

**Military Police Complaints
Commission**



**Commission d'examen des plaintes
concernant la police militaire**

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MILITARY POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION TAKES EFFECT

OTTAWA, December 1, 1999 – The Military Police Complaints Commission officially comes into effect today. This announcement was made by Mrs. Louise Cobetto, LL.L., chair of the Military Police Complaints Commission. Attending Mrs. Cobetto at the launch were part-time commission members Paul E. Duffie, Q.C., and Thomas G. Flanagan, S.C.

The Military Police Complaints Commission was created through amendments made to the National Defence Act in Bill C-25, assented to on December 10, 1998. Mrs. Cobetto was appointed as chair-designate on July 7, 1999. Appointed at the same time were Mr. Flanagan and Mr. Duffie.

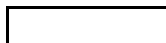
The Commission members have been working since September 1, 1999 on the preparatory work leading up to the establishment of the Commission today. Said Mrs. Cobetto, "It has been an interesting and challenging process to date and, I look forward to contributing over the coming years to an improved military justice system in Canada."

The creation of the Military Police Complaints Commission stems from the results and recommendations of various reports, including the MND (Minister of National Defence) Report to the Prime Minister, the Dickson I and II reports and the report of the Somalia Commission of Inquiry.

The Report of the Special Advisory Group on Military Justice and Military Police Investigation Services, chaired by the late Rt. Hon. Brian Dickson (Dickson I) made recommendations that would ensure the independence of Military Police investigations from the chain of command. Stated one recommendation, "An independent review capability is ... essential to ensure confidence and respect for the military justice system."

With the Military Police Complaints Commission now established, any citizen, including DND and Canadian Forces personnel, may make a complaint to the Commission about the conduct of a member of the Military Police in the performance of any of their policing duties or functions. Further, any member of the Military Police may make a complaint with respect to the chain of command if he/she believes an investigation by the

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Military Police has been subjected to interference. The Commission also has the power to conduct public hearings.

The independence of the Commission is central to its success. Said Mrs. Cobetto, "The Late Rt. Hon. Brian Dickson was accurate in his assessment that an independent review process was essential to ensuring confidence and respect for the Military Police." to this end, the Military Police Complaints Commission will be external and independent of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces.

The Commission will provide within three months after the end of each year a report to the Minister which highlights the Commission's activities during that year and includes any recommendations the Commission may wish to make. The Minister will table the report before both Houses of Parliament on any of the first fifteen days on which that House is sitting after the Minister receives it. The Commission will derive its spending authority through its own vote within National Defence spending estimates.

Stated Mrs. Cobetto, "Bill C-25 of the *National Defence Act*" ensures the Commission's independence from both the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces."

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For information contact the Commission at:
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