

# Breaking down the barriers

By Gloria Kelly

**The CF** is in the midst of a major employment systems review (ESR) mandated by the *Employment Equity Act*, and wants to hear from members across the country about issues and concerns that impact on their employment opportunities within the CF.

The goal of the CF ESR is to determine if systemic barriers exist that may prevent the full and equitable employment of CF members. "The CF is committed to providing a welcoming, fair and supportive work environment to all members. The ability to make sure there are no barriers to employment opportunities is an important part of looking after our people," says Lieutenant-Colonel Josée-Ann Paradis, the CF Employment Equity (EE) officer. "That means we must make sure the employment systems, policies and practices currently in place are not unduly creating barriers for anyone in the CF, but especially those in the four designated EE groups—women, Aboriginal peoples, members of visible minorities and persons with disabilities."

While the review is mandated under the *Employment Equity Act*, LCol Paradis and her team believe performing a regular review of the organization's processes is also a sound human resources management practice. A review team is in the process of touring units across the country to talk with members of the designated groups, rank and file members, as well as senior leaders. The team's mandate includes a review of all employment policies and practices, including recruitment and release, training and development, and career management and promotions.

While the review is designed to specifically target the employment of designated group members, LCol Paradis says that, "Having a look-see at all employment practices across the board to determine if there are any barriers such as unfair selection criteria or artificial glass ceilings, will benefit everyone in the long run. While the law sets out a minimum, we are going across the country to hear everyone's point of view. The white male can't be forgotten in all this."

Participation in local focus group discussions and interviews will be totally voluntary—an opportunity to be heard in a neutral setting—and confidentiality will be afforded to all participants. The information gathered will be used to determine where policy changes are required to ensure the fair treatment of all persons based on merit and capability.

"This is an important undertaking for us," said Major Pat Hurley, CF Employment Equity Regulations officer. "We will be looking for a wide range of information, both positive and negative; suggestions on where improvements can be made; what is working and what is not. We need people to share their experiences with us."

To assist the CF in this major undertaking AJILON Consulting Inc. has been contracted to conduct the review, along with the CF's EE staff. The support of everyone in the chain of command, as well as that of Defence Advisory Groups, has also been enlisted. It is anticipated a final report of the review will be ready by late fall 2004.

To take full advantage of the ethnic and cultural diversity of Canada's population, the CF seeks to be an inclusive work force, representative of Canadian society. "A lot of work has already been done in terms of where the CF is in its goal to attract members of the four designated EE groups," said Nikki Holden, a defence scientist with the Directorate Military Gender Integration and Employment Equity.

"We know we are making progress in terms of the representation of women in the CF, but the numbers are of concern in the other three groups." Diversity remains a source of strength and creativity, and it plays a pivotal role in making the CF a modern, forward-looking organization.

The CF ESR team will be visiting bases/wings/units between now and the end of April 2004. A list of sites and dates is included in the adjacent visit schedule; you can also contract your local EE officer for more information about this project.



MCPL/CPLC BRIAN WALSH

*In the upcoming employment systems review the team will make sure the white male who makes up a large percentage of today's CF is not forgotten. The troops above are shown arriving in Afghanistan for a six-month deployment.*

*Au cours du prochain examen sur les systèmes d'emploi des FC, l'équipe s'assurera que les hommes de race blanche, dont le pourcentage actuel au sein des FC est le plus élevé, ne sont pas oubliés. Les soldats sur la photo arrivent en Afghanistan pour un déploiement de six mois.*



SGT STEPHEN ROY

*Aboriginal people make up a small portion of the CF and the employment equity team would like to see the numbers increase. MS Earl Charters is shown above.*

*Une petite portion des FC se compose d'Autochtones; l'équipe d'équité en matière d'emploi aimerait bien que leur nombre augmente. On aperçoit sur la photo le Matc Earl Charters.*



SGT FRANK HUDEC

*OS Rosemary Feltmate, a quarterdeck communicator aboard HMCS IROQUOIS, maintains communication with the bridge during a rigid hull inflatable boat launch in the Gulf of Oman.*

*Le Mat 3 Rosemary Feltmate, spécialiste des communications de la plage arrière à bord du NCSM IROQUOIS, assure la communication avec la passerelle lors de la mise à l'eau d'une embarcation pneumatique à coque rigide dans le golfe d'Oman.*

## THE CF ESR VISIT SCHEDULE

LOCATION	DATE
Toronto	February 18-19
Shilo	February 24-25
Winnipeg	February 26-27
Edmonton	March 3-4
Kingston	March 9-10
Trenton	March 11-12
Valcartier	March 23-24
Québec City	March 25-26 (TBC)
Esquimalt	Week of March 22 or 29 (TBC)
Bagotville	March 30-31
Halifax	April 5-6 (TBC)
Greenwood	April 7-8
Gagetown	April 14-15
Petawawa	Week of April 19-20 (TBC)

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*LCol Josée-Ann Paradis*