravine and rolled over, killing Chris. He was the first Canadian to give his life as part of that peacekeeping mission.

Read more about Mrs. Hooper and her son Chris at Legion.ca.

The National Silver Cross Mother acts on behalf of all Canadian mothers who have lost a son or daughter in the line of service, be it in action or over the course of normal duty. From November 1, 2023 to October 31, 2024, Mrs. Hooper will be part of several events honouring Canada's fallen.

The Memorial Cross - more commonly referred to as the Silver Cross - was introduced on December 1, 1919. It is a symbol of personal loss and sacrifice on behalf of widows and mothers who lose a child on active duty, or whose death is later attributed to such duty.

The Royal Canadian Legion receives nominations for the National Silver Cross Mother role from Provincial Commands and individual Canadians each year. The final recipient is chosen by a Dominion Command selection committee.



Every Member should be a GCCPP (Garrison Community Council Project Person)



GCC September General Meeting



Our Speaker for the GCC's September General Meeting
Giorgio Clementi,
President of The International Test Pilots School (ITPS) London

Giorgio has 34 years of flying experience of which twenty have been in flight testing. He holds a Post Graduate Certificate in Aerospace Engineering from Bristol University in the UK and an Airline Transport Pilot License. He is a Graduate of NTPS 1990, Flight Test Engineer Course. Giorgio's flight-testing experience as a pilot and flight test engineer spans Fixed-wing and helicopter, civil and military.



Contracted by Diamond Aircraft to set up a Flight test department in Canada, he conducted the initial Proof of Concept flight test for the D-Jet Prototype as well as the whole Diamond piston engine line. Giorgio's military experience includes participating in the flight test of the Mirage IIIBZ upgrade for the South African Air Force and the development and qualification of flight tests of the SA332 Oryx medium helicopter. Subsequent experience includes Stores Certification and Weapons Testing, Navigation Systems, targeting pod, and Laser Warning receiver tests. Giorgio has over 24 years of experience training test pilots and flight test engineers and designing and managing military training programs for customers from around the world.



He has flown over 3000 hours on over 60 types. Giorgio is an Associate Fellow of the Society of Experimental Test Pilots and a Senior Member of the Society of Flight Test Engineers.



GCC September General Meeting



ON TARGET: WE NEED TO DO MORE THAN SIMPLY 'REMEMBER' AFGHANISTAN VETERANS



November 13, 2023

By Scott Taylor

On Saturday November 11, Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast pause for a minute of silence to remember the sacrifice made by those in uniform in the service of our great nation.

For the younger generation Canada's 12-year commitment to the war in Afghanistan from 2002-2014 has put a modern face on the notion of a Canadian combat veteran.

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ON TARGET: WE NEED TO DO MORE THAN SIMPLY 'REMEMBER' AFGHANISTAN VETERANS *Continued from page 5*

In total 158 Canadian servicemembers were killed in Afghanistan, a further 2000 suffered wounds or injuries and countless thousands more suffer from the invisible damage of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

There was no victory parade when our soldiers concluded the Afghanistan deployment in 2014.

At that juncture there were howls of protest from the pro-war pundits in Canada who still argued that NATO was just one school house away from total victory.

Their collective facetious argument was that our troops pulling out of the NATO mission in Afghanistan in 2014 was akin to Canada opting out of World War II after D-Day in 1944, and leaving our allies to finish the job without us.

The wilful ignorance of these tub-thumpers has now been exposed following the December 2019 publishing of the Washington Post's story on what became dubbed 'The Afghanistan Papers.'

This collection of documents obtained under the U.S. Freedom of Information Act clearly illustrated that the Pentagon knew from the outset that the U.S. led coalition could not achieve victory in Afghanistan. Instead of revealing that truth, senior officials conspired to lie to the public to keep them 'onside' in supporting the conflict.

For the die hard hawks, even the revelation that the U.S. commanders knew it was a no-win war did not stop them from hoping for a last minute miracle victory.

In August 2021, that last dim hope was extinguished for good when the Taliban roared to victory against the U.S. trained Afghan security forces who simply melted away without a fight.

When our troops had come home in 2014, most major media outlets had used that milestone to pose the question as to whether or not Canada's sacrifice in 'blood and gold' had been worth the cost.

These assessments had of course been loudly denounced by all of those pro-war cheerleaders who had spent 12 years selling Canadians on the war. They cried that it was 'too soon' to tally up the losses against those gains being made in Afghanistan, as the war was not yet over.

Well folks, as of the summer of 2021 and the U.S. abandonment of Kabul airport, one can safely say that the war is over. We lost.

Which means that the sacrifice and expense of the Afghanistan war cannot be justified or offset by an elusive victory.

To ensure that such a failure is not repeated, Canada needs to establish a public inquiry to probe how this mistake happened, and continued to happen over 12 bloody years.

