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Army commander

ARMY RESERVES AT CRITICAL POINT

Hello General,

I would like to draw your attention to the role and situation of the Reserves, particularly the 2nd Division. Despite the short-term challenges, our organization would like to remind you of the fundamental role of the Reserves. A mobilization structure ensuring a regional presence supported by committed citizens/soldiers with over 98% of part-time reservists serving at unit level. This letter is part of our profound desire to contribute to the establishment of a strong and resilient Reserve capable of contributing to security issues at home and abroad, while respecting its intrinsic nature: *the part-time service of a citizen-soldier fully integrated into his or her community.*

The Army Reserve in Canada has a rich history, deeply rooted in the military and social development of our communities. This history goes back to well before Confederation, when local militias were composed of citizen-soldiers who trained occasionally and could be mobilized, as was the case during the War of 1812. After Confederation, the Active Militia – forerunner of today's Reserve – was formed. During the First World War, many militia members enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force and fought overseas. As in the First World War, the Reserve served as a major recruitment pool in the Second – a kind of mobilization base – supporting Canada's war effort. After the Second War, the government formed the Reserve Force as we know it today.

Since its inception, the Reserve has been an institution of national importance. Reserve units, thanks in part to their distribution in many communities across Canada and to their regimental system, constitute the fundamental structure for a force capable of supporting the Army's efforts in all its mandates. The Reserve's contribution during the two world wars was significant. It was just as significant during missions in the Balkans, during the Afghanistan campaign, and continues to be so in support of NATO's deterrence operation on the Eastern Front. During recent and current operations, Reserve personnel have contributed and continue to contribute 20% of the various contingents. The Reserves have been, are and always will be part of the solution to provide the Army with the military capability to support its commitments. The Reserves have the structure, but not the financial, human, equipment or legislative resources to maintain the pace and intensity of reinforcement required.

In a nutshell, the institution of the Reserve is based on the commitment and part-time leadership of men and women in each Reserve unit. The main issue is unit sustainability. Units are finding it extremely difficult to generate replacements while delivering the mandates required for full-time service. For the past 30 years, we have been assisting and supporting the operationalization of the Reserves, geared to the ever-increasing need for immediate reinforcement of the Regular Force.

Whereas this institution is based on the citizen/soldier, a citizen who decides to invest himself in public service on a part-time basis, alongside his family and a civilian career. This commitment contrast with our society's current culture, in addition to his job, a reservist invests at least 15 hours a week over the long term in military service, and remuneration alone cannot be a source of motivation. Compared to full-time reservists in garrison receive 7 days' pay for 35 hours of work, including time spent maintaining their physical condition. On the other hand, a part-timer receives 1 day's pay for 8 to 10 hours' work, with no guarantee, and his physical training has to be done on his own time.

The part-time, long-term service of Reserve members is the foundation of the institution; they must ensure the institution's influence, in addition to recruiting, training and coaching personnel. Through a rich Regimental life, commanding officers and honoraries, together with their teams, must develop an outstanding sense of belonging among their members, in order to perpetuate the institution through the duration of members' service, essential to the development of leadership to be renewed.

The question is, is it your intention to eliminate the foundations of the Reserves and limit them to being nothing more than a placement agency to fill the gaps left by full-time personnel in fulfilling their mandates? Because it is hard to imagine pursuing a civilian career under the ever-increasing pressure of recurring availability for full-time service, when there is so much to do in the units.

Paradigm shifts are urgently needed if the Reserves are to make their full contribution as an institution. Its base, the part-time Reservists, must be revitalized. With current recruiting and training processes, the number of available part-time Reservists is continually dwindling, despite authorized additions since the 1992 integration into the Total Force concept. We are asking for your support in revitalizing this institution that is essential to Canada's Security. Energizing means increasing the number of part-time reservists in units, and enhancing the value of this role.

We ask the fundamental question, is CA up to the task? So, should we:

1. **Consider a parallel line of command** to ensure the maintenance of a line of operations adapted to its condition, dedicated resources and constant funding without the risk of being cannibalized by the full-time component.
2. **Accelerate the recruiting process and the numbers**, because the recruiting process is certainly improving and we need to keep up the momentum. We should be able to speed up enrolment from street to uniform within 14 days for simple files if we are to maximize our attraction and recruitment efforts.
3. **To make training more efficient**, the aim should be to train new members in less than a year, and to recognize civilian achievements where relevant. The further along they are in their military careers, the more time citizen-soldiers have to devote to developing their civilian careers and to their families. Availability for full-time service is often limited to two or three week's vacation in the summer. With this in mind, it would be important to review the curricula of career courses and the mode of delivery (asynchronous distance, self-learning, recognition of prior learning, valuing the experiential approach) of individual training in order to reduce the number of full-time days required for advanced courses. Time is the key resource for every citizen-soldier.

4. **Bring back enlistment and accelerated training for** experienced **officers** to oxygenate unit leadership teams. Managers not necessarily deployable in the first place.
5. **Equip each of our units adequately.** At present, not even a platoon/troop/battery can be equipped for training.
6. **Fill full-time positions** with staff capable of supporting the mandate.
7. **It has to be said that compensation for Class A reservists** is neither competitive nor fair. The daily rate is based on a seven-day week, whereas the normal work week is five days. It is based on 365 days, whereas there are 104 weekend days plus statutory holidays. In short, there is room for improvement if we want to become competitive on the salary front. Otherwise, the civilian job market will be the one to hire the limited human resources.

Unlike the Regular Force, whose operational units are supplied with personnel trained and schooled in their respective trades, without having to manage recruitment and basic training, the Reserve Force, which operates in a decentralized generation model, must draw from its operational manpower the managers, instructors and executives required to train its troops in this particular context.

In addition, the commanders and staffs of reserve formations and units have to cope, on a part-time basis, with the burden of infrastructure management, HR (career) management of their members, as well as fulfilling their training and Regular Force reinforcement responsibilities. This challenge, which was significant at the turn of the 2000s, is not almost unsustainable, as the resources allocated for these functions are not adequately distributed given the growing demands of an ill-adapted bureaucracy.

Yours sincerely,

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Chairman
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