

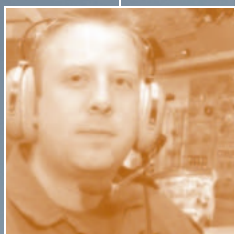
Special Report

to the Minister of
National Defence

June 2006

THE CANADIAN FACE BEHIND THE **RECRUITING** TARGETS

A Review of the Canadian Forces Recruiting
System: From Attraction to Enrolment



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National Defence
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Défense nationale
et Forces canadiennes

Canada 

***The Canadian Face Behind
the Recruiting Targets***

**A Review of the Canadian Forces
Recruiting System: From Attraction to
Enrolment**

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Executive Summary

1 ***Background***

2 In September 2004, the former Minister of National Defence announced that
the government intended to increase the size of the Canadian Forces by 5,000
new Regular Force members and 3,000 Reservists over a five-year period.

3 Given the priority placed on recruiting by the government and the intense
competition that existed, and continues to exist today, for the services of
skilled Canadians, the Office of the Ombudsman proceeded with an
examination of the 573 complaints that had been received by the office on the
issue of recruiting. Following this examination, in the fall of 2004, the former
Ombudsman determined that a more thorough review of the Canadian Forces
recruiting process was warranted.

4 As part of the review, investigators assessed the ability of the Canadian Forces
to meet their recruiting targets; however, this was not an area of major focus.
Although there are specific military occupations that remain below their target
strength, the overall numbers indicate that the Canadian Forces Recruiting
Group is meeting (or coming very close to meeting) the Canadian Forces’
yearly recruiting objectives.

5 More significantly, the review focused on the way in which applicants were
treated from the time of their first contact with the Canadian Forces to the point
when they were either enrolled or found to be unsuitable for military service.
This review of the recruiting system also included areas where a perceived lack
of effectiveness or efficiency on the part of the Canadian Forces had a negative
impact on applicants.

6 For the overwhelming majority of new applicants, the initial recruiting phase is
their first experience with the Canadian Forces. If this experience is
unsatisfactory for any reason, there is a strong possibility that an applicant will
discontinue the process. This could – and does – result in the loss to the
Canadian Forces of some of the most skilled and talented Canadians. At the
same time, applicants that have had an unsatisfactory experience with the
recruiting process are likely to discuss this with their friends, families and
colleagues – all potential recruits possibly lost to Canada’s military. And,
more broadly, this experience will very likely shape the way in which the
discouraged applicant – and many others – views the Canadian Forces and the
Government of Canada as a whole.

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7 In other words, meeting the established recruiting targets cannot and must not be the only benchmark for the Canadian Forces. To be effective and successful, and to attract the best and the brightest in Canadian society, the military recruiting process must be viewed and managed as a client-driven service. This review focused on evaluating the recruiting services provided to Canadians.

8 As part of the overall review, the office selected 301 complaints that were received between 2003 and 2005 for in-depth study. These complaints revealed a number of potential systemic issues within the Canadian Forces recruiting and selection process, including:

- 9 • a lack of responsiveness on the part of some recruiters in their dealings with applicants;
- 10 • excessive delays in the recruiting process, particularly with the medical assessment and security portions of the process;
- 11 • difficulties with the transfer procedure between the Reserve and Regular Force and *vice versa*; and
- 12 • inconsistencies in the application of recruiting incentives or bonuses being offered to potential recruits for specific military occupations.

13 In addition to these specific issues, a number of other areas of concern emerged during the course of the review and are documented elsewhere in this report.

14 In recent months, a number of events and activities have taken place that have had a significant impact on this review and, more specifically, on the findings and recommendations made by this office. In some cases, areas of concern identified in earlier stages of this review have been addressed by the Canadian Forces and, therefore, are not included here or are only included in passing.

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- 15 For example, in January 2006, the Canadian Forces implemented *Operation Connection*, which assigns specific responsibilities to various organizations within the Canadian Forces to support the current recruiting initiative. Among other things, it recognizes that all Canadian Forces organizations must be part of, and support, a successful recruiting drive. It also makes clear that recruiting is vital to the Canadian Forces and that recruiters must be recognized for their work. In announcing *Operation Connection*, the military released a Canadian Forces General Message (CANFORGEN) stating that “the Chief of the Defence Staff places tremendous importance on recruiting and strongly supports the emphasis being placed on selecting the best people to be recruiters and to reward them for this valuable service.” I believe that many of the measures announced in *Operation Connection*, if rigorously implemented, will contribute to addressing some of the major concerns identified by Ombudsman investigators.
- 16 On February 23, 2006, the Honourable Gordon O’Connor, Minister of National Defence, announced that “increasing the strength of the Canadian Forces to at least 75,000 Regular Force [from approximately 60,000] is a clear priority.” He added that the government also intends “to increase the Reserve Force by 10,000.” In order to meet this commitment, the Minister stated that the Department and the Canadian Forces would be expanding the existing recruitment and training system.
- 17 Finally, on May 16, 2006, the Office of the Auditor General released a report on the issues of recruiting and retention in the Canadian Forces. Among other things, the report highlighted shortfalls in specific (generally technical) military occupations; the growing competition to attract the best candidates; delays related to the medical and security phases of the selection process; issues related to advertising and attraction; challenges related to retention; and broader issues related to strategic human resources planning in the military.
- 18 The Office of the Auditor General and the Office of the Ombudsman have identified a number of common concerns related to the military’s recruiting process. However, this review is focused more specifically on the way in which applicants are treated by the military when they attempt to join the Canadian Forces. It is focused on the *Canadian face behind the recruiting targets*.

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19 *Summary of Findings*

20 Overall, I found that the Canadian Forces recruiting system is working, and that the military is, for the most part, meeting its recruiting targets. I am also encouraged by the emphasis currently being placed on recruiting by Canada's Chief of the Defence Staff. Indeed, I hope that recent initiatives implemented as part of *Operation Connection* will be adopted as the standard for the Canadian Forces' approach to recruiting in the future.

21 However, our review has also found that there is significant room for improvement related to recruiting. I am concerned by the number of individuals that my office has come across as part of this review who have quit the process – or were very close to quitting the process – as a result of an unsatisfactory experience during one of the recruiting phases. Of course, I am also concerned by a number of specific issues raised by more than 300 complainants.

22 In order to ensure that it does not routinely lose talented Canadians interested in a military career, the Canadian Forces must address a number of problems in the current recruiting system. This becomes even more imperative given the government's commitment to increase the size of the Regular Force to 75,000 members and to augment the Reserve Force by 10,000 personnel.

23 The area most in need of improvement is the level and quality of service that is provided by recruiters to applicants. The recruiting system must become more responsive to the people who are seeking information about a career in the military. Maintaining regular contact with applicants must not only become a priority for recruiting staff, it must become the norm. In short, Recruiting Centres must become 'client focused' organizations. To do this, the recruiting system must aggressively develop, implement, communicate and monitor client service standards. If the quality of service provided to applicants is not improved, the Canadian Forces will continue to fail to attract the services of some of the most skilled Canadians.

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- 24 This review also found significant discrepancies between the level of responsibility that has been assigned to the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group for recruiting and the authority that it actually has over the various aspects of the overall recruiting process. It is difficult to hold the Commander of the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group accountable for ensuring an effective recruiting system when the Commander has little or no control over a number of organizations that are instrumental to the system's success. Accordingly, I encourage the Canadian Forces to examine the lines of command and control associated with the recruiting process and, wherever possible, assign greater control to the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group – the organization that is ultimately responsible for the overall process. Apart from this, it is critical that the lines of responsibility and authority for the military recruiting process be identified and/or clarified and communicated to all implicated organizations. Moreover, performance measurement procedures must be developed and implemented in order to monitor progress in a variety of areas, including communications between the various organizations involved in the recruiting process.
- 25 At the individual level, the review found that some Canadian Forces Recruiting Group personnel did not adequately understand the policies that guide various aspects of the recruiting process. I believe that a misinterpretation of existing policies and a lack of operational direction in certain areas have led to the loss of quality applicants and made it more difficult for the military to meet its annual recruitment objectives. To address this, the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group must develop simpler policies and ensure that their personnel have a thorough understanding of all issues related to the recruiting process, particularly recruit allowances and the security screening process. This would help to ensure that applicants are provided with accurate and timely information.
- 26 In terms of the security screening process, I am aware that Treasury Board Secretariat is currently reviewing the Government of Canada Security Policy. The Chief of the Defence Staff, through *Op Connection*, has asked the Vice Chief of Defence Staff to formalize policy and procedural changes within the organization with the aim of increasing demographic targets by reducing delays in reliability checks for those applicants. This is a welcome change and it has the potential to reduce lengthy delays, as well as the frustration that some applicants face while waiting for their security checks to be completed. That said, it is clear that Recruiting Centre staff must be better informed of existing policies and procedures related to the security screening process so that they can minimize delays and better communicate the reasons for those delays to applicants.