With the Afghanistan Papers in the public domain, we need to ask whether those U.S. officials who knew the war was unwinnable, shared that info with NATO allies, including Canada.

In other words was it American officials deliberately misleading their Canadian counterparts into believing victory was around the corner? Or were our Canadian leaders in on the ruse from the outset and they chose, like the Americans to continue deceiving the general public?

Such a set of public hearings could follow the example of Britain's Iraq inquiry which is better known as the Chilcot Inquiry.

This probe delved into the circumstances which led British Parliament to participate in the 2003 U.S. illegal invasion of Iraq.

Launched in 2009, the Chilcot inquiry published it's finding in 2016.

The report concluded that at the time of the invasion, Saddam Hussein's Iraq did not possess the Weapons of Mass Destruction as was falsely claimed by the U.S. and UK Intelligence.

If the British can own up to a lie that led to an illegal and disastrous war, surely Canada can do the same.

Our soldiers and the families of the fallen deserve no less.



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CANADIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

GCC October General Meeting

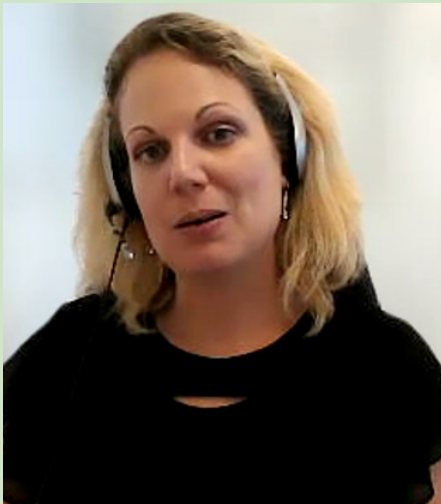


Our Speaker for the GCC's October General Meeting
Shawna Chambers P.Eng., DPA
Division Manager of Stormwater Engineering at the City of London

Shawna Chambers, P.Eng., DPA holds a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Waterloo (Water Resources and Environmental Engineering Options) and a Diploma of Public Administration from Western University. Her 16-year career at the City has focused on the planning and implementation of municipal stormwater, sewer, and wastewater projects. As Division Manager, she focuses on delivering practical and effective stormwater infrastructure programs to benefit both the natural environment and the greater community. Ms. Chambers is committed to sustainability, innovation, and challenging the way "it's always been done."

Topic: Stormwater Engineering - Preparing for the future!

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October General Meeting *Continued from page 7*



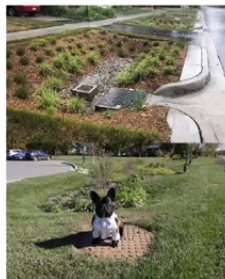
Stormwater Engineering – Preparing for the future!



Low Impact Development



- Create “sponges” on the surface to absorb rainwater
- Promote groundwater recharge, reduce runoff, and flooding
- Tree planting initiatives
- City Pilot Projects:
 - Bostwick Community Centre
 - SOHO at Waterloo/Horton
 - Fire Station 11
 - Oakridge Acres
 - East Lions Park
 - And more...
- LIDs incorporated into 2019 City Design Standards.



SOHO Rain Gardens (2017);
“Archie” at Fire Hall 11 (2018)



London's 1937 Flood Event



Front Street



The Coves



Springbank Drive



Blackfriars Area



London's Stormwater Engineering Division

- 15-person team of Engineers, Technologists, Hydrogeologist and Ecologist
- Provide input related to all SWM matters in City
- Funded by Storm Rates established in 1996
- Construct SWM projects for new subdivisions



Then, During, and Now

Downstream of
Colonel Talbot
Road



Upstream of
Isaac Drive/
Ped bridge



Canadian Special Ops Deployed to Israel



According to a Global News article, Canada has sent a small team of Canadian special operations forces to Israel. According to the Global News article, the information was received from multiple sources with direct knowledge of the mission.

Joint Task Force 2 is an elite Tier 1 special operations force of the Canadian Armed Forces, serving under the Canadian Special Operations Forces Command. Serving as the centrepiece of Canadian special operations, JTF 2 is primarily tasked with counter-terrorism operations, both domestic and abroad, and specializes in direct action, special reconnaissance and surveillance, hostage rescue, protective security, foreign internal defence and other high-value tasks.

READ: Feature Interview – VAdm Bob Auchterlonie – Commander CJOC

Canadian special forces members are in Israel helping Canada's embassy there with "contingency planning," a Department of National Defence spokesperson confirmed to CBC News on Sunday.

On October 21st Minister Blair & DND released a statement regarding the explosion at Al Ahli Arab Hospital on October 17. The statement read:

"Canada is deeply saddened by the loss of life caused by the explosion at Al Ahli Arab hospital in Gaza on October 17, 2023. We reiterate our sincere condolences to all those who lost loved ones.

