

RESERVES 2000

Prudent Defence

COMMUNIQUÉ

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SENATE REPORT ON RESERVES

In December the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence issued its report, *Answering the Call*, based on hearings held by the Committee on Canada's reserves. Reserves 2000 was the first witness called on 4 October 2010 and Reserves 2000 Quebec testified in November 2010.

The report is very supportive of our position and if the recommendations are acted upon Canada will be well served. The first two recommendations, to increase the size of the reserves and to protect reserve pay, have been the top priority of Reserves 2000 for some time. Recommendations are summarized in the attached Senate Press Release and the entire report may be accessed on the web at <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/411/secd/rep/rep04dec11-e.pdf>. Senator Wallin asked for Reserves 2000 comments and our reply, dated 11 January 2012, is also attached.

Answering the Call has been very useful in highlighting critical Militia problems and providing Canadians and defence planners with clear recommendations on the way forward. Coming, as it does, from an all-party committee of such distinguished Canadians, it will be difficult to ignore the findings. Reserves 2000 thanks all Senators and staff involved for their efforts.

COMMANDER CANADIAN ARMY TESTIMONY TO THE STANDING SENATE COMMITTEE

On February 27th, 2012, the Commander Canadian Army (former title, Chief of the Land Staff), Lieutenant-General Devlin, appeared before the Senate Standing Committee on Defence and National Security. Several items of his testimony are of interest to Militia supporters. In his opening remarks he claimed the regular and reserve forces to be "more integrated than we have ever been". When asked by Senator Lang about "reorganization of the armed forces.....as far as reservists versus those in the regular force" he responded by talking about how quickly reservists responded to a particular domestic emergency and then said "There is no threat to that reserve structure. Those numbers of units and those soldiers are funded at 37.5 days per year, plus 7 days collective training, plus augmentation to regular force exercise, plus their individual training".

In keeping with the concerns Senators showed in *Answering the Call* regarding stable funding for reserve pay, Senator Lang also went on to ask "The concern I have, and I think other members will have as well, is that if an envelope is not set aside from the point of view of at least the financing for the reserves, it will be very easy one day to move in and remove a substantial amount of money that should have gone to the reserves, if at that time you are looking for, shall we call them, cuts." The Commander's response was "Sir, I can assure you that the reserves army structure that exists across the country is one, from our point of view, that is a fixed cost. Those

salaries and that training envelope, which come out of our budget, we see as a fixed cost.”

Senator Day tried to get a more definitive answer by referring to previous cuts to reserve budgets in the course of a fiscal year “I heard you say in your watch that will not happen, but I need you to acknowledge that that was a problem in the past.” Lieutenant-General Devlin answered Senator Day by saying “I am happy to assure you that all you are concerned about is in hand” and made further reference to Militia training costs being viewed as a “fixed cost”.

While the Army Commander’s responses are not exactly clear cut, he does at least seem to be trying to reassure Senators he is not planning to change the structure of the Militia in the immediate future and that he understands the pay issue.

The full text of Lieutenant-General Devlin’s testimony can be accessed on the web at http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/411/secd/49351-e.htm?Language=E&Parl=41&Ses=1&comm_id=76

UK TERRITORIAL ARMY EXPANSION PROCEEDING

In the last issue of Communiqué the planned expansion of UK reserve forces, as recommended by an Independent Commission, was reported. This reserve force expansion is part of a massive restructuring of all UK forces which will see full-time service personnel and civilians diminish in numbers while part-time strength will climb.

The independent commission recommended the Territorial Army should increase to 30,000 by 2015 but a recently issued order now calls for 22,500 by 2015 and 30,000 by 2018. Still, this is a very significant programme and as the order states “success is dependent on the Army getting behind it to embrace the FR20 vision”, FR20 being the name for the major recommendations of the commission.

Compared to Canada, the UK reserve expansion is in a whole other league. The current Canadian plan, according to the Canada First Defence Strategy which was announced in 2008, calls for an increase in Canadian Forces reserve strength of 4,000 personnel to 30,000 total, to be achieved by the year 2028. According to the Leslie report, NDHQ recently grew by much more than 4,000 in much less time!

PROTECTION OF MILITIA PAY

There is still no DND policy on this long standing irritation for Militia soldiers. When the problem last arose in 2009 (just the latest of many episodes over the years of abuse of the Militia budget as year-end neared), the Minister ordered the Chief of the Defence Staff to create a policy to prevent future abuse. The Vice Chief of the Defence Staff was tasked to create such a policy but incredibly, despite the vast staff at his disposal, nothing has been finalized. For the previous two years the Vice Chief briefed the Conference of Defence Associations on his progress, or lack thereof, but this year he did not appear or send a substitute.

