

January 28, 2026

Command Newsletter #15 - Veterans support opportunities, OSI Section Update

MBNWO Branches,

Your Provincial Command is pleased to introduce Chief Warrant Officer (Retired) Joel Langley, MMM, CD as the newly appointed Legion OSI National Section Provincial Representative for Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario!

This appointment strengthens our commitment to peer-based Veteran support and community connection through supporting Branch-level OSI programming across our Command.

Meet Joel Langley, MMM, CD

Chief Warrant Officer (Retired) Joel Langley enrolled in the Canadian Armed Forces in January 1986, completing more than 36 years of distinguished service.

Career Highlights:

- Began service with the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, including the Airborne Regiment and postings in Germany
- Occupational transfer to the Royal Canadian Air Force as an Aerospace Control Operator (1998)
- Key postings across Canada and the United States supporting NORAD operations
- Accumulated 1,250+ flying hours aboard the E-3 AWACS aircraft
- Senior leadership roles including:
 - Unit Master Warrant Officer
 - Squadron Warrant Officer
 - Squadron Chief Warrant Officer
- Final posting: Squadron Chief Warrant Officer, 4 Mission Support Squadron, 4 Wing Cold Lake
- Retired on 5 July 2022

Operational Experience:

- Deployments to the former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan
- Participation in national security events, counter-drug operations, and domestic emergency response operations

Joel is a Member of the Order of Military Merit.

Following retirement, Joel and his wife Shauna settled in Minnedosa, Manitoba, where they founded Paws 4 Valour—an initiative providing free professional dog training for Veterans, serving members, and first responders in support of mental health and well-being.

Joel continues his service as:

- Royal Canadian Legion Zone 24 Commander
- Service Officer, Branch 138

Expanding OSI Support Across Our Branches

MBNWO Provincial Command is expanding its Operational Stress Injury (OSI) Section to better support Branch-led outreach programs that prioritize:

- Peer connection
- Informal, safe spaces
- Shared experience and mutual support

As OSI National Section Provincial Representative, Joel Langley will assist Branches with:

- Starting new OSI-focused programs
- Sustaining existing initiatives
- Accessing national resources and guidance

This volunteer role allows for hands-on, flexible support tailored to local Branch needs. Veterans and immediate family members can join the section via Facebook, by searching "BSO Legion OSI Member's Notice Board". Legion membership is not a requirement to participation.

Operation VetBuild

Operation VetBuild is a hands-on, community-based program that supports Veterans through building scale models together.

Program Overview:

- Veterans meet at participating Legion Branches
- Build model kits (aircraft, ships, vehicles, and similar projects)
- All supplies and model kits are provided for Veterans through Poppy funds
- No skill level required
- No pressure or expectations

Why It Works:

- Encourages relaxed conversation and camaraderie
- Helps restore the sense of connection many Veterans miss after service
- Can include family members, creating shared experiences

Why It Matters:

- Hands-on, focused activity helps reduce stress
- Promotes mindfulness and a sense of accomplishment
- Creates a comfortable environment for peer support

Buddy Check Coffee

Buddy Check Coffee is a Veteran-run initiative developed through the Legion's Operational Stress Injury Special Section (BSO Legion OSI).

Program Overview:

- Informal coffee gatherings for Veterans
- No agenda or formal structure
- Veteran-led and Veteran-focused

How It Started:

- Co-founded by Veterans Chris Richardson and Joe Elliott
- Originated during Red Fridays in Prince George
- Expanded nationally through BSO Legion OSI

Why It Matters:

- Reduces isolation
- Encourages open conversation among peers
- Provides meaningful support in a low-pressure setting

Interested in Starting an OSI Program at Your Branch?

Branches interested in launching or supporting Operation VetBuild, Buddy Check Coffee, or other OSI-focused initiatives are encouraged to get in touch.

To get started Branches may contact Command at veterans@mbnwo.legion.ca for more information.

Support is available to help Branches:

- Explore program options
- Access resources and guidance
- Establish sustainable Veteran-focused outreach in their communities

Together, we can continue building strong, supportive spaces for Veterans across Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario.

Thank you,

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Provincial Executive Director
The Royal Canadian Legion
Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Provincial Command