

THE SPECTATOR, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1991 ••••

# Canadian military dropping ban on gays

OTTAWA — Homosexuals will be officially allowed into the Canadian military.

The federal government will announce as early as today that the Canadian Armed Forces is dropping its controversial policy against "knowingly" hiring or promoting gays.

Conservative MPs were informed of the change by Defence Minister Marcel Masse at yesterday's weekly caucus meeting.

General John de Chastelain,

chief of the defence staff, will announce that people who have engaged in homosexual conduct will no longer be prevented from serving in the military.

But a source said Gen. de Chastelain will also say the policy change will not stop the forces from dealing with "sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, either heterosexual or homosexual, which can be demonstrated to have a disruptive effect on operational effectiveness."

The no-gays policy is being challenged as a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in five separate Federal Court lawsuits launched by former soldiers.

## U.S. challenge: C22

Last year, the independent Security Intelligence Review Committee ruled the policy was unconstitutional and ordered the rehiring of a former air force lieu-

tenant who was forced to quit because she was a lesbian.

The watchdog committee also blasted the military's special inquiries unit for its "deplorable" conduct in investigating whether Michelle Douglas was gay.

It said Ms Douglas was taken to a hotel room under false pretenses and grilled by two officers who showed an "intense prurient interest" in her sexual activities.

The federal government has appealed that ruling.

From Southam News

Kitchener-Waterloo Record, Thurs., Oct. 10, 1991

# Gays to be allowed in military

By Stephen Bindman  
Southam News

OTTAWA — Homosexuals will be officially into the Canadian military.

The federal government will announce as early as today that the Canadian Armed Forces is dropping its policy against "knowingly" hiring or promoting gays.

Tory MPs were informed of the change by Minister Marcel Masse at Wednesday's caucus.

Gen. John de Chastelain, chief of the defence, announced that homosexuals will no longer be barred from serving in the military.

But a source said de Chastelain will also say the change will not stop the Forces from dealing with sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, heterosexual or homosexual, which can be demonstrated to have a disruptive effect on operational effectiveness.

The no-gays policy is currently being challenged as a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in five separate Federal Court lawsuits launched by former soldiers.

Last year, the independent Security Intelligence Review Committee ruled the policy was unconstitutional and ordered the rehiring of a former air force lieutenant who was forced to quit because she was a lesbian.

The committee also blasted the military's special inquiries unit for its "deplorable" conduct. It said Michelle Douglas was taken to a hotel room under false pretenses and grilled by two officers who showed an "intense prurient interest" in her sexual activities.

In 1990, an inquiry by former judge Rene Marin found there was "no reason whatsoever" for the military's counter-intelligence unit to investigate homosexuals.

the examiner, Thursday, October 10, 1991

# Military to admit gays

OTTAWA (CP) — The federal government is about to change its policy banning homosexuals from the military, a Toronto television station reported Wednesday.

The report said the decision to bar discrimination against homosexuals in the military was announced in caucus by Mary Collins, the associate defence minister.

Toronto-area MP Don Blenkarn was quoted as saying the change was prompted by some court cases pending under the Charter of Rights.

Capt. John Blakeley, a spokesman for the Defence Department, said



MARY COLLINS

Wednesday the policy has been reviewed but no date has been set for an announcement. He would not reveal any details concerning the review.

In Calgary, Brig.-Gen. Barry Ashton said it won't be easy but he is sure the Armed Forces will eventually adapt to homosexuals in its ranks.

Ashton told the Citizen's Inquiry into Peace and Security last week that homosexuals have the potential to cause problems when military personnel are confined to close quarters or serve in remote locations.

The general also said, despite official policy, he is certain homosexuals have served in the Armed Forces.

They survived because they performed well, were loyal, remained in the closet and didn't make their sexual preferences an issue, he said.

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*Homosexual*  
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**HUMAN RIGHTS**

10 (Oct '91)

# Policy against gay soldiers being scrapped by forces

The change is 'long overdue,' says a civil rights lawyer.

By Stephen Bindman  
Southam News

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The federal government will announce, possibly as early as today, that the Canadian Armed Forces is dropping its controversial policy against "knowingly" hiring or promoting gays.

Conservative MPs were informed of the change by Defence Minister Marcel Masse at Wednesday's weekly caucus meeting.

General John de Chastelain, chief of the defence staff, will announce that people who have engaged in homosexual conduct will no longer be prevented from serving in the military.

**SEXUAL MISCONDUCT:** A source said de Chastelain will also say the policy change will not stop the forces from dealing with "sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, either heterosexual or homosexual, which can be demonstrated to have a disruptive effect on operational effectiveness."

The no-gays policy is being challenged as a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in five separate federal court lawsuits launched by former soldiers.

Last year, the independent Security Intelligence Review Committee ruled the policy was unconstitutional and ordered the rehiring of a former air force lieutenant forced to quit because she was a lesbian.

The watchdog committee also blasted the military's special inquiries unit for its "deplorable" conduct in investigating whether Michelle Douglas was gay.

It said Douglas was taken to a hotel room under false pretences and grilled by two officers who

showed an "intense prurient interest" in her sexual activities.

The federal government has appealed that ruling.

A few years ago, policy was amended so that if gay soldiers refuse to quit, they were no longer automatically forced out but were not eligible for training, courses or promotions.

**LONG OVERDUE:** Douglas's lawyer, Clayton Ruby, said the change is "long overdue" because the policy clearly violates the charter's equality guarantees.

"Only a Tory government could be so mean-spirited to wait this long," he said.

Last September, a special inquiry by former Ontario judge Rene Marin said there was "no reason whatsoever" for the military's counter-intelligence unit to single out homosexuals for investigation.

And last month, in a challenge brought by a former air force captain, an Ontario judge ruled Canada's human rights law is unconstitutional because it did not give gays and lesbians legal protection from discrimination.

Tory back-bencher Don Blenkarn seemed resigned to the change, but said rules will have to be introduced to make sure soldiers act "decently" on ships and in military barracks.

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## News digest

2-STANDARD-FREEHOLDER, Thursday, October 10, 1991

# Military to accept gays

OTTAWA (CP) — The federal government is about to change its policy banning homosexuals from the military, a Toronto television station reported Wednesday.

CFTO TV says the announcement would have come Wednesday, save for protests from some members of the Conservative caucus.

The report said the decision to bar discrimination against homosexuals in the military was announced in caucus by Mary Collins, the associate defence minister.

Toronto-area MP Don Blenkarn was quoted as saying the change was prompted by some court cases pending under the Charter of Rights.

Capt. John Blakeley, a spokesman for the Defence Department, said Wednesday the policy has been reviewed but no date has been set for

an announcement. He would not reveal any details concerning the review.

In Calgary, Brig.-Gen. Barry Ashton said it won't be easy but he is sure the Armed Forces will eventually adapt to homosexuals in its ranks.

"I think I would be less than honest if I said I thought it was going to be simple and they will be welcomed with open arms," the Calgary-based commander of the 1st Canadian Brigade Group said Wednesday.

"It's not clear to me how we're going to implement the policy or how it will be applied, but I have confidence that whatever we do is going to be marching in line with society at large," Ashton said.

Ashton told the Citizen's Inquiry into Peace and Security last week that homosexuals have the potential

to cause problems when military personnel are confined to close quarters or serve in remote locations.