

**SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE
REFERENCES COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO RECRUITMENT & RETENTION
OF DEFENCE PERSONNEL**

SUBMISSION

Submission No: 109

Submittor: Colonel D J Sandow RFD ED

Address: PO Box 339
WOODEND VIC 3442

Telephone No: (03) 5424 8272

Fax: (03) 54234 8382

E-Mail:

No. of Pages: 4

Attachments: No

COLONEL D.J. SANDOW RFD ED

P.O. BOX 339
WOODEND, VIC 3442

The Secretary
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Sir/Madam,

INQUIRY INTO RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF DEFENCE PERSONNEL
SUBMISSION BY COLONEL DONALD SANDOW RFD ED

Enclosed please find my submission on this subject. Also enclosed please find a 3.5" disc with a copy of the submission. Both were forwarded in electronic form on 19th May.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sandow". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial letter.

Donald Sandow.

DONALD SANDOW
P.O. BOX 339
WOODEND VIC. 3442

TELEPHONE 03 5424 8272
FAX 03 5423 8382

The Secretary
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade reference Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

INQUIRY INTO RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF DEFENCE PERSONNEL
SUBMISSION BY DONALD SANDOW

Introduction

1. This submission results from about fifty years of close personal association with the Citizen Military Force and, more recently, the Army Reserve and the Reserve Forces in general. This experience includes about 38 years as an active member. I have also been an active member of the Defence Reserves Association and have served some years as State President and Federal President of that body.
2. It is my intention to offer notes and consequent opinion regarding the Reserves and shall comment on some of the headings offered by the reference material. It is however item (c) of the terms of reference which is the nub of the problem regarding recruiting and retention in the Reserves, and the Army Reserve in particular.
3. The traditions of the Australian Army are so well founded upon the heritage of the "civilian" in uniform. This is not to detract from the excellence of our military training, but draws the attention of the Committee to the absolute need for the Army to capitalize upon the experiences and leadership capabilities of the Reserve, hitherto undernourished and largely ignored.
4. The stark reality is that the Reserve's present condition of disintegration is no haphazard condition. It has arrived in that circumstance by design. It is my sincere belief that only a genuine review of its misfortunes can repair its state of affairs and that such a review has a chance of success only if it is executed without delay. And it will need nurturing for it to work.
5. There is an overwhelming body of evidence and documentation to confirm the problems of deprivation and neglect over several decades. Numerous reports have reached this conclusion. I trust that it is not necessary to catalogue that which is by now very well known. What is not recognized is that the Army (and, no doubt the Defence Department) have repeatedly and wilfully ignored their duty to attend to this neglect, and with malice aforethought.
6. Before studying the individual problems, it will be necessary to recognize that the leaders of the Army have progressed through the ranks of real control of the Service in such a way that many have had an opportunity to leave an influence upon the psyche of the Army without being in position for long enough to have to account for their contribution to the disaster which is now staring us in the face.
7. The logical remedy for this would have been for governments not to have yielded to the persuasion of the Generals. To be fair, it is not always easy to interpret their intentions, as it must be said that the Army has its own quite peculiar code of behavior and its own thesaurus. It has also developed the practice of making statements carefully designed to leave the speaker safe from criticism or challenge. It is often out of touch with the kind of reality at large in the community.
8. The final, and perhaps the cruelest problem is that all those concerned over the last forty years or so have seen fit to accept the notion, so often put by those in positions of responsibility, that something has been or will be done about the problem, whilst the real intention has been to allow the problem to subside into expedient temporary insignificance.
9. There *is* a cure for this state of affairs, which is to return to practices which avoid continuance of the trouble. This involves returning conditions to those in which the Government is more in control of the related practices within the Services. In particular, Reserves will need to have their problems addressed by someone who accepts their true and potential value and can and will override the insincerity and innate jealousy of some of the permanent elements of the Forces.

10. The rank and command structure of the Reserves compared with their regular counterparts is a symptom of the ailment. Not only are the Reserves being progressively deprived of a reasonable rank and command structure, but selection of such senior Reserve officers as are allowed to emerge runs the risk of being on the basis of "amiability" to the present undesirable trends.