It appears from the Commander Canadian Army’s testimony before the Standing Senate Committee he is aware of the problem and therefore declared the Militia budget to be a “fixed cost”. Hopefully that means it cannot be used for other purposes. It is unknown if his Area Commanders (where the trouble started in 2009) have the same understanding. Thankfully, as evidenced in the recommendations of the Standing Committee, Senators understand the issue and will continue to press defence planners for a better solution than declaring Militia spending to be a “fixed cost”.

RESERVE PENSIONS

The Spring 2011 report of the Auditor General of Canada gave a less than warm endorsement of how the Reserve Force Pension Plan was introduced by the Department of National Defence. Problems noted were lack of adequate planning, risks identified but not dealt with, poor communication, ill preparedness for the roll out, and procedures and systems not sufficient to deliver the services promised. All of which has resulted in a serious backlog of pension buybacks.

On 14 December the House Standing Committee on Public Accounts called the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff and the Deputy Minister to testify about the Auditor General's report. Chaired by Mr David Christopherson (NDP, Hamilton Centre), the Committee thoroughly grilled the defence officials and the Chair concluded by expressing his disappointment in the findings of the Auditor General while urging the Department to do better.

The Auditor General's report can be found at http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_201104_03_e_35222.html.

A transcript of the House Standing Committee on Public Accounts proceedings is at <http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=1&DocId=5334399&File=0>

EDITORIAL

The testimony of the Commander Canadian Army is a welcome change from sentiments expressed just three years ago by the Director General Land Reserves. In March 2009 Brigadier-General Gary O'Brien was quoted by CBC Radio in an article titled "Army looking to overhaul reserves through amalgamation" as saying "We are going to mess with the basic structure of the army reserve". While he later recanted, claiming he was misquoted by the CBC, amalgamations were a central part of the picture given to the CBC at the time as anyone who heard the programme can attest.

So what has changed in three years?

Outstanding performance in Afghanistan has shown the value of reservists in the augmentation role. As well, many gaps in the regular establishment in Canada, caused by the pace of that operation, were successfully filled by Class B callouts which reached a historic high in 2011. These winning close associations have bolstered the perception of reservists in the eyes of regulars and, as the Commander noted, drawn the two components closer together.

But the Afghanistan experience has not been influenced by the structure of the Militia, so it cannot be assumed the Commander's assertion that there is no threat to reserve structure comes from reserve participation in that conflict. Rather, the interest shown by Parliamentarians for the welfare of reservists and their units is a more likely explanation for the official change of heart.

One needs to look no further than the report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence or minutes of the House Standing Committee on Public Accounts to understand the depth and focus of parliamentary concern. That interest translated into a statement buried in an appendix of the Leslie report that read: "Previous initiatives to reduce Class A Res F units have resulted in significant political pressure being brought to bare (sic) to thwart its implementation." The author of that line thinks better than he spells.

We must now watch for the impact of the coming federal budget and hope the Commander will continue to see his commitment to 37.5 days of local training plus one week of collective training as a "fixed cost". And that the Government continues to follow the expansion plan laid out in the Canada First Defence Strategy, anemic as that plan is. We will, of course, continue to press for a 45,000 strong Militia.

Much of the credit for focusing Parliamentarians on our problems and bringing them to the point of view that the basic structure of the Militia must not be altered goes to you, the supporters of Reserves 2000. Thank you for all your efforts. Let us continue to be vigilant in the future and act decisively again if required.

Reserves 2000 is a coalition of Canadians concerned with the security and defence of our country, now and in the future. Among its constituents, **Reserves 2000** includes Honorary Appointments from Reserve and Militia units across Canada, along with responsible citizens from all walks of life.

The purpose of **Reserves 2000** is to ensure the perpetuation and contribution of Canada's Reserves and Militia as a viable and important component of Canada's Forces in the context of present and future challenges.



NEWS RELEASE

Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence

Senate Committee Urges Protections for the Primary Reserve

Ottawa, December 15, 2011 - The Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence today tabled the committee's report, *Answering the Call - The Future Role of Canada's Primary Reserve*.

That future is currently under review as part of the Canadian Forces transformation process, so the timing of this report is crucial.

The report states that Canada's "citizen soldiers"—the Primary Reserve—have become indispensable to the operations of the Canadian Forces, on missions abroad and here at home.

Reservists, who mostly serve part-time while holding down jobs or studying, at times comprised more than 20% of Canadian troops deployed during the combat mission in Afghanistan, and have been an important part of other missions at home and abroad over the last two decades.

Senator Pamela Wallin, Chair of the Senate committee, noted that, "On my many trips to Afghanistan and to military bases here in Canada and abroad, I have found in the ranks of the Reserves the ultimate example of citizenship and sense of duty. They stand and serve alongside their full-time Regular Force counterparts. We are respectful of and grateful for these citizen soldiers."