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- 27 Another area of frustration for applicants has been confusion and clear inequities related to recruit allowances. This program is designed to attract and enrol individuals with specific skills into Canadian Forces trades and occupations that are experiencing a shortfall that cannot be corrected through the normal recruiting process. While laudable and useful, this program has not always been clearly communicated to applicants. Moreover, if an applicant's process spans two fiscal years (e.g., the applicant starts the process in December 2005 but is not formally enrolled into the Canadian Forces until May 2006), the allowance provided to the applicant may change considerably. In essence, applicants may get a smaller allowance than the one that enticed them to join the Canadian Forces. To correct this, I recommend that the current policy of awarding an allowance based on the date when an applicant is enrolled be changed to reflect the date when the application is initially received by the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group. In addition, all offers of a recruit allowance should be provided to potential recruits in writing, and in very easily understood terms.
- 28 A significant number of complainants that contacted the office as part of the review also raised concerns about lengthy delays associated with the medical review process, as well as excessive delays in the transfer process from the Reserves to the Regular Force. Both of these areas of concern were addressed by the Canadian Forces during the course of this review through the implementation of new policies and procedures. I will be monitoring very closely the effectiveness of the actions that have been taken.
- 29 Finally, this review identified an urgent need for the development and implementation of a National Reserve Recruiting Policy. Although there are some very good Reserve recruiting practices in place, a number of areas need attention, including significant inconsistencies and variations amongst the three environments and across the country. The *ad hoc* system currently in place is neither efficient nor is it adequate to meet the needs of the Canadian Forces. Given the current operational demands on Canada's military, it is absolutely crucial to have a Reserve Force that can shoulder more of the burden. To do that, thousands of Reserves must be recruited. This will require a national policy and a common standard.
- 30 In order to meet the government's commitment to increase dramatically the size of the Canadian Forces, the recruiting system will be tested as it has not been in decades. But even more importantly, in order to successfully compete for the services of skilled and talented Canadians, and to ensure that the best and the brightest are not lost due to unnecessary delays or poor communications, the Canadian Forces recruiting system must be improved. I believe that the recommendations in this report will make a real difference in this regard.

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- 31 I would like to acknowledge the excellent cooperation of personnel from the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group and from Canadian Forces Recruiting Centres. Their willing and generous participation allowed us to better understand the process and to formulate what I believe are valid recommendations.

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Introduction

32 ***Background***

33 In September 2004, the former Minister of National Defence announced that the government intended to increase the size of the Canadian Forces by 5,000 new Regular Force members and 3,000 Reservists over a five-year period. This commitment was formalized with the release of the Defence Policy Statement, *A Role of Pride and Influence in the World: Defence*, in April 2005.

34 Given the priority placed on recruiting by the former government and the intense competition that existed, and still exists today, for the services of skilled Canadians, the former Ombudsman directed the Special Ombudsman's Response Team to examine the 573 complaints that had been received by the office to that point on the issue of recruiting. Following this examination, in the fall of 2004, the Ombudsman determined that a more thorough review of the Canadian Forces recruiting process was warranted.

35 As part of this review, investigators assessed the ability of the Canadian Forces to meet their recruiting targets; however, this was not an area of major focus.

36 Over the past three years, more than 25,000 applicants have been processed by the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group annually. Out of this number, approximately 5,000 new Regular Force members and 3,000 Reservists have been enrolled each year. Although there are specific military occupations that remain below their target strength, the overall numbers indicate that the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group is meeting (or coming very close to meeting) the Canadian Forces' yearly recruiting objectives.¹ Indeed, the Canadian Forces fully met its recruiting targets in 2005-2006.

37 The real focus of the review was on determining the way in which applicants were treated from the time of their first contact with the Canadian Forces to the point when they were either enrolled or found to be unsuitable for military service.² This review of the recruiting system also included areas where a perceived lack of effectiveness or efficiency on the part of the Canadian Forces had a negative impact on an applicant.

¹ In 2004-2005, the Canadian Forces' Strategic Intake Plan called for a total of 1,368 new officers and 4,306 new non-commissioned members to be recruited. The Canadian Forces managed to recruit 1,294 new officers and 4,155 new non-commissioned members, resulting in a shortfall of only 235 or approximately four percent.

² Of note, delays or challenges experienced by recruits related to the training system were not the subject of this review. The Minister of National Defence and others have raised publicly concerns regarding the capacity of the military training system to process significant numbers of new recruits.

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38 For the overwhelming majority of new applicants, the initial recruiting phase is their first experience with the Canadian Forces. If this experience is unsatisfactory for any reason, there is a strong possibility that an applicant will discontinue the process. This could – and does – result in the loss to the Canadian Forces of some of the most skilled and talented Canadians. At the same time, applicants that have had an unsatisfactory experience with the recruiting process are likely to discuss this with their friends, families and colleagues – all potential recruits likely lost to the Canadian military. And, more broadly, this experience will likely shape the way in which the discouraged applicant – and many others – view the Canadian Forces and the Government of Canada as a whole.

39 In other words, meeting the established recruiting targets cannot and must not be the only benchmark for the Canadian Forces. To be effective and successful, and to attract the best and the brightest in Canadian society, the military recruiting process must be viewed and managed as a client-driven service. This review focused on evaluating the recruiting services provided to Canadians.

40 As part of the overall review, the Special Ombudsman’s Response Team selected 301 complaints that were received between 2003 and 2005 for in-depth study. These complaints revealed a number of potential systemic issues within the Canadian Forces recruiting and selection process, including:

- 41 • a lack of responsiveness on the part of some recruiters in their dealings with applicants;
- 42 • excessive delays in the recruiting process, particularly with the medical assessment and security portions of the process;
- 43 • difficulties with the transfer procedure between the Reserve and Regular Force and *vice versa*; and
- 44 • inconsistencies in the application of recruiting incentives or bonuses being offered to potential recruits for specific military occupations.

45 In addition to these specific issues, a number of other areas of concern emerged during the course of the review and are documented elsewhere in this report.

46 In recent months, a number of events and activities have taken place that have had a significant impact on this review and, more specifically, on the findings and recommendations made by the office. In some cases, areas of concern identified in earlier stages of the review have been addressed by the Canadian Forces.

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47 For example, in January 2006, the Canadian Forces implemented *Operation Connection*, which assigns specific responsibilities to the various organizations within the Canadian Forces to support the current recruiting initiative. Among other things, it recognizes that:

- 48 • all Canadian Forces organizations must be part of, and support, a successful recruiting drive;
- 49 • recruiting is vital to the Canadian Forces and that recruiters must be recognized for their work; and
- 50 • there is a requirement for increased funding for a national advertising campaign.

51 In announcing *Operation Connection*, the military released a Canadian Forces General Message (CANFORGEN) stating that “the Chief of the Defence Staff places tremendous importance on recruiting and strongly supports the emphasis being placed on selecting the best people to be recruiters and to reward them for this valuable service.” I believe that many of the measures announced in *Operation Connection*, if rigorously implemented, will contribute to addressing some of the major concerns identified by Ombudsman investigators.

52 On February 23, 2006, the Honourable Gordon O’Connor, Minister of National Defence, announced that “increasing the strength of the Canadian Forces to at least 75,000 Regular Force [from approximately 60,000] is a clear priority.” He added that the government also intends “to increase the Reserve Force by 10,000.” In order to meet this commitment, the Minister stated that the Department and the Canadian Forces would be expanding the existing recruitment and training system.

53 On May 16, 2006, the Office of the Auditor General released a report on the issues of recruiting and retention in the Canadian Forces. Among other things, the report highlighted shortfalls in specific (generally technical) military occupations; the growing competition to attract the best candidates; delays related to the medical and security phases of the selection process; issues related to advertising and attraction; challenges related to retention; and broader issues related to strategic human resources planning in the military.

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- 54 The Office of the Auditor General and the Office of the Ombudsman have identified a number of common concerns related to the military's recruiting process. However, the Ombudsman's review is focused much more specifically on the way in which applicants are treated by the military when they attempt to join the Canadian Forces. It is focused on the fairness of the recruiting process from the perspective of the applicants.

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Methodology

55 ***Scope***

56 The focus of this review was on determining the way in which applicants were treated from the time of their first contact with the Canadian Forces to the point when they were either enrolled, dropped out of their own volition, or found to be unsuitable for military service. It focused on the fairness of the recruiting process itself and on what most would consider to be reasonable expectations from the prospective of the applicant while going through the recruiting process. The review of the process also included areas where a perceived lack of effectiveness or efficiency on the part of the Canadian Forces had a negative impact on an applicant.

