

# Board of Directors of the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families expands

*Board expanded to increase representation from across Canada as well as to include additional Veteran and Family perspectives*

OTTAWA, ONTARIO, CANADA, August 12, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Atlas Institute for

Veterans and Families is pleased to announce the expansion of its Board of Directors with the appointment of Dr. Alice Aiken, Craig Dalton, Inspector (Ret'd) Baltej Dhillon and James MacRae.

**“**  
Our Board of Directors is comprised of dedicated individuals who are committed to providing strength, stability and well-being for Canadian military and RCMP Veterans and their Families.”

*Fardous Hosseiny*

The Atlas Institute has been designed to have a small Board of Directors from a governance and oversight perspective, while ensuring input into its day-to-day operations from the lived expertise community through the use of reference groups.

Additionally, Scott McLean, founding Chair of the Board of

Directors, has announced his retirement. Cal Crocker will step into the Chair role and Joanne Bezzubetz is continuing in her role as board member. This brings the new Board of Directors of the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families to six.

“Our Board of Directors at the Atlas Institute is comprised of dedicated individuals from across Canada who are committed to providing strength, stability and well-being for Canadian military and RCMP Veterans and their Families,” Fardous Hosseiny, President and CEO said, adding that the expanded talent, expertise and energy as well as each having a direct connection to the community itself in varying capacity will help further the mission of the Atlas Institute.

“I would like to thank Scott for the instrumental role he has played in building this organization, and his commitment to the community as our inaugural Chair of the Board,” Hosseiny said, adding, “I would also like to welcome this new board as together they will provide the governance that continues to guide our work in this sector.”

The Atlas Institute’s original board was made up of three members who brought different skills and perspectives from within the mental health sector. With today’s announcement, the Board has been expanded to ensure representation from across Canada as well as additional Veteran

and Family perspective.

Professor Alice B. Aiken, CD, PhD, MSc, BScPT, BSc, ICD.D

Dr. Alice Aiken is Vice-President, Research & Innovation at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada. She is a full Professor in the Faculty of Health whose research focuses on health systems transformation and evidence-informed policy making, with a focus on military and Veteran health. Dr. Aiken is currently the interim Chair of the Governing Council of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). She is elected to the College of New Scholars of the Royal Society of Canada. She holds her ICD.D designation from the Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD).

She was formerly the Dean of the Faculty of Health at Dalhousie. She started her academic career at Queen's University where she founded and was the first Scientific Director of the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research, a unique consortium of over 48 Canadian and 13 international universities dedicated to researching the health needs of military personnel, Veterans and their families.

She received her PhD and Master from Queen's University, Canada, her Physical Therapy degree from Dalhousie University, and a BSc in Kinesiology from the University of Ottawa. She also proudly served in the Canadian Armed Forces for 14 years, first as a ship's navigator in the Royal Canadian Navy, then as a physiotherapist.

In recognition of her research leadership in military health, she is currently the Honorary Captain (Navy) for Canadian Forces Health Services Atlantic, and a Dame of the Order of St George. She has also received a Distinguished Alumni Award from Queen's University, the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, and the Chapel of the Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion (USA).

### Craig Dalton

Craig Dalton was commissioned into the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery in 1990 and over the course of a 25-year Army career, had the distinct pleasure of serving alongside Canadian soldiers, sailors, airmen and airwomen, as well as whole-of-government partners, both here at home in Canada, and abroad on operations, in Cyprus, Bosnia-Herzegovina and, most recently, Afghanistan. During his time in uniform, Craig served in a wide variety of staff appointments and had the privilege to lead teams from the troop to formation level including command of the 2nd Regiment Royal Canadian Horse Artillery and command of 5th Canadian Division Support Group/Canadian Forces Base Gagetown.