The committee recommends that steps be taken to ensure the viability and effectiveness of the Primary Reserve for the future, including:

- increasing the size and strength of the Primary Reserve and enhancing the number of Reserve training days
- making Reserve pay stable, predictable, non-discretionary, with its own funding line
- identifying the operational tasks and measurable readiness benchmarks required for the Reserve, both for deployment abroad and at home
- keeping a small number of Reservists at the same training level as the Regular Force, for faster deployment, and employing some Reservists in new specialities such as cyber defence

- continuing its efforts to inform reservists who are veterans of the health benefits and services available to them
- reassessing the roles of the Reserve to clarify the part they play as the military's link to Canadian communities.

Senator Roméo Dallaire, Deputy Chair of the committee, said, "Reservists have been deployed in every mission since the Gulf War of 1991. They have fought and bled, and some have died. They have proven themselves to be worthy, courageous, and equal to the task. They remain essential to the Canadian Forces and deserve exactly the same care."

Witnesses told the committee that without participation by Reservists, the combat mission in Afghanistan would not have been possible. They contributed capabilities that automatically put them at the centre of operations where they provided depth, breadth and expertise.

Reservists continue serving abroad. They stepped up during the crisis in Haiti and for the mission to Libya. And they serve at home through storms and floods and provide security, as they did for international summits and during the Olympics. The Reserve's citizen soldiers are indispensable, indeed crucial, to our military operations at home and abroad.

The Primary Reserve numbers just under 27,000, most in the Army Reserve, but with more than 5,700 Naval and Air Reservists and an additional 2,500 in the Health Services Reserve, the Canadian Special Operations Forces Command Reserve and the Judge Advocate General Reserve.

For more information please call:

Senator Pamela D. Wallin,
Chair, Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence
613-997-4097

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Deputy-Chair
Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence
613-995-4191

RESERVES 2000

Prudent Defence

11 January 2012

The Honourable Pamela D. Wallin, OC, SOM
Chair, The Standing Senate Committee on National Defence and Security
The Senate of Canada
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A4

Dear *Senator!*

Thank you for your letter of December 15th inviting comments on the latest Standing Senate Committee on National Defence and Security report, *Answering the Call*. On behalf of all members of Reserves 2000 I would like to thank you and your Committee for devoting so much of your valuable time to Canada's reserve forces. It is a subject worthy of attention.

The report raises many issues that have been of concern to reserve supporters for some time. If the majority of your Committee's recommendations are acted upon, Canada and Canadian citizen soldiers will be well served.

Reserves 2000 has raised most of these issues in the past. Our highest priority is to increase the part-time strength of the Militia and we are pleased to see that is also your first recommendation. Our only comment is that the Canada First Defence Strategy target is far too timid in both total strength to be attained and how long that should take. Reserves 2000 is of the opinion the part-time Militia should total at least 45,000 and that this goal should be reached in five years.

Our second priority is that Militia pay must be, just as you recommend, *stable, predictable, non-discretionary and with its own funding line*. Minister MacKay became aware of the problems that arise when funding is arbitrarily slashed, such as occurred in late 2009, and early in 2010 he directed his officials to produce a policy to prevent it happening again. To date that policy has not been forthcoming despite several reminders to Minister MacKay and to the Chief of the Defence Staff from Reserves 2000 and the Conference of Defence Associations. This kind of foot-dragging within the Department of National Defence is a pattern well documented in the enclosed paper titled *The Role of the Militia in Today's Canadian Forces*, by the eminent Canadian military historian Dr. Jack English. If you have not yet had the opportunity to read this excellent study I commend it to you to help to understand the source of so much frustration to Canadians who believe in the value of the Militia and reserve service.

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Reserves 2000 disagrees with your fourth recommendation. Dr English also has a different viewpoint about the role of mobilization for the Militia than that expressed by the Honourable David Pratt and Dr English's position is shared by Reserves 2000. It is our strong contention that Canada's reserve forces, in particular the Militia, must be more than a manning depot for Canada's tiny full-time forces. Certainly the Militia must be capable of augmenting the regular force, but it would be sheer folly to assume that a fully manned regular force, with its field army establishment of about 12,000 positions, will be sufficient to deal with a significant domestic or overseas emergency. Canada simply must have a plan for major military expansion, be that called mobilization or some other name. This fundamental debate about the role of the Militia has sputtered off and on ever since the aborted attempt by defence planners to slash the Militia in the mid 1990s, despite the fact that the Government of the day enshrined mobilization as the Militia's first role in its Land Force Reserve Restructure direction to the Department.

Other than the differences noted above, Reserves 2000 strongly supports your findings and will work to see them implemented.

Moving forward, expansion of the Militia represents an opportunity to do more with scarce defence dollars, an opportunity that should be of interest in these times of fiscal restraint. It is a subject well worth study and perhaps could form a future theme for your Committee. I note the Senate resumes sitting on the 31st of January and I would be pleased to come to Ottawa to discuss the issues further with you, should you desire.

In closing, thank you for the opportunity to appear in front of your Committee and thank you again for all your efforts on behalf of Canada's reserve forces.

Sincerely,


John Selkirk, Lieutenant-Colonel (retired)
Executive Director