57 The review did not focus on the Canadian Forces' ability to meet recruiting targets, nor did it include an evaluation of the various standards, such as medical, physical fitness or educational levels, required of applicants to be enrolled in the Canadian Forces

58 This review also does not take into account developments or actions that have been taken by the Canadian Forces after March 31, 2006 – the point at which the investigation was concluded.

59 ***Approach***

60 The review of the recruiting process was conducted in five distinct phases:

61 I. Initial fact finding, including an extensive review of current recruiting policies and processes, a review of complaints, interviews with complainants, as well as interviews with military personnel from Recruiting Centres and Canadian Forces Recruiting Group Headquarters.

62 II. Detailed analyses of the assembled information and identification of the major issues to be investigated.

63 III. In-depth information gathering, detailed examination of specific policies and procedures, extensive interviews with complainants, interviews with Canadian Forces recruiting and training staff, and a review of other organizations' recruiting practices, including foreign militaries and Canadian police and fire services.

64 IV. Analyses of all information gathered.

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65 V. Report writing.

66 As part of the review, investigators from the Office of the Ombudsman interviewed a total of approximately 250 individuals, including 35 complainants. In so doing, they visited Canadian Forces Recruiting Group Headquarters; 18 Canadian Forces Recruiting Centres; a variety of Regular Force units, including Operational Headquarters; Militia Brigade Headquarters; and Naval Reserve and Militia units.

67 Investigators also obtained and examined a large number of documents, including Canadian Forces Recruiting Group Directives, all applicable Canadian Forces General Messages (CANFORGENs), Department Administrative Orders and Directives (DAODs), the *Recruiters Handbook*, and various other instructions.

68 Throughout the review, the co-operation received from the Canadian Forces was excellent, particularly from those involved in the recruiting process itself.

The Recruiting Process

69 ***Background***

70 **General**

71 The Canadian Forces Recruiting Group is responsible for recruiting the allocated number of new personnel identified by the Annual Canadian Forces Strategic Intake Plan. Over the past three years, more than 25,000 applicants have been processed by the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group annually. Out of this number, approximately 5,000 new Regular Force members and 3,000 Reservists have been enrolled each year.

72 **Recruit Process**

73 The Canadian Forces recruiting process can be broken down into six distinct major sub-processes:

74 I. Attraction.

75 II. Application.

76 III. Processing, which consists of an interview, a medical evaluation, an enhanced reliability (security) check, and a physical fitness test.

77 IV. Selection.

78 V. Employment offer.

79 VI. Enrolment in the Canadian Forces.

80 These sub-processes are detailed below.

81 ***I. Attraction***

82 Attraction is the first step in the recruiting process. Various promotional strategies are developed and implemented by the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group in order to inform potential applicants about employment opportunities that are available in the Canadian Forces. These include advertisements (and advertising campaigns) on the Internet, television, radio and in various print media outlets. They also include outreach programs that are carried out by the Canadian Forces Recruiting Centres throughout the country.

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83 ***II. Application***

84 The next step involves interested applicants completing an Employment Application Form in person at a Canadian Forces Recruiting Centre or completing an “E-application form” located on the Canadian Forces recruiting website. As part of the application process, applicants are required to provide documentation, including: a birth certificate; proof of citizenship (if applicable); educational transcripts; trade qualifications (if applicable); a social insurance number; letters of reference; and signed consent forms.

85 ***III. Processing***

86 All Employment Application Forms for the Regular Force individuals are received, reviewed and assigned a specific competitiveness ranking using a system known as the Priority Processing Procedure. This ranking is arrived at through the use of a standard model that assigns a weight factor to a number of specific areas. These numbers are used to rate an applicant’s competitiveness for the military as well as their chosen military occupation. Once a Priority Processing Procedure score has been assigned, successful applicants are then required to complete a Canadian Forces Aptitude Test.

87 **Interview**

88 An interview is conducted to confirm the information supplied by the applicant in their Employment Application Forms and to explore other suitability criteria. Upon completion of the interview, a Military Career Counsellor briefs (verbally) the applicant and provides the applicant with a realistic understanding of their individual competitiveness standing compared to other candidates. A report is then written, complete with recommendations regarding the applicant’s suitability for the military and their chosen military occupation.

89 **Medical Evaluation**

90 Canadian Forces enrolment physicals are divided into three distinct parts. Parts one and two are conducted at local Recruiting Centres by a Physician’s Assistant, while part three consists of a file review and assessment by Medical Officers at the Directorate of Medical Policy in Ottawa.

91 Part one consists of a health questionnaire, preliminary tests and a review of an applicant’s medical history for prior medical conditions. Part two consists of a complete physical examination.

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92 Local Recruiting Centres are authorized to enrol applicants if they
successfully complete parts one and two of the medical evaluation.
Medical files are then forwarded to the Director of Medical Policy for
final review and evaluation.

93 Applicants that are not successful in either parts one and two must wait
for their files to be evaluated by the Director Medical Policy at National
Defence Headquarters to determine their suitability for enrolment in the
Canadian Forces.

94 **Enhanced Reliability (Security) Check**

95 The Government of Canada Security Policy requires that any individual
seeking employment in any federal department or agency of the
government must undergo a reliability (security) check. Given the
sensitive nature of the work performed by the military, the Canadian
Forces requires that anyone applying to become a member successfully
complete an Enhanced Reliability Check prior to enrolment.

96 **Physical Fitness Test**

97 All Canadian Forces applicants must successfully complete the
Canadian Forces Minimum Physical Fitness Standard prior to being
enrolled. Applicants are informed early in the recruiting process of this
requirement and are provided with a brochure and/or a CD ROM that
explains the standard as well as guidance on how to train for the test.

98 ***IV. Selection***

99 All applicants are assigned a Military Potential rating (between 1 and 90) upon
completion of the recruiting process. This rating is based on all of the
information gathered during the recruiting process and is the result of a
combination of factors, including the Canadian Forces Aptitude Test score,
leadership potential, military potential, education and experience.

100 ***V. Employment Offer***

101 Local Recruiting Centres contact successful applicants once the selection
process is completed. Applicants are informed of their employment offer,
planned enrolment date, course start date, and any other administrative details
that might be required by the applicant to assist them in making their decision
to accept or reject the employment offer. Unsuccessful candidates receive
counselling regarding how they could improve their Military Potential rating
and are encouraged to re-apply once they have upgraded their qualifications.

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102 ***VI. Enrolment***

103 Enrolment in the Canadian Forces can take place up to 21 days prior to the start of a recruit's Basic Military Training Course.

Findings and Recommendations

104 ***General Findings***

105 Overall, I found that the Canadian Forces recruiting system is working and that the military's recruiting targets are, for the most part, being met. I am also encouraged by the emphasis currently being placed on recruiting by Canada's Chief of the Defence Staff. Indeed, I hope that recent initiatives implemented as part of *Operation Connection* will be adopted as the standard for the Canadian Forces' approach to recruiting in the future.

106 However, this review has also found that there is significant room for improvement. I am concerned, in particular, by the number of individuals that my office has come across as part of this review who have quit the process – or were very close to quitting the process – as a result of an unsatisfactory experience during one of the recruiting phases.

107 In order to ensure that it does not routinely lose the services of talented Canadians interested in a military career, the Canadian Forces must address a number of specific issues in the current recruiting system.

108 ***Issue One – Client Centered Services/Communications***

109 **Background**

110 A majority of complainants interviewed by the Office of the Ombudsman during this review spoke of the frustration that they had experienced when they tried to obtain information from their local Recruiting Centre about the status of their files. In many of these cases, applicants not only had to initiate contact, they normally had to do it numerous times before receiving a response. Indeed, one applicant told investigators: "I had to call the Recruit Centre seven days in a row before anyone called me back to give me an update on my file and every time I did call I spoke to a different person. Eventually I just gave up. I now have a very good job and no longer have any interest in joining the Canadian Forces".

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111 **Analysis**

112 Although Ombudsman investigators were informed by the majority of Canadian Forces recruiters that regular contact is maintained with all applicants, investigators could find no direction at either the local or Canadian Forces Recruiting Group Headquarters levels to support this assertion. There is no evidence that could be found that a ‘standard’ exists or is in place, nor that applicants are provided with any information other than the telephone number of their local Recruiting Centre if they had additional questions.

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113

The Canadian face behind the recruiting targets...

A complainant applied to the Canadian Forces in August 2003 under the Continuing Education Officer Training Plan while attending his final semester in an Aviation Pilot Training program at a well-known Institute of Technology. In September 2003, the complainant completed the Canadian Forces Aptitude Test and medical parts one and two at his local Recruiting Centre. During the second part of the medical testing, a Physician Assistant (PA) expressed concern about a possible heart murmur and what the PA interpreted as reconstructive surgery on one of the complainant's knees as a result of a hockey injury.

