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STUDY FINDS GAYS DO NOT UNDERMINE CANADIAN MILITARY PERFORMANCE

18 April 2000 - SANTA BARBARA, CA. A new 44-page study of gays and lesbians in the Canadian military has found that after Canada's 1992 decision to allow homosexuals to serve openly in its armed forces, military performance did not decline.

The study is the most comprehensive academic study of homosexuality in a foreign military ever compiled and reflects an exhaustive inventory of relevant data and research. Its title is "Effects of the 1992 Lifting of Restrictions on Gay and Lesbian Service in the Canadian Forces; Appraising the Evidence".

The study was written by Aaron Belkin and Jason McNichol. Belkin is Director of the Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military at the University of California, Santa Barbara. McNichol is Doctoral Candidate in Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley and Director of ELM Research Associates, a non-partisan research firm in Berkeley.

Key findings are as follows:

- * Lifting of restrictions on gay and lesbian service in the Canadian Forces has not led to any change in military performance, unit cohesion, or discipline.
- * Self-identified gay, lesbian, and transsexual members of the Canadian Forces contacted for the study describe good working relationships with peers.
- * The percent of military women who experienced sexual harassment dropped 46% after the ban was lifted. While there were several reasons why harassment declined, one factor was that after the ban was lifted women were free to report assaults without fear that they would be accused of being a lesbian.
- * Before Canada lifted its gay ban, a 1985 survey of 6,500 male soldiers found that 62% said that they would refuse to share showers, undress or sleep in the same room as a gay soldier. After the ban was lifted, follow-up studies found no increase in disciplinary, performance, recruitment, sexual misconduct, or resignation problems.
- * None of the 905 assault cases in the Canadian Forces from November, 1992 (when the ban was lifted) until August, 1995 involved gay bashing or could be attributed to the sexual orientation of one of the parties.