"In order to determine what happened, the Prime Minister asked me to task the Canadian Armed Forces with preparing an independent review and analysis of the explosion. The Canadian Forces Intelligence Command (CFINTCOM) undertook that review and analysis. Today, after briefing the Prime Minister, I am releasing its findings.

"Analysis conducted independently by the Canadian Forces Intelligence Command indicates with a high degree of confidence that Israel did not strike the hospital on October 17, 2023. The more likely scenario is that the strike was caused by an errant rocket fired from Gaza. We will continue to provide updates as new information becomes available."

In August 2021, JTF-2 and CSOR operators were deployed to Afghanistan to evacuate staff from the Canadian Embassy in Kabul.

In May 2022, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau visited Ukraine to show solidarity and to witness the war for himself, alongside members of the cabinet. As part of the security detail, they were accompanied by members of JTF 2.



Celebrating 80 Years of Service



On August 26, 2023 the world's last surviving Tribal-class destroyer HMCS Haida marked the 80th anniversary of its commissioning in 1943. HMCS Haida served as a fleet destroyer and destroyer escort in the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) between 1943 and 1963.

HMCS HAIDA is one of three remaining RCN warships from the Second World War. It gained the title of Canada's 'fightingest ship.' In 2018 it was designated "Ceremonial Flagship" for the Royal Canadian Navy.



GCC November Meeting



Speakers: Jacinda Gedney and Martha Josephian
Veterans Affairs Canada



Jacinda Gedney is a Veterans Service Team Manager in the London Area Office of Veterans Affairs Canada. A proud graduate of Carleton University with a degree in Anthropology, working with a unique sub set of the population was highly appealing and led to her decision to work at Veterans Affairs for just shy of 15 years.

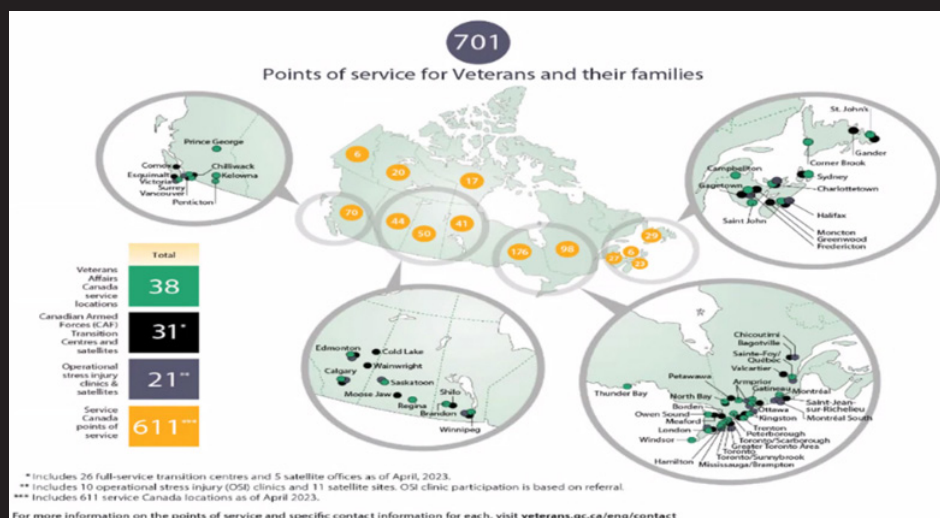
By focusing on Veterans strengths and their unique resources it has been her pleasure to serve this deserving population. Jacinda has recently received an excellence award for her work within a team to renew case management at VAC.



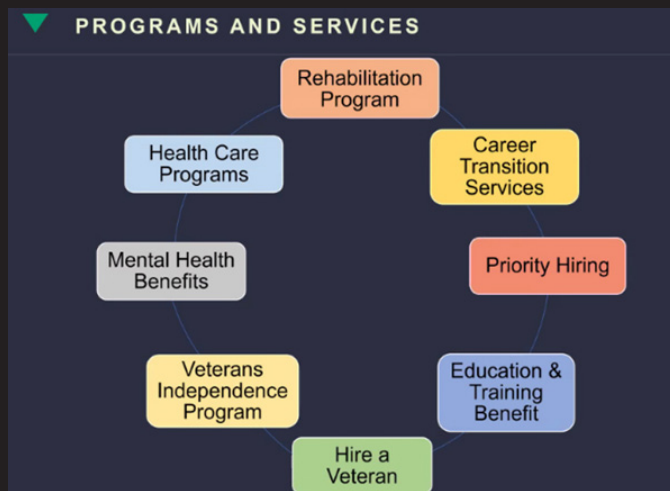
When Jacinda is not at Veterans Affairs she is a hiking enthusiast who loves spending time in nature.