The complainant advised the PA that he had undergone (and passed) an ECG as part of an aviation medical that he had had the previous year. There had been no evidence of a heart murmur. He also explained that he had not had reconstructive surgery on his knee. Instead, a surgeon had only performed an exploratory procedure to ensure that the knee had healed properly. The Physician Assistant advised the complainant that he would require a doctor's letter to that effect.

The complainant obtained the documentation in October 2003 and it was forwarded to the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group Medical Staff. In December, the complainant received correspondence stating that he was considered a medical liability due to the issue of his knee. As a result, he was asked to supply additional information from an orthopaedic surgeon regarding the surgery that was done on his knee. In February 2004, the complainant received the required documentation giving him a clean bill of health. This was sent to the Medical Staff in March. He was told by the local Recruiting Centre to expect a response in 7-8 weeks. After waiting 8 weeks, the complainant contacted the Recruiting Centre and was informed that, although he was now considered medically fit, he had missed the Continuing Education Officer Training Plan entry deadline – a deadline that he had never been informed of.

Although extremely discouraged by the amount of information that he was required to provide as a result of a 'misinterpretation' of his medical information and the lack of communication from the local Recruiting Centre about the entry deadline, the complainant is still interested in a career in the Canadian Forces.

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114 **Summary and Recommendations**

115 In the critical area of communications with applicants, it is clear that the Canadian Forces – and the local Recruiting Centres in particular – are experiencing shortcomings. For many applicants, contact with their local Recruiting Centres is their first, and only, real experience with the Canadian Forces. And if they are not well served, many applicants will simply decide that it is not worth their time or effort to pursue a career in the Canadian Forces. Throughout this review, the Ombudsman and Ombudsman investigators came across a number of these cases.

116 Whenever Canadians decide to quit the military recruiting process out of frustration, there are at least two likely consequences. First, the Canadian Forces loses some of Canada's best and brightest, including those individuals discouraged from joining the military by the frustrated applicant. Second, a frustrating experience will very likely shape the way in which the discouraged applicant – and many others – view the Canadian Forces and the Government of Canada as a whole.

117 Maintaining regular and meaningful contact with applicants throughout the recruiting process must not only become a priority for recruiting staff, *it must become the norm*. Based on the evidence gathered, this does not appear to be the case. Given the frustration expressed by many of the complainants, and the lack of a definitive policy in this area, a more structured way of ensuring that this takes place is sorely needed.

118 As a point of reference for the level and quality of communications – and, indeed, overall service – that should be offered to applicants, the Government of Canada has launched the *Service Improvement Initiative* requiring government departments and agencies to establish and implement service standards. Once established, federal departments and agencies are required to monitor their performance against these standards and to use them to manage client expectations and thus improve user satisfaction.

119 A review of corporate and public sector entities conducted by Treasury Board Secretariat to ascertain what service standards were in the public domain and thus accessible by the average consumer, *Service Canada* was considered to be at the forefront. This organization is responsible for providing Canadians with information on government services and benefits, and by visiting their website (at <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca>) any client can easily determine the type of service that they can expect to receive. The website includes a *Service Charter* that outlines the goal of the organization, what it provides, its commitment to its clients, how to contact the organization, and the standard of service that clients can – and should – expect.

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120 In order to ensure that skilled Canadians – indeed, all Canadian applicants – do not routinely become frustrated with the military recruiting process, Recruiting Centres must truly become ‘client focused’ organizations. More specifically, service standards, like those of *Service Canada*, must be developed, implemented, and clearly communicated to recruiters and to applicants.

121 **Recommendation One**

122 **I recommend that:**

123 **The Canadian Forces Recruiting Group develop and implement comprehensive service standards explaining exactly what clients can expect from their Recruiting Centres. The standards should include, but not be limited to:**

- 124 • **A standard timeframe (48 hours, for instance) in which applicants can expect to receive replies to their inquiries, be they by telephone, written communication or e-mail;**
- 125 • **The type and quality of service applicants can expect;**
- 126 • **How to contact someone within the recruiting system should applicants have a question; and**
- 127 • **Information, in writing, on how applicants can file complaints with someone outside of their local Recruiting Centre. These complaints must then be dealt with in a specified period of time.**

128 **Once developed, these standards must be promulgated and communicated to both applicants and recruiters. They should not only appear on the Canadian Forces website, they should be prominently displayed in all Recruiting Centres.**

129 As required under Treasury Board Policy, the service standards, once developed, must be monitored to ensure that they are being implemented. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation should also be used to assess resource levels and determine if adjustments are required to policies and procedures if service standards are not being met.

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130 In order to do this, a performance measurement system is required to capture the qualitative and quantitative data that must be analyzed and reported on. This will require additional resources. It will also require dedicated personnel who can develop the appropriate measures and who can then monitor, adjust and report on those measures in a meaningful, value-added way to the Canadian Forces. And to be most effective, these measures must be available to decision-makers on an ongoing and timely basis.

131 **Recommendation Two**

132 **I recommend that:**

133 **The Chief of Military Personnel provide the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group with the resources required to put in place a Standards Cell, whose responsibility would be to monitor and report on performance measures, and to develop best practices and lessons learned for the benefit of the entire organization.**

134 As a way to help ensure better (including more timely) communications with applicants, the standing up of a recruiting ‘call centre’ in the summer of 2006 by the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group is an important initiative and a positive development. It is another major area, however, where proper client focused service standards must be developed, implemented, monitored and reported on.

135 **Recommendation Three**

136 **I recommend that:**

137 **The Canadian Forces Recruiting Group develop, implement, monitor and report on client service standards for their recruiting ‘call centre’.**

138 Finally, in order to make the recruiting system more immediately accessible to applicants, the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group should also make Recruiting Centres available outside the regular business working hours (see recommendation eighteen).

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139 ***Issue Two – Command and Control***

140 **Background**

141 During this review of the recruiting system, it became evident that the Commander of the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group was responsible for six distinct sub-components of the overall recruiting process. However, it also became clear that several of the sub-processes were either wholly or partly under the control (or authority) of another organization within the Canadian Forces. In some cases, this was due to the centralization of resources; in other cases, it was a question of government or departmental policy.

142 Regardless of the rationale for this state of being, the task of the Commander of the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group is complicated by the current arrangement. Fundamentally, it is impossible to assign accountability for the success or failure of the Canadian Forces recruiting system to the Commander of the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group when the Commander does not have the authority over several aspects (or components) of that system.

143 The current Commander of the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group and his staff have been able to develop personal (and positive) working relations with the other parts of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces that have a role to play in the successful outcome of the military recruiting process. Nonetheless, there are no guarantees that, as personalities and priorities change, this will remain the case. And this could lead to problems and disruptions in the overall recruiting system.

144 **Analysis**

145 An essential element of success for any organization is its ability to effectively command and control the resources allocated for the accomplishment of a specific mission or outcome. When an organization is given responsibility for a specific mission or outcome without being provided with the necessary authority, inefficiencies often result. More significantly, this situation may lead to problems between organizations and adversely affect the accomplishment of the mission or outcome.

146 There are a number of specific areas in the military recruiting system, considered critical to the broader recruiting effort, over which the Commander of the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group does not have authority. These are:

- 147
- Recruit advertising is the responsibility of Assistant Deputy Minister (Public Affairs).

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148 • The medical file review process is the responsibility of Canadian Forces Health Service.

149 • The Enhanced Reliability (security) Checks are conducted by the Deputy Provost Marshal Security with the assistance of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service.

150 It is important to note that a number of concerns brought forward by complainants during the review were related to the medical and security processes – areas, in large part, outside the authority of the Commander of the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group. These issues are discussed in more detail in subsequent sections.

151 **Summary and Recommendations**

152 It is beyond the scope of this review to analyze or comment on issues of efficiency or cost savings associated with the centralization of the responsibility for specific parts of the Canadian Forces recruiting system. What does fall under this review, however, is the fact that the Commander of the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group has responsibility for Canadian Forces recruiting efforts without having the requisite authority (or, in military terms, command and control) over all of the various components of the broader recruiting process.

153 In an ideal situation, the Commander of the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group would have under his or her direct command all of the authorities and resources needed to attract applicants and to take them from the point of their first contact with the military to the enrolment stage. Wherever possible, the Canadian Forces should strive for this ideal. Failing this, it is imperative that the separation of the current authorities and responsibilities related to the recruiting process be very well defined and communicated. Otherwise, there cannot be true accountability.

154 **Recommendation Four**

155 **I recommend that:**

156 **The lines of responsibility and authority for the military recruiting process be identified and/or clarified and communicated to all implicated organizations in the most effective manner.**

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157 Once the lines of responsibility and authority are identified and/or clarified, the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group's requirements and expectations of other 'service providers' must be defined, articulated and formalized. Military recruiting is a top priority for the Government of Canada and the Canadian Forces, and all 'service providers' must provide the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group with the services that they need to succeed.

