

O.S.S.O.M.M.

Box 26, MYNARSKI PARK, ALBERTA TOM 1N0
REPRESENTING CANADIAN MILITARY FAMILIES

Hi!

Most of you have probably read in the newspapers about the court action OSSOMM is taking against the Attorney General of Canada and the Minister of National Defence. In order to clarify what is happening for our members, I will repeat some of what you already know.

When OSSOMM began distributing our newsletter, holding general meetings, and conducting the write-in campaign for a dental plan, we were informed by the Base Administration Officer that we were conducting "Political Activity" on the base. Since this was not allowed according to The QR & O 19:44, we could be charged with trespassing under the Defence Establishment Trespass Regulations. QR & O 19:44 states:

"No officer in command of a base or other unit or element shall:

A. allow a political meeting to be held or a political speech to be delivered at his base or other unit or element."

It was apparent that the decision to allow OSSOMM to distribute the newsletters door to door, to have meetings, to conduct a write-in campaign, and to circulate a petition concerning a dangerous intersection, would have to come from a higher authority. This is why in October 1984 we wrote a letter to the Minister of Defence, at the time, Mr. Robert Coates. In April 1985, we received a reply from the Minister of National Defence, Mr. Erik Nielsen. In this letter we were told that he could not grant us the authority we requested because we would pose a threat to the political neutrality of the Canadian Armed Forces.

OSSOMM believes that family and social issues do not pose a threat to this neutrality. We also believe that QR & O 19:44 was not intended for spouses of military members. If the article can be applied to the spouses, then OSSOMM argues that this is a denial of our rights as guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We have filed a claim in Court of Queen's Bench in Calgary, asking the courts to determine if this section is a violation of our rights and freedoms.

In our brief to the Commission of Equality Rights, OSSOMM made six recommendations. These recommendations are:

1. Define **Prohibited Political Activity** under Article 19:44 very specifically to be that which threatens the security of Canada. If there are certain activities which could pose a risk then these should be listed. All other lobbying and participation in the democratic process should be allowed.
2. We request **Special Status**. In requesting special status, we point out that we are not military members but we are civilians living on DND property. This action would grant us our rights but still protect the military from outside civilians.
3. Establish a **civilian office** with official capacity to liaise between the DND, government representatives, and families and with the power of an Ombudsman. This office could also provide research which is much needed and sadly lacking with regards to the military and their families.
4. Drop the term **DEPENDANT** or **DEPENDANT WIFE** from regulations, law documents, publications, etc. This wording is symbolic of the archaic attitudes. It is inappropriate, demeaning and discriminatory. We suggest the terms spouses and children.
5. The investigation and implementation of ways to have democratic elections in PMQ's open to all residents regardless of rank or sex. This should include the office of mayor (or chairman or president). It should also include school board members and trustees. These elections should be outside the jurisdiction of the base commander.
6. Investigation into the administration of NPF funds. These funds are generated through the messes and the Canex system. Spouses and ordinary military families contribute to these, yet have no say in the spending of the fund. It is run by the base commander and senior officers.

Due to nationwide publicity as a result of our brief (Sept. 20, 1985) and our simultaneous newsconferences in Toronto and Calgary (Sept. 26, 1985) OSSOMM has gained support across the country. We have no indication of how long the court proceedings will take, however OSSOMM intends to continue our efforts. For all those who would like to become members, a registration form is available with this newsletter.

"The probability that we may fail in the struggle ought not to deter us from the support of a cause we believe to be just."

Abraham Lincoln

LEAF - Women's Legal Education and Action Fund. LEAF is a national, non-profit organization. The objectives of LEAF are:

1. To fund equality cases important to the advancement of women, and to pilot them through the complex legal process.
2. To provide resources in the form of legal research, education, and expertise for litigants, professionals, and the public at large.

OSSOMM is being supported by LEAF in our struggle to be allowed to associate on the bases across Canada, and to conduct a write-in campaign for a dental plan, etc... It is with the support and commitment from LEAF, that OSSOMM is able to proceed with the court action.

Grant for OSSOMM - OSSOMM applied for a grant 4 months ago and has still not received word. We are hoping that when our grant application is reviewed by the new minister M. Bouchard, funds will be approved for the period of April 1985 to October 1985.

Funds Donated. In the last month we have had donations of financial support from other organizations as well as from private citizens. It is very gratifying to see this support, especially at this time.

Information Package. We have had numerous requests from across the country for more information on OSSOMM. Members are now putting a package together to have ready for mailing.

There is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, and no tonics so powerful as expectation of something better tomorrow.

Orison Swett Marden

Phenomenal Support For OSSOMM. Phones have been ringing off the walls in support of OSSOMM. Newsrooms and radio stations have been busy answering calls from across Canada expressing support of aims and objectives of OSSOMM. If you know of anyone who wants to become a member of OSSOMM please ask them to send their name, address, telephone number and \$3.00 for registration to OSSOMM, Box 26, Mynarski Park, Alberta. TOM 1N0

Meeting to Discuss the Issues. On Thursday, October 10, a meeting was held at the Red Deer and District Museum to discuss any questions anyone may have had. If anyone else would like to have some questions answered, feel free to write us at our address, or call 346-0041 and ask for Mary Anne.

How Can OSSOMM Help You? OSSOMM can help you by promoting better understanding and communication between Military Families, policy makers and our elected representatives regarding issues affecting Military Families.

OSSOMM can help you by promoting better understanding of benefits, rights, and legislation affecting the Military Community and Family.

OSSOMM can help you by offering information through our newsletter.

OSSOMM can help you primarily by providing access to people ... people who can improve the quality of your life.

Who Can Join OSSOMM? Members of past and present military families who are concerned about one or all the issues facing military families today are cordially invited to join OSSOMM. Associate memberships are also available for friends of OSSOMM.

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Annual membership fees: \$3.00

Please mail to OSSOMM Box 26, Mynarski Park