Jacinda Gedney and Martha Josephian's presentation described many of the services that Veterans Affairs Canada offers for Regular and Reserve personnel of the Canadian Armed Forces.

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GCC November Meeting *Continued from page 10*



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

OSI Clinic Network

Family peer support (OSISS Program)

Mental Health Service Providers

Mental Health Benefits

VAC Assistance Service
• 1-800-268-7708

Mobile apps
• PTSD Coach Canada
• OSI Connect



HELP FOR THE FAMILY

Group Health Insurance (PSHCP)

Vocational Assistance

Mental health support (OSISS)

VAC Assistance Service

Veteran Family Program
• Access to Military Family Resource Centres;
• Family Information Line; and
• Veteran Family Journal.

Caregiver Recognition Benefit



Minister Blair officially accepts delivery of first new Armoured Combat Support Vehicles for the Canadian Army

News release

October 19, 2023 - Garrison Petawawa, Ontario - Department of National Defence / Canadian Armed Forces

Today, the Honourable Bill Blair, Minister of National Defence, and General Wayne Eyre, Chief of the Defence Staff, visited Garrison Petawawa where the first four new Armoured Combat Support Vehicles (ACSVs) were officially accepted by the

Canadian Army.

Minister Blair and General Eyre toured the newly-arrived armoured vehicles, which represent the first of 360 Armoured Combat Support Vehicles that will be delivered to the Canadian Army over the coming years.

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Delivery of first new Armoured Combat Support Vehicles for the Canadian Army

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These first four vehicles are the ambulance variant, which will be equipped with medical supplies and an internal layout that will allow for the treatment of a wide range of injuries.

Procured through the Armoured Combat Support Vehicle project, these vehicles will provide the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) with a modernized, armoured combat support fleet which will ensure the members of the Canadian Army have the tools that they need to conduct operations in Canada, and abroad. These vehicles are general-utility combat support vehicles that will fulfil a wide variety of support roles on the battlefield - including serving as troop transport, command vehicles, electronic warfare, mobile repair, and various combat engineering tasks. They will provide a high degree of maneuverability and protection to their crews and payloads.

This procurement is delivering major economic benefits for Canada. The 360 ACSVs are being acquired thanks to a \$2 billion investment with General Dynamics Land Systems - Canada. This project is supporting 1,975 jobs annually in London, Ontario and across the country, as well as contributing \$250 million dollars annually to Canada's Gross Domestic Product over an eight-year period.

The delivery of the ambulance marks the first of eight variants to be received by the Canadian Army under the ACSV project. Training for both maintainers and operators of the vehicle is scheduled to begin this month.

Quotes:

"The members of the Canadian Armed Forces deserve modern equipment that gets the job done. These new Armoured Combat Support Vehicles will serve our members well at home and abroad, enabling them to protect Canada and support our Allies. I thank the hundreds of Canadian workers involved in building these vehicles - and reaffirm our commitment to investing in our military while creating good jobs for Canadians."

The Honourable Bill Blair, Minister of National Defence

"This project highlights investments in Canada's domestic supply chain, and the importance of supporting good middle-class jobs. Welcoming the first ambulance variant of the Armoured Combat Support Vehicle supports our commitment in ensuring members of our Canadian Armed Forces have the modern equipment they need to do their jobs and keep Canadians safe."

The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Public Services and Procurement

Quick Facts:

- Under Canada's defence policy, Strong, Secure, Engaged, we previously expected initial delivery in 2025. National Defence and the CAF were able to advance this procurement to a faster timeline, which is good news for CAF members.
- The new fleet of ACSVs will all be based on the Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV) 6.0 and will replace the current LAV II Bison and M113 Tracked LAV fleets.

Light Armoured Reconnaissance Vehicles On the Move



Image: General Dynamics Land Systems

Beginning August 30, 2023, five Light Armoured Reconnaissance Vehicles will be transported by semi-trailer flatbed from London, ON to Valcartier, QC. Members of the public may notice these vehicles on major Canadian highways. These activities are in direct support of the Light Armoured Vehicle Reconnaissance Surveillance System project that will provide the Canadian Army with its first vehicle-based, on-the-move, long-range reconnaissance capability.

The Light Armoured Vehicle Reconnaissance Surveillance System project is replacing 141 aging Coyote surveillance vehicles with 66 state-of-the-art surveillance systems, which will be fully integrated onto the Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV) 6.0 platform. The first five vehicles will be received in Valcartier, QC and will undergo testing until winter 2024.

Over the next 18 months, the remaining vehicles will be delivered in a similar manner to Canadian Forces Bases in Gagetown, NB, Petawawa, ON, Valcartier, QC, and Montréal, QC.