158 **Recommendation Five**

159 **I recommend that:**

160 ***Client Service Agreements* be developed (where they do not exist) and formalized between the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group and all 'service providers'. These agreements should establish clear expectations and service standards, including performance measures and indicators, and they should be adhered to in a rigorous way.**

161 Finally, ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the service agreements is important to ensuring that they are functioning properly, meeting established expectations and that adjustments are made as circumstances warrant.

162 **Recommendation Six**

163 **I recommend that:**

164 **The Chief of Military Personnel develop performance measures to monitor the effectiveness of the service agreements, including the communications between groups, and to identify when changes are required.**

165 ***Issue Three – Component Transfer***

166 **Background**

167 A significant number of complainants that contacted the Office of the Ombudsman raised concerns about the Component Transfer process – a process under which serving members of the Canadian Forces can transfer between components or sub-components of the military. The majority of these complaints came from Reservists seeking to transfer to the Regular Force. Although already considered members of the Canadian Forces, Reservists were required to follow the same process as any other applicant; in addition, however, they were also required to obtain a recommendation from their commanding officer supporting their application.

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168 In terms of the Component Transfer process, the most frequent complaint involved excessive delays. Indeed, as a result of these delays, many applicants were not able to submit their files to the appropriate occupational selection boards by the established deadlines, thus resulting in the applicant not being considered for selection.

169 Other concerns were from those members seeking a transfer related to the rejection of applications due to the Canadian Forces Common Enrolment Medical Standards. According to a number of complainants, although the Canadian Forces had found them medically fit for service in the Reserves, in their specific occupation, they were considered unfit for the Regular Force because they did not meet the Canadian Forces Common Enrolment Medical Standards. Complainants contended that, from a medical perspective, their application should be considered in the same way that an Occupational Transfer (*i.e.*, changing from one type of occupation in the Regular Force to another) file was assessed – particularly considering that Reservists are members of the Canadian Forces. In the case of an Occupational Transfer, the applicant should only be required to meet the minimum medical category for the desired occupation rather than the Canadian Forces Common Enrolment Medical Standards.

170 A number of Reservists also expressed frustration over what they perceived as a lack of support from their Reserve units, including commanding officers that did not support their Component Transfer application, files being lost or misplaced, and a general lack of knowledge regarding the roles and responsibilities of Reserve unit personnel with respect to Component Transfer processing.

171 **Analysis**

172 This review determined that a number of independent factors can contribute to excessive delays in the Component Transfer process. For example, the Verification of Former (military) Service was frequently cited as a major cause of delay. Similarly, invalid security clearances or the need to re-take lapsed tests, such as the Physical Fitness Test, often create delays. In addition, the requirement for a new medical test and/or the retrieval of medical files adds significant time to the process. Even more delays can occur at the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition phase – the phase at which a member's existing skills, prior training and experience, are assessed. Another major source of delay involves the requirement for a letter from the commanding officer of the Reservist seeking a transfer to the Regular Force. Indeed, in some instances, Reservists were forced to make repeated requests for a letter from their commanding officer.

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- 173 In this review, Ombudsman investigators also found that the coordination between some Reserve units and their local Recruiting Centres was haphazard and lacking.
- 174 Compounding all of these factors was the apparent lack of a standardized approach to the processing of Component Transfers across the various authorities involved.
- 175 It should be noted that, during the course of this review, the Canadian Forces conducted its own internal review of the policies and procedures related to Component Transfers and, on June 17, 2005, released new direction on this issue. Defence Administrative Order and Directive (DAOD) 5002-3 and Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources-Military) Instruction 07/05 together recognize that a member transferring between components is already a member of the Canadian Forces. As a result, redundant processing has been eliminated; relevant military and civilian work experience is recognized; and training differences are de-emphasized by using military work experience versus training as the basis for determining a candidate's service comparison. These directives also provide new definitions of a skilled applicant; conditions for rank protection; and use of a new Prior Learning Assessment matrix. At the same time, Reservists wishing to apply to the Regular Force now have the option of applying directly to a Recruiting Centre as opposed to having to apply through their Reserve unit commanding officer.

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A complainant, a Senior Officer with 16 years of service in the Reserves, the first four as a Class “A” (part-time contract) and the last twelve as a Class “B” (full time contract), applied to the Canadian Forces in the fall of 2005, for a Component Transfer from the Reserves to the Regular Force. He stated that when he visited his local Recruit Center, he was informed “that it was more difficult to bring in a Senior Officer than a civilian off the street and that the process could take up to two years.”

Despite already being a Commissioned Officer in the CF with a record of over ten years of working in the Regular Force environment, the complainant was advised that he would be required to undergo the same screening process as anyone else applying to join the Military. As a result he needed to obtain letters of reference from both civilians and his Commanding Officer; complete a full Medical Assessment; and be processed for a Security Clearance.

The complainant advised the Recruiter that he held both a valid CF Medical assessment and CF Express Test qualification, and questioned the requirement for both. He also stated that as a result of his Officer Classification and the work it involved, he held a up to date Top Secret Security Clearance. Regardless, the Recruiter after showing him the appropriate sections in the Recruiters Handbook informed him that he would have to undergo the same screening process as any civilian, before his application for transfer could be processed.

Although extremely discouraged by the lack of acknowledgement of his Reserve experience, and the failure of the Recruit System to recognize his qualifications as an already Commissioned Officer, the complainant continues the Component Transfer process. He expects to be accepted into the Regular Force in the near future.

177 **Summary and Recommendations**

178 This Canadian Forces initiative on Component Transfers is a step in the right direction and it appears to address the issues identified by this review. However, it is too early to assess the effectiveness of the measures that have been put in place or to determine whether they will rectify all of the problems identified by Ombudsman investigators.

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179 **Recommendation Seven**

180 **I recommend that:**

181 **The Chief of Military Personnel, the Chief of Reserves and the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group monitor the implementation of these directives rigorously and make adjustments if, and where, necessary to refine them.**

182 Given the significance of this issue, I will be following up on the implementation of this initiative.

183 ***Issue Four – Security***

184 **Background**

185 A large number of complaints received by the Office of the Ombudsman during this review involved delays and/or a lack of communication about the security screening process. Complainants described to investigators a number of frustrations involving:

- 186 • The basic eligibility criterion of citizenship which must be met (except in the most exceptional circumstances) in order to join the Canadian Forces;
- 187 • Delays encountered by Canadian citizens who had been out of the country for extended periods; and
- 188 • A general lack of communication (or sometimes miscommunication) from Recruiting Centres regarding the security screening process and, in particular, about the reasons for delays.

189 The Government of Canada Security Policy requires that all potential employees, including Canadian Forces applicants, undergo a security screening process if their duties may require access to sensitive information and/or assets. Applicants cannot be formally appointed to a position or have access to sensitive information and/or assets until the required screening has been completed successfully.

190 The National Defence Personnel Security Screening Program is derived from the Government of Canada Security Policy and has three distinct and separate processes:

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- 191
- The first process is the Enhanced Reliability Check, which all applicants must successfully complete prior to enrolment in the Canadian Forces. The Enhanced Reliability Check assesses whether an applicant can be expected to be reliable and trustworthy in the performance of his or her duties.
- 192
- The second process is the Security Clearance Pre-Assessment. This process is conducted for any applicant who, during the recruiting process, makes a verbal or written statement about a history or behaviour which gives rise to a security concern. It is also conducted if there are any international implications related to an applicant. This process must be completed prior to enrolment in the Canadian Forces and can only be conducted for applicants who have successfully completed an Enhanced Reliability Check.
- 193
- The third process is the Security Clearance process and it is conducted for all Government of Canada employees, be they military or civilian, after they have received and accepted a position.

194 The Deputy Provost Marshal Security is responsible for all aspects of the security policy in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces and oversees the certification aspect of the security screening program. Although responsible for the various checks, the Deputy Provost Marshal Security enlists the assistance of outside agencies for support in certain areas, specifically the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for fingerprint identity confirmation and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service for any security clearance background checks required in Canada or abroad.

195 **Analysis**

196 During this review, it became apparent that there is a widespread misperception by many individuals in (and outside) the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces that all applicants are required to complete the Security Clearance process prior to their enrolment in the Canadian Forces. This simply is not the case. Indeed, prior to enrolment, the majority of applicants must only complete an Enhanced Reliability Check, and only under specific circumstances is a Security Clearance Pre-Assessment conducted.