(a) Whether the current recruitment system is meeting, and will continue to meet, the needs of the ADF.

11. Meanwhile the Army can and has perceived with impunity that the Reserve is a less than effective force (even though it successfully calls upon the Reserve for soldiers and specialists in time of stress). Simultaneously conscious efforts are made to suppress and incapacitate the Reserve. Evidence of this will be found (but is not restricted to) in such exercises as Project Wellesley, A21 and various cynical propositions to "enhance" the Reserve.

12. There can be little doubt that more must be done to improve recruitment levels. Some reference has been made to this by the recent report of the Australian National Audit Office on the Reserves. Unfortunately they seem to have "bought" the idea, currently popular with senior permanent members, that much can be done to alleviate the problem by encouraging personnel leaving the regular force to join the Reserve. This is fraught with problems including those of:

- a. Early disenchantment,
- b. Exacerbation of the present trend to use the Reserve as a pool of individuals to be called upon by regular units
- c. Elimination of vacancies in the rank structure for training traditional Reservists (with consequent depreciation of motive for enlistment)
- d. Modification and collapse of the training system (as with R.A.N.)

13. Surely a more permanent and effective method of attending to the recruitment question is to attend to the image of Reserve Forces by addressing overall conditions of service.

(c) The impact of changes to ADF conditions of service, pay and allowances on retention and recruitment of personnel

14. In recent articles in the R.A.N. "Reserve News" the Chief of Personnel of the Navy, in an unguarded moment, related the attitude of the permanent Services to the correlation of pay rates between Permanent and Reserve members. Until the prevailing misconceptions are addressed by the Services, the Department and the Government nothing can be done to offer equity to Reservists. As a consequence, nothing rational is being done to encourage retention in Reserves.

(d) Current levels and categories of specialist personnel in the ADF compared to the organisation's requirements

15. There aren't many specialist categories required by ADF which can't be provided by Reservists from within the ranks of the Reserves. There appears to be no effort made to identify the requirements, to enlist the capabilities and to catalogue and employ those skills.

16. An awesome pool of professional, commercial and industrial skills resides in the Reserves, and a great "native cunning" not evidenced by their regular counterparts. For this reason alone, recruitment and retention of Reservists should be quickened.

(e) The impact of current career management practices on retention of personnel

17. I don't know how much damage Dr Millar did in 1974 with his "One Army" concept. I do know, however, that it has been the cause of many theories about how the Army should be organized. Some of these have been constructive, some downright mischievous.

18. The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs...of August 2000, "*From Phantom to Force*" deals very briefly indeed with the concept of "One Army" (paragraph 7.4 to 7.6. In doing so it agrees with the concept although stating that it was concerned about the implementation.

19. In the same document and chapter, matters of collective training are discussed. Paragraph 7.60 refers to the absolute logic of those serving together being those who have trained together. That's what training is all about.

20. Under the heading "Individual Training" some quite irrational comments are recorded. The idea that Reserves need a *better expression of Mission* than the regular force is hard to explain. The Mission presented for itself by the Army was " *to provide a potent, versatile and modern Army to promote the security of Australia and to protect its people and interests* ". This is little more than a motherhood statement.

21. The proposition was also made that the need for higher training standards was crucial to having a Reserve that could be used. But the self-satisfying result of conscious neglect has been to make the maximum level of difficulty for the Reserve to achieve high levels of training.

22. In paragraph 7.55 the point is made that the trade of Electronics Technician takes over twelve months of full-time training and study to complete. What kind of notion exists in the prejudiced regular General's breast to make him believe that the Army is the sole source of training an Electronics Technician ? It is also necessary to dismiss the idea that Reservists can offer protracted periods of Full-Time training. It never has been generally possible and is not likely to become so. But there can be little doubt that the Reserve could flood itself with Electronics Technicians ready for duty with just a Short Course provided recruitment and retention circumstances were reasonable. Such a facility could no doubt then be available to regular units at a fraction of the current training and wastage costs.

