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NEWS RELEASE

## **Families are the Backbone of Support for the Military and must be supported**

### **Legion Welcomes Recommendations in DND Ombudsman's Report**

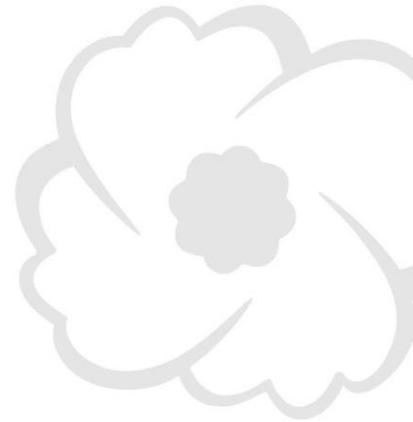
OTTAWA, ON, NOVEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup> 2013 – The DND/CF Ombudsman's Special Report: *On the Homefront: Assessing the well-being of Canada's Military Families in the New Millennium* was released today. This report is an independent, comprehensive review focused on the state of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Regular Force families. The report highlights that the CAF has been engaged in almost continuous operations since 1990; that the transition from peace support operations to war required much more of serving CAF members and that by extension, considerably more was also asked of their families.

"The Royal Canadian Legion reviewed the report and these findings should not surprise anyone. They have been at the forefront of the CAF family agenda since the SCONDVA Report in 1998." says Gordon Moore, Dominion President of The Royal Canadian Legion.

"We wholeheartedly agree with the Ombudsman's recommendation to maintain and improve the current level of support to military families and ensure that it will be maintained well into the future." says Moore. While the Legion supports all military families and provides funding to local Military Family Resource Centers across the country, the Government has a responsibility to provide and ensure that the programs and services are in place across the country to meet the needs of the men and women serving our country.

The Legion supports the recommendation that the DND/CAF modernize the existing relocation policies and procedures to alleviate the challenges surrounding geographic relocations. The Home Equity Assistance Program requires immediate review so that the policy is not so vague and the criterion so onerous. Our military members should not be out of pocket when selling their principal residence on a move due to service requirements.

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#### **ABOUT THE LEGION**

Established in 1926, the Legion is the largest Veterans service organization in Canada with more than 320,000 members. Its mission is to serve all Veterans including serving Canadian Forces and Royal Canadian Mounted Police members and their families, to promote Remembrance and to serve our communities and our country.

The Legion's Service Bureau Network provides assistance and representation to all Veterans including serving CF and RCMP members, and their families regarding their disability claims, benefits and services from Veterans Affairs Canada and the Veterans Review and Appeal Board. In communities across Canada, it is the Legion that perpetuates Remembrance through the Poppy Campaign and Remembrance Day ceremonies. With more than 1,450 branches, The Legion supports programs for seniors, Veterans housing, Long Term Care, youth leadership, education, sports, Cadets, Guides and Scouts. We will Remember Them.

The Legion shares the Ombudsman's request for a review of the Military Family Services Program (MFSP). The MFSP was introduced in 1991 and has been tailored and redesigned over time, but has not fundamentally evolved since its inception. "While an extensive review was completed in 2009 to identify areas of improvement to services and supports offered to families, many of the issues identified by the Ombudsman were identified in 2009 but not implemented," adds Moore. "We ask that the CAF commit now to the review and take the necessary action to implement the remaining initiatives first identified in 2009." These initiatives would ensure consistency of services offered to families and facilitate smoother transitions during postings and deployments. Timely implementation of enhanced policies, programs and services in support of families will help the CAF remain an effective military force with supportive families.

The Legion is very supportive of the Military Family Services Program, we have been working in collaboration at a national and local level for some time and by working together, we can assure that serving Canadian Armed Forces members, veterans and their families have services available to them wherever they may live.

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