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- 197 The Enhanced Reliability Check can be completed at local Recruiting Centres with the exception of the criminal records and credit checks, which are conducted by Deputy Provost Marshal Security. If an applicant does not appear on either the Canadian Police Identification Centre or the Credit Bureau of Canada, the Enhanced Reliability Check can be completed in as little as 72 hours. If problems arise with either check, however, this time may be extended considerably.
- 198 Unfortunately, the second process – the Security Clearance Pre-Assessment – can take much longer as a result of the types of checks that must be conducted. Deputy Provost Marshal Security and Treasury Board Secretariat officials informed Ombudsman investigators that, depending on the country of origin of an applicant, it can take up to two years for the Security Clearance Pre-Assessment to be completed. Deputy Provost Marshal Security officials have said that they receive good and timely service from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, but noted that the nature of this assessment – including having to retrieve information from foreign governments – can lead to long delays.
- 199 I commend the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces on their leadership, as outlined in *Operation Connection*, in trying to move forward on policy changes meant to increase their target demographics and reduce wait times for applicants with foreign implications. These changes would see the adoption of reduced times for secret and confidential clearances, as well as the elimination of Security Clearance Pre-Assessments for applicants that have only spent time in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States and other original North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries.
- 200 However, there is still significant room for improvement related to the overall security screening program. In particular, based on a number of interviews with front line Recruiting Centre staff, it became apparent that many of them did not fully understand the security screening program or its various components. As a result, they had difficulty explaining the program, including the reasons for lengthy delays, to applicants. This caused a great deal of frustration with many complainants.

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An individual who had immigrated to Canada (from Africa) in 1998 attempted to join the Canadian Forces. He applied as a landed immigrant at his local Recruiting Centre in the early months of 2001, completing a physical fitness test and a security clearance form.

In 2002, the applicant moved from his original location to another region of the country, and, as a result, had his file transferred to the Recruiting Centre closest to his new home. Approximately seven months later, the applicant was informed that the processing of his file would have to stop, as he had not resided in Canada for the required five years. Although the applicant was disappointed that he had not been advised of this policy when he had initiated his application, his intent was to re-apply after he reached the five-year threshold.

In December 2003, the applicant reached this threshold and he again applied to join the Canadian Forces. As the process unfolded, he was informed by the local Recruiting Centre that he would have re-do the security clearance process and that it could take a year or more to complete.

Having become disillusioned with the process and frustrated with the amount of time that he had already invested and would have to continue to invest, the applicant lost interest in pursuing a career in the Canadian Forces.

202 **Summary and Recommendations**

203 Generally speaking, the Government of Canada Security Policy and the National Defence Personnel Security Screening Program are necessary instruments of government. That being said, this review has determined that inordinate delays related to the implementation of these policies/programs is leading to skilled and talented Canadians quitting the military recruiting process. Although some delays may be unavoidable, the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces have made some progress in addressing these challenges as part of *Operation Connection*. I am also aware that Treasury Board Secretariat is currently reviewing the Government of Canada Security Policy.

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204 **Recommendation Eight**

205 **I recommend that:**

206 **The Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces assess the feasibility of extending or expanding the measures taken as part of *Operation Connection* to reduce and/or eliminate delays in the security screening process.**

207 As a result of this review, it was also determined that some delays related to the security screening process may be the result of a lack of information (or misinformation) at the Recruiting Centre staff level regarding the overall security policy/program and its various components. Most notable is the widespread belief that applicants are required to complete the Security Clearance process prior to their enrolment in the Canadian Forces. In order to minimize delays wherever possible, Recruiting Centre staff must understand thoroughly all aspects and requirements of the security screening process.

208 **Recommendation Nine**

209 **I recommend that:**

210 **All Recruiting Centre staff be provided with an appropriate level of training and information on the Government of Canada Security Policy, the National Defence Personnel Security Screening Program, and all aspects (and components) of the security screening process.**

211 This training will also assist Recruiting Centre staff in informing applicants, in a clear and understandable fashion, of the security requirements that they will be expected meet, including the documentation that will be required by the Department and the Canadian Forces in the processing of applications. Beyond this, Recruiting Centre staff should maintain regular contact with applicants and inform them on a timely basis if their supporting documentation is incomplete.

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212 Ultimately, given the nature of the security screening process, it is clear the
some delays in particular areas or for particular applicants will be unavoidable.
213 In these cases, and in keeping with previous recommendations, Recruiting
Centre staff must communicate with applicants on an ongoing basis and seek to
establish reasonable expectations on the part of the applicant. For example, if
documents about a particular applicant are required from a country that is
known to be slow in responding to such requests, this fact should be included
as part of the expectation-setting exercise. This may also provide applicants
with the opportunity to assist the Department and the Canadian Forces in
obtaining required documentation.

213 **Recommendation Ten**

214 **I recommend that:**

215 **The Canadian Forces Recruiting Group develop standard procedures for
informing applicants of the security screening process, including
providing a reasonable assessment as to how long the process will take for
each individual applicant.**

216 ***Issue Five – Medical***

217 **Background**

218 Of the 301 complaints examined during this review of the recruiting system,
96 specifically identified concerns with the medical review process. These
concerns covered a variety of issues; however, the most common was the
length of time taken to review an applicant's medical file. In some cases, these
delays resulted in individual applicants missing deadlines for specific
occupational selection boards. This meant that some potentially successful
applicants had their enrolment in the Canadian Forces delayed. For others, the
resulting frustration caused them to lose interest in a career in the Canadian
Forces.

219 **Analysis**

220 All Canadian Forces applicants must meet the Common Enrolment Medical
Standards. The decision to accept or reject an applicant from a medical
perspective is based on a review of the combined results of his or her physical
examination, medical history, and a medical questionnaire completed by the
candidate. If an applicant is rejected outright due to a pre-existing medical
condition, they are provided with a letter outlining the reasons for the rejection,
as well as information on how to appeal that decision. If an applicant's file
requires additional information, they are provided with a letter detailing what
information is required and why.

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- 221 When all relevant medical information is collected from the applicant, the local Recruiting Centre forwards it on to the Recruit Medical Staff located at Canadian Forces Base Borden (now relocated in Ottawa) for review and a final decision on the applicant's suitability. This review must be completed prior to an applicant being enrolled in the Canadian Forces. The requirement to have all medical files reviewed by a central staff is in place to ensure that the same standard is applied to all applicants.
- 222 On average, the process of collecting the required information, forwarding it to the Recruit Medical Staff at NDHQ Director Medical Policy conducting the review, and informing the local Recruiting Centre of the results takes up to six weeks. And, if additional information is required, this process can take even longer. As applicants cannot be enrolled until this process is finished, some potential candidates missed their occupational selection board and found themselves in a state of limbo. This caused many to quit the recruiting process altogether.
- 223 In an attempt to accelerate the medical screening portion of the recruiting process, the Canadian Forces recently introduced two new initiatives.
- 224 The first, announced on 20 May 2005 by Canadian Forces General Message (CANFORGEN) 097/05, gives individual Recruiting Centres the authority to enrol applicants who meet all other enrolment requirements, and who successfully pass their medical parts one and two. With this, the requirement to wait for a complete review of applicants' medical files by the Recruit Medical Staff has been eliminated. Although the medical files are still reviewed, an applicant with no apparent medical issues can now be enrolled while that review is being conducted.³ This new process creates a small risk that some applicants may be enrolled even though they are medically unsuitable; however, for the majority of applicants the process is more efficient and timely.
- 225 The second initiative involved the move of the Recruit Medical Staff from Canadian Forces Recruiting Group Headquarters at CFB Borden to National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa as part of the Director of Medical Policy, answering ultimately to the Commander of Canadian Forces Health Services.
- 226 Senior staff within Canadian Forces Health Services believe this move will increase their ability to respond to requests from the recruiting system, resulting in a decrease in the average medical review period.

³ In the event that an applicant is determined to be medically unfit after part three of the medical review, he or she is released from the Canadian Forces without prejudice under *Queen's Regulations and Orders (QR&O)* 15.01 item 5(e): Irregular Enrolment.

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227 **Summary and Recommendations**

228 The requirement to have all medical files reviewed by a centralized medical staff provides a measure of standardization and, ultimately, fairness. It ensures that the same standards will be applied to all applicants regardless of where they are processed. However, it also raises concerns about timeliness.

229 The recent change authorizing the enrolment of applicants prior their medical review being finalized is welcomed and may decrease overall wait times. However, the new policy has not been in place long enough for this review to make a definitive assessment.

230 Likewise, this review cannot assess the benefits (or problems) associated with the move of the Recruit Medical Staff to National Defence Headquarters or their altered reporting chain of command. Although anecdotal evidence suggests that delays have been reduced, it is too early to draw any conclusions.

231 In order to ensure that the new organizational structure is effective, the Chief of Military Personnel must rigorously monitor and assess the situation. To do that, performance measures must be developed, implemented and analyzed on an ongoing basis.