23. What is happening is that the insular intellect of "The Army" has as a mind-set that it wants the Reservist to be the same as the regular serviceman. There are even somewhat spurious questions of occupational health and safety put forward. The sooner there is a realization that this is not possible, the better. The whole of Chapter 7 puts forward in a most readable way the improbabilities which collectively ensure that the two streams must be regarded separately.

24. That is not to say that one stream is superior to the other. The regular soldier is a professional soldier first and finally. The Reservist is a citizen first and a soldier second. But let it not be said that he is an inferior or less valuable creature in peace or in war. Ample evidence insists that Australians have done it and can still do it.

Solution

25. Resist the temptation to think that the Reservist can fit into the mould of regular soldiers (or that the latter can have a second *civilian* career) because such a proposition defies logic. Our nation has struggled with this absolute improbability for too long, and it is clear that it has been at the expense of recruitment, retention and efficiency. Fancy ideas of integrated units other than for special purposes or for reasons of logical attachments are just not workable over the long term, given the characteristics of the two streams.

26. The Reserve, from its position years ago as a cogent force, capable of effective independent employment, has been reduced to a component regarded as a resource of doubtful value. From a vital element seen as a pertinent partner in the Army community with its own supportive role and voice, it has become a reservoir from which resources can be drawn in the some-times vain expectation that they will be replaced when it is found expedient to do so.

27. Formerly the Reserve (then the CMF) had a right and a responsibility to report to government in times of need, it has been stripped of most of its senior postings and down-graded in others to the extent that, under normal requirements of subordination and loyalty, it can not reasonably assert its proper claims or inconveniences.

28. This willful down-grading is not solely the act of the Army itself, but has been aggravated by Governments. The hierarchy of the Reserve has been depreciated by Governments both actively and by successive neglect in the face of repeated warnings that the situation is worsening. Yet it is the Reserve who are said to be the increasingly important component of the Army. There is an hypocrisy from which it is now necessary to find extrication in the interests of *suitability* for the Army.

29. The Committee might explore the value of reflecting upon the former notion of the "Citizens' Military Force" compared with the "Reserve". The former was an organization which was fully part of the Army but which had a structure capable of organizing into an integral useful set of components. In the latter stands a scattering of largely dismembered organizations to which command is often appointed without reference to the realities of Reservist personnel available and which is becoming more like the Reserve of the Navy (in which real opportunities for the training and betterment of truly citizen sailors and officers is all but extinct).

30. So:- Create a clear and separate component within the Army (and almost certainly in the other Services) in the form of a Reserve (*that may not be the best name*) to train the Reserve personnel. Such a component must, of course have the same overall objective as the regular component and be answerable to the Chief of the Army. It would need support in the form of:

- a. Facilities for training,
- b. Availability of equipment and stores,
- c. Provision of training time,
- d. Provision of instructors,
- e. Administration of personnel,
- f. Training of some specialists,
- g. Military training of commanders and leaders,
- h. Consultation of senior Reserve personnel, and
- i. Consultation of Reserve elements of the Military community such as the Defence Reserves Association.

31. Such a Reserve component would have its own command structure and be properly represented at the senior level of each of the Army's "Commands". It would most certainly need training support, although it would probably have the capacity to offer many kinds of specialist training to the regular component. It would require to have a responsibility to report to the Minister for Defence on matters affecting its well-being.

32. The Mission for this component must be consistent with the overall mission of the Army and must be no less vague or equivocal. It is possible that the structure of the component should be along the lines of a Division, but extra care should be taken to ensure that it could provide soldiers, specialists and command personnel and/or Formations, Units, Sub-Units or other elements to the regular component on a basis as needed.

33. Care should also be taken to ensure that it is provided with substantial computerization and other technical facilities to maintain data bases on its personnel.

34. Having achieved that, there would need to be a pay system equal to that of the regular force and a proper system to compensate members for the fact that the myriad facilities for full-time (long) courses and other occupational support for regular personnel was not readily available to its members.

35. Commanders for the component must be carefully selected in the first instance and competitive promotion examinations need to be re-established as soon as possible.

DONALD SANDOW

18 MAY 01