Since his release in 2014, Craig has had the opportunity to serve at all three levels of government initially joining the Government of New Brunswick where he had privilege of serving as the Deputy Minister of Public Safety and subsequently as the Deputy Minister of Social Services. Craig then joined the Government of Prince Edward Island where he served as Deputy Minister of Family and Human Services before appointed as Canada's Veterans Ombudsman. More

recently, Craig has worked at the local government level as the City Manager with the City of Lethbridge and in his current position as the Chief Administrative Officer with the Squamish — Lillooet Regional District.

Craig holds a Bachelor's Degree from the Royal Military College of Canada and holds Masters Degrees from Central Michigan University (Strategic Leadership), the United States Army Command and General Staff College (Strategy), and from Deakin University, Australia (Policy).

Inspector (Ret'd) Baltej Dhillon, Hon. LLD., C.Dir.

Raised in Malaysia, Baltej and his family moved to British Columbia in 1983 after which they settled in Surrey. He studied criminology, and though initially interested in practising law, he volunteered with the RCMP and acted as an interpreter so that the RCMP could communicate with recent Asian immigrants.

In 1988, Baltej decided to formally apply to join the RCMP. Though he met all the entrance requirements, he encountered one significant problem: the dress code forbade beards and wearing a turban in place of the uniform hat. In 1989, Baltej appealed to the RCMP Commissioner, who recommended new RCMP uniform regulations that would include an RCMP turban and the ability for members of the Sikh community to maintain their unshorn hair. After months of debate, the federal government announced new changes to the RCMP dress code in March of 1990 — including the freedom for observant Sikhs to wear beards and turbans. As a result, Baltej was able to join the RCMP, train in Regina and then graduate to active duty in 1991.

Inspector Dhillon's career with the RCMP started off in Quesnel, BC where he started off as Constable serving the community. He then went to serve in other units including the Air India Task Force, Pickton serial killer investigation, Polygraph Unit, established the first Provincial Intelligence Centre in BC, served as the Non Commissioned Officer in charge of Intelligence Section, RCMP — Federal Serious Organized Crime and retired in 2019 after serving as the Officer in Charge, RCMP — Operational Readiness and Response & Protective Technical Services Section.

Inspector Dhillon has been awarded two honorary degrees of the Doctor of Laws by Kwantlen Polytech University in May 2014 and McMaster University in 2021, as well as the Distinguished Alumni Award from Kwantlen Polytechnic University. Inspector Dhillon is also the recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and earned a Commanding Officer's Commendation for Excellence in Policing for his work on the Pickton serial killer investigation

He is a Director with WorkSafeBC, Dan's Legacy, Coast Mental Health BC, and Chair of the Canada India Education Society and continues to serve in law enforcement as a member of the Organised Crime Agency of BC in the role of Program Manager — Crime Guns Intelligence and Investigations Group for the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit in BC.

## James MacRae

James MacRae is the President and CEO of verTerra Corp., an Ottawa based real estate development and infrastructure management company. Incorporated in 2009 by James and his late partner Judy Klenik, verTerra Corp. provides management and advisory services to public and private sector clients in the investment and delivery of real estate and infrastructure assets, specializing in Public Private Partnerships. Since incorporation, verTerra has successfully managed over \$1 billion of capital real estate projects in Canada and the United States.

Prior to establishing verTerra, James held Senior Management positions with national and international design and construction companies. James is an Architectural Technologist, Project Management Professional, LEED Accredited Professional and a Certified Risk Management Analyst.

James is a passionate and dedicated advocate for advancing mental health care in Canada. James's father, two of his uncles and both grandfathers were war veterans and James's sister suffered from mental illness from her childhood to her passing in 2018. James respects and understands the impact of mental illness on the people affected their families and the systemic challenges faced by mental health care organizations. James has served as an Independent Board Trustee of the Royal Ottawa Hospital Group (ROHGC) since 2018 and served on the Board of the Royal Ottawa Volunteers Association from 2009 to 2018, including a term as Board Chair.

**ABOUT THE ATLAS INSTITUTE:** The Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families was originally established as the Centre of Excellence on PTSD through the Minister of Veterans Affairs 12 November 2015 mandate letter with funding and budget announced in the March 2017 federal budget.

Fardous Hosseiny

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