232 **Recommendation Eleven**

233 **I recommend that:**

234 **The Chief of Military Personnel develop, implement and analyze performance measures to determine the effectiveness of communications and cooperation between the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group and Canadian Forces Health Services and, ultimately, the impact that this arrangement has on the military recruiting system.**

235 ***Issue Six – Recruit Allowances***

236 **Background**

237 As part of this review, Ombudsman investigators received a number of complaints related to recruiting allowances, particularly the ‘Civilian Trade Qualification Allowance’. Complainants claimed that the incentive that was paid to them after the completion of all required training was smaller than that which had originally been offered at the time of their enrolment.

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238 Recruiting allowances are governed by Treasury Board policy and are specific to military occupations that are designated ‘under-strength’. These allowances offer either a rank and/or monetary incentive to qualified applicants enrolling in the Canadian Forces. They were implemented to attract pre-qualified individuals to the Canadian Forces, thus reducing the amount of time that they would normally spend in initial occupational training. There are three specific programs offered:

- 239 • *Post-secondary Diploma or Certificate*: Up to \$10,000 can be awarded to eligible applicants who possess a designated academic qualification – a college diploma in specified studies or a technical certificate from an academic institution – that would allow them to bypass most, or all, of the initial occupation training in one of the designated under strength military occupations of their choice.
- 240 • *Civilian Trade Qualification*: Up to \$20,000 can be awarded to applicants who have earned a civilian trade-qualified federal or provincial ‘ticket’ that is equivalent to the advanced occupational training (at least qualification level 5), thus allowing them to bypass initial occupation training.
- 241 • *Military Occupation Qualification*: Up to \$20,000 is available to Regular Force re-enrolees or Reserve Force members who undertake a component transfer into any one of the designated under strength military occupations.

242 **Analysis**

243 Once a year, all military occupations are reviewed to determine their relative ‘health’ or ‘strength’ based on previous attrition projections. Occupations that are considered ‘distressed’ (*i.e.*, with no hope of recovery through the normal recruiting process) are considered for recruiting allowances under the Compensation and Benefit Instructions.

244 After the Chief of the Defence Staff approves the final list of occupations that are eligible for recruiting allowances, a Canadian Forces General Message is released (normally in the March timeframe) announcing the occupations and classifications that are eligible for an allowance in the following fiscal year; the qualifications that are required to receive an allowance; and the compensation that each eligible candidate is to be awarded. This policy remains in effect for one year, from 1 April until 31 March the following year, and does not change during that period. The Canadian Forces Recruiting Group then communicates this information to Recruiting Centres across the country who are responsible for informing any potential applicants.

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- 245 If an individual applicant's recruiting process spans two fiscal years, however, the allowance provided to that applicant may change considerably. For example, if an applicant started the recruiting process in December 2005 but was not formally enrolled into the Canadian Forces until May 2006, the applicant would only be eligible for the allowance that was promulgated in March 2006 – months after the applicant started the process. And, if adjustments were made in the intervening period, this may not be the same allowance that attracted the applicant to the Canadian Forces in the first place; indeed, it may be smaller or potentially even non-existent.
- 246 During this review, Chief of Military Personnel staff recognized this inequity. And, significantly, grievances involving this issue are now being resolved in the favour of the applicant/Canadian Forces member. At the same time, the policy is being reviewed with a view to protecting an applicant's eligibility to an allowance based on the application date and not the enrolment date.
- 247 As noted throughout this report, effective communication between Recruiting Centre staff and military applicants is essential to the success of the overall recruiting system and to ensuring that quality applicants do not quit the process. Unfortunately, in the case of recruiting allowances, this communication has not been effective. Indeed, Ombudsman investigators have determined that recruiting allowances are poorly understood by Recruiting Centre staff and, consequently, by applicants. Moreover, there is limited information available to potential applicants on the specific administration of these allowances, apart from some very general facts on the Canadian Forces recruiting website.

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In 2002, after learning about a recruiting allowance of \$20,000 plus an advanced rank being offered by the Canadian Forces, the complainant applied to join the military. A licensed diesel truck mechanic with several other qualifications deemed desirable by the Canadian Forces, he successfully completed the application process in November 2002. He was given a conditional offer of employment at that point and was informed that he would receive the rank of corporal and \$20,000 after completing all of the required training.

However, from November 2002 until May 2003, while he was waiting for his Basic Recruit Training, this offer changed three times: initially it changed to Private 3rd Class and \$20,000; then to Private 3rd Class and \$10,000; and, finally, to Private with no monetary compensation.

In April 2003, the Recruiting Centre explained that the complainant had missed the deadline for the specific bonus for which he was qualified and recommended that he take the offer and file a grievance after completing his Basic Recruit Training. At no time previous to this had anyone at the Recruiting Centre informed the complainant that there had been a deadline or that it affected his allowance offer. At this stage, the complainant, who had already given up his civilian employment, accepted the offer.

In August 2003, at his graduation ceremony from Basic Recruit Training, the complainant was presented with an offer in French, (which he did not understand) and was advised that it was his allowance – Private 3rd Class but no compensation. After accepting the offer, however, he actually received \$10,000 but no rank compensation. From May 2004 to July 2004, the complainant completed his Basic Trades Training and was subsequently posted to an operational base. With the full support of his chain of command, he submitted a grievance and, as a result, received the full \$20,000 and the rank of corporal in June 2005.

After requesting his personnel file, he discovered a letter that stated “that as he had community college vice trade papers he was not entitled to receive the bonus that he had initially been offered.” This was never explained to him by anyone at his Recruiting Centre.

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249 **Summary and Recommendations**

250 As a result of this review, it became evident that some Canadian Forces Recruiting Group staff are unfamiliar with the regulations associated with the Recruit Allowance Program. In order to maintain credibility with applicants and prevent unnecessary frustration, military recruiters must be able to provide applicants with accurate and up-to-date information on the program. Moreover, it is essential that all Recruiting Centre staff that have contact with applicants (not just Military Career Counsellors) have the ability to answer questions concerning the Recruit Allowance Program.

251 **Recommendation Twelve**

252 **I recommend that:**

253 **The Canadian Forces Recruiting Group develop a current information distribution process that ensures that all Recruiting Centre staff have easy access to the latest information regarding the Recruit Allowance Program.**

254 On a more substantive level, the inequity that currently exists in the awarding of allowances must be rectified. For instance, under the current policy if an individual commences the recruiting process prior to April 1st of any given year but is not formally enrolled until after that date, and the allowance changes, that individual could receive a different level of compensation than was advertised at the start of the process. Although the grievance system is currently dealing with these instances in a positive manner, it is clear that the policy must be changed to avoid the loss of potential recruits due to frustration. And this inequity must be resolved in a way that favours the applicant (except where it is clear that the delay is directly attributable to the applicant).

255 **Recommendation Thirteen**

256 **I recommend that:**

257 **The present policy of awarding a recruit allowance based on the date when an applicant is enrolled be amended to reflect the date when the application is received by a Canadian Forces Recruiting Centre with all supporting documentation.**

258 At the same time, fairness dictates that should the recruit allowance increase (or be instituted) after a qualified individual has applied to join the Canadian Forces but before that individual is actually enrolled, the individual should receive the higher allowance. This is meant to avoid a situation where two applicants are enrolled at the same time but are provided different recruit allowances.

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259 **Recommendation Fourteen**

260 **I recommend that:**

261 **The present policy include a provision that, should a recruit allowance increase (or be instituted) after a qualified individual has applied to join the Canadian Forces but before that individual is actually enrolled, then the individual should receive the new (higher) allowance.**

262 Ultimately, it is imperative that any potential recruit completely understands what he or she is being offered by the Canadian Forces under the Recruit Allowance Program. Accurate, timely and understandable communication in this regard is critical.

263 **Recommendation Fifteen**

264 **I recommend that:**

265 **All offers of a recruit allowance (including relevant terms and conditions) be provided to applicants in writing, and in very clear and easily understood terms.**

266 ***Issue Seven – Reserve Issues***

267 **Background**

268 The recruiting process for the Regular Force is different in many ways from that which exists for the Reserves. For the Regular Force, the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group and their associated Recruiting Centres are responsible for all aspects of the recruiting process. In the case of the Reserves, however, local Reserve units are responsible for attraction, compiling applicant files for processing (by local Recruiting Centres), offers of employment and enrolment. Local Recruiting Centres administer the Canadian Forces Aptitude Test, candidate interviews, medical assessments and physical testing.

269 In order to understand the key differences between the Reserve and Regular Force recruiting process, Ombudsman investigators interviewed a variety of Reserve recruiters across the country. What they found was a lack of standardization and a general inconsistency of approaches and procedures used across the three environments throughout Canada, and even within the same environment.

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270 **Analysis**

271 The review determined that the Air Force Reserve does very little active recruiting, relying instead on recruiting former or retiring Regular Force members. And, in the majority of cases, Air Force Reservists are integrated directly into Regular Force units. Even those units composed of Reservists are usually employed as support to the Regular Force.

