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TO 1745-42-7 (DGPP)  
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COMMENTS: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS 1-4  
SEXUAL ORIENTATION IN THE CANADIAN FORCES

General

A major work done under the auspices of the Kinsey Institute found that attitudes towards homosexuality in the U.S.A. were wide-ranging and overwhelmingly negative (Klassen et al., 1989). Canadian public opinion polls indicated that a sizeable segment of Canadian society held negative attitudes towards homosexuality (e.g., Gallup, 1977).

With respect to homosexual rights in Canada related to employment, 52% of the Canadian public indicated that homosexuals should be protected from discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act (Gallup, 1977) and 70% of Canadians felt that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation should be prohibited by law (Gallup, 1988). On the issue of employment of homosexuals in the Canadian Forces (CF), Canadian men were evenly divided in their opinions, whereas 59% of the women agreed (27% disagreed) that homosexuals should be employed in the CF (Environics, 1986).

Question 1

Zuliani (1986) conducted a study for the CF Charter Task Force to assess the behavioural impact of employing homosexuals in the CF. That study concluded that the presence of known homosexuals in the CF would be detrimental to cohesion, morale and recruiting. It found that the majority of servicemen felt that the employment of homosexuals would decrease CF effectiveness (less than half of servicewomen held this view). In a subsequent survey, it was found that the majority of CF respondents indicated that enrolment of homosexuals would decrease CF effectiveness (Urban Dimensions Group, 1991).

Because the sexual orientation of CF members is not identified or monitored, the number of homosexuals in the CF has not been determined. Since there is no restriction on homosexuals serving in the CF, there are no plans to make such a determination. The predictions

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reflected in the Zuliani (1986) and Urban Dimensions Group (1991) reports have not materialized. There have not been any known major changes to trends in standard indicators (e.g., police reports, disciplinary returns, redresses of grievance, significant incident reports) since the policy was cancelled. CF leaders have followed the direction of the CDS and have implemented the preferred approach.

Devotion to duty and sense of fairness on the part of CF members are key factors in making the policy change work. CF members are motivated to do their duty while recognizing that individual performance that contributes to the mission, regardless of individual differences, is what is important. At the same time, the negative attitudes and predispositions that were found to exist in the CF towards the employment of homosexuals (e.g., Zuliani, 1986) can set up internal conflicts that must be addressed. CF research on the integration of servicewomen into non-traditional occupations (e.g., Park, 1986) showed that leadership plays a critical role in the resolution of such conflicts, while maintaining cohesion, morale and effectiveness. Where leaders supported the integration of women, the employment trials were successful. Where leaders did not actively support or participate, the trials were not as successful and significant difficulties were experienced. It was this principle that was applied to implementing the CF policy change regarding homosexuals, right from the CDS on down. So far it appears to be working and the impact is minimal.

#### Question 2

There have been no known differences in the acceptance of female versus male homosexuals in the CF since the policy change. Gender is a variable that has been the subject of research investigation on attitudes towards homosexuals. The Kinsey Institute work (Klassen et al., 1989) analyzed the demographic variables gender, age, race, education, marital status, community size, geographic region and religious affiliation. It found that in general, the attitudes of men and women towards homosexuality differed little, where the largest difference was that women were more likely than men to find homosexuality abhorrent. The work also noted that some researchers found males to be somewhat less

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antihomosexual than females whereas other researchers found no gender differences in attitudes.

In Canada, Zuliani (1986) analyzed gender, rank, language, education, years of service, media information and contact with homosexuals to determine if they could account for attitudes towards homosexuals among CF members. He found that overall there were more negative reactions towards male homosexuals than towards female homosexuals but overall CF members' attitudes towards female homosexuals were neutral. He also cited Kite (1984), who found that males were more negative toward male homosexuals than females but there was little difference in male and female attitudes towards female homosexuals (Zuliani, 1986). Urban Dimensions Group (1991) found that a number of variables were more strongly related than others to acceptance/non-acceptance of homosexuals, e.g., servicewomen were found to be more accepting of homosexuals than men.

There has been no examination of differences in acceptance of homosexuals in the CF among sea, land and air element personnel since the policy change. Previous research (e.g., Zuliani, 1986) did show that personnel in land and sea operations units were less accepting of homosexuals in the CF. However, standard indicators since the policy change do not appear to reflect this in behaviour.

### Question 3

On the issue of potential for finding differences in standards of acceptability or informal prejudices between non-commissioned members and commissioned officers in the CF, Urban Dimensions Group (1986) found that CF members of higher rank were more accepting of homosexuals. Although Zuliani (1986) used rank as a variable in studying attitudes towards homosexuals, no differences based on rank were discussed in the report. He found that the most important predictor of negative attitudes towards male homosexuals was quality of respondent contact with male homosexuals. This was followed by either respondent gender or impression gained from the media. Again, leadership has been a key factor in making the change in CF policy work.

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Question 4

No specific examples are available. The fact that there have not been any confirmed problems as a result of the policy change should speak for itself. Employment of homosexuals in the CF is a non-issue in Canada. If problems should occur, the implementation process will be modified as required.

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