272 For its part, the Navy uses a centralized approach to recruiting Reserves, with the Naval Reserve Headquarters in Quebec City controlling the activity. Naval Reserve Headquarters determines the number of Reserve recruits that are required in each occupation and these numbers, in turn, are used to calculate the target recruit numbers by trade for each Naval Reserve Division. Naval Reserve Headquarters also provides funding to each division to employ one full-time Class “B” recruiter throughout the year. Although there appears to be no Naval Reserve-wide standard operating procedure, every division that was interviewed has produced procedures that take into account the uniqueness of the area from which they recruit. Finally, Naval Reserve Headquarters conducts a yearly recruiters seminar, bringing together all Naval recruiters to discuss the issues that they face.

273 The recruiting of Reservists in the Army is approached differently by each Land Force Area command (*i.e.*, four Areas, in the West, Central Canada, in Quebec and in the East). Although there are similarities in approach between the Areas, there is no Army-wide coordination. Area Commands determine the number of recruits that are required based on the amount of funding that is available and the input that is received from their various subordinate Brigade Headquarters. Although the Area Commands have all produced a set of recruiting operating procedures for their Area, the responsibility for recruiting has been delegated to the Brigade Headquarters and there is little commonality across the country.

274 Throughout the review, the most consistent concern raised by Reserve recruiters, regardless of their environment or location, centred on their inability to communicate with their local Recruiting Centre during their training evenings, which is when the majority of recruiters actually conduct their recruiting. Indeed, the issue of communications between Reserve recruiters and local Recruiting Centres, or the lack of communications at times, was one of the most frequent complaints.

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275 **Summary and Recommendations**

276 The *ad hoc* system currently in place for Reserve recruiting is neither efficient nor do I believe it adequate to meet the needs of the Canadian Forces. Given the current operational demands on Canada's military both at home and abroad, it is absolutely crucial to have a Reserve Force that can shoulder more of the burden. And, to do that, thousands of Reserves must be recruited.

277 Although there are some very good practices in place to recruit Reservists, there is significant room for improvement. It is clear that the most pressing need is for the development of a National Reserve Recruiting Policy and, flowing from that, the creation of national standard operating procedures. The development and implementation of a National Reserve Recruiting Policy, while allowing for differences in the way in which the environments employ Reserves, would address the many inconsistencies (as well as the clear inefficiencies) that currently exist across the country.

278 **Recommendation Sixteen**

279 **I recommend that:**

280 **The Chief of Military Personnel, in consultation with the Chief of Reserves and the other various stakeholders, develop and implement a National Reserve Recruiting Policy. While establishing national goals and procedures, this policy must also recognize the unique requirements of the various Reserve elements.**

281 It became evident during this review that communications between some Recruiting Centres and the Reserve units that they serve is far less than optimal. As detailed earlier, it is imperative that Recruiting Centres become more 'client focused' in their operations, including in their approach to Regular Force applicants and to Reserve units. In order to ensure effective communications and dealings between local Recruiting Centres and Reserve units, standard operating procedures, including service level standards, need to be developed, taking into account the requirements and priorities of both.

282 **Recommendation Seventeen**

283 **I recommend that:**

284 **The Chief of Military Personnel, the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group and the other various stakeholders involved in the Reserve recruiting process develop and implement standard operating procedures, including service level standards, in this area.**

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285 In developing standard operating procedures, it is clear that Recruiting Centres must be more available and accessible to Regular Force applicants and Reserve recruiters. The Canadian Forces may lose the services of skilled Canadians if those Canadians find it difficult to contact their local Recruiting Centres (which may be the case if they can only be contacted during regular working hours). At the same time, potential Reservists may grow frustrated with delays that may result from poor communications between Recruiting Centres and local Reserve units.

286 **Recommendation Eighteen**

287 **I recommend that:**

288 **That the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group develop a Standard Operating procedure that would allow access to Recruiting Centres outside the normal business working hours. This would allow access to applicants who work full time. Consideration should be given to have recruiting centres open during evenings to coincide with Reserve Units hours, in order to facilitate contacts in processing their candidates.**

Annex A: Summary of Recommendations

289 *Issue One – Client Centered Services/Communications*

290 **Recommendation One:**

291 That the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group develop and implement comprehensive service standards explaining exactly what clients can expect from their Recruiting Centres. The standards should include, but not be limited to:

- 292 • A standard timeframe (48 hours, for instance) in which applicants can expect to receive replies to their inquiries, be they by telephone, written communication or e-mail;
- 293 • The type and quality of service applicants can expect;
- 294 • How to contact someone within the recruiting system should applicants have a question; and
- 295 • Information, in writing, on how applicants can file complaints with someone outside of their local Recruiting Centre. These complaints must then be dealt with in a specified period of time.

296 Once developed, these standards must be promulgated and communicated to both applicants and recruiters. They should not only appear on the Canadian Forces website, they should be prominently displayed in all Recruiting Centres.

297 **Recommendation Two:**

298 That the Chief of Military Personnel provide the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group with the resources required to put in place a Standards Cell, whose responsibility would be to monitor and report on performance measures, and to develop best practices and lessons learned for the benefit of the entire organization.

299 **Recommendation Three:**

300 That the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group develop, implement, monitor and report on client service standards for their recruiting ‘call centre’.

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301 *Issue Two – Command and Control*

302 **Recommendation Four:**

303 That the lines of responsibility and authority for the military recruiting
process be identified and/or clarified and communicated to all implicated
organizations in the most effective manner.

304 **Recommendation Five:**

305 That *Client Service Agreements* be developed (where they do not exist) and
formalized between the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group and all
'service providers'. These agreements should establish clear expectations
and service standards, including performance measures and indicators,
and they should be adhered to in a rigorous way.

306 **Recommendation Six:**

307 That the Chief of Military Personnel develop performance measures to
monitor the effectiveness of the service agreements, including the
communications between groups, and to identify when changes are
required.

308 *Issue Three – Component Transfer*

309 **Recommendation Seven:**

310 That the Chief of Military Personnel, the Chief of Reserves and the
Canadian Forces Recruiting Group monitor the implementation of these
directives rigorously and make adjustments if, and where, necessary to
refine them.

311 *Issue Four – Security*

312 **Recommendation Eight:**

313 That the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces assess
the feasibility of extending or expanding the measures taken as part of
Operation Connection to reduce and/or eliminate delays in the security
screening process.

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314 **Recommendation Nine:**

315 That all Recruiting Centre staff be provided with an appropriate level of training and information on the Government of Canada Security Policy, the National Defence Personnel Security Screening Program, and all aspects (and components) of the security screening process.

316 **Recommendation Ten:**

317 The Canadian Forces Recruiting Group develop standard procedures for informing applicants of the security screening process, including providing a reasonable assessment as to how long the process will take for each individual applicant.

318 *Issue Five – Medical*

319 **Recommendation Eleven:**

320 That the Chief of Military Personnel develop, implement and analyze performance measures to determine the effectiveness of communications and cooperation between the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group and Canadian Forces Health Services and, ultimately, the impact that this arrangement has on the military recruiting system.

321 *Issue Six – Recruit Allowances*

322 **Recommendation Twelve:**

323 That the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group develop a current information distribution process that ensures that all Recruiting Centre staff have easy access to the latest information regarding the Recruit Allowance Program.

324 **Recommendation Thirteen:**

325 That the present policy of awarding a recruit allowance based on the date when an applicant is enrolled be amended, to reflect the date when the application is received by a Canadian Forces Recruiting Centre with all supporting documentation.

326 **Recommendation Fourteen:**

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327 The present policy include a provision that, should a recruit allowance increase (or be instituted) after a qualified individual has applied to join the Canadian Forces but before that individual is actually enrolled, then the individual should receive the new (higher) allowance.

328 **Recommendation Fifteen:**

329 All offers of a recruit allowance (including relevant terms and conditions) be provided to applicants in writing, and in very clear and easily understood terms.

330 *Issue Seven – Reserve Issues*

331 **Recommendation Sixteen:**

332 The Chief of Military Personnel, in consultation with the Chief of Reserves and the other various stakeholders, develop and implement a National Reserve Recruiting Policy. While establishing national goals and procedures, this policy must also recognize the unique requirements of the various Reserve elements.

333 **Recommendation Seventeen:**

334 That the Chief of Military Personnel, the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group and the other various stakeholders involved in the Reserve recruiting process develop and implement standard operating procedures, including service level standards, in this area.

335 **Recommendation Eighteen:**

336 That the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group develop a Standard Operating procedure that would allow access to Recruiting Centres outside the normal business working hours. This would allow access to applicants who work full time. Consideration should be given to have recruiting centres open during evenings to coincide with Reserve Units hours, in order to facilitate contacts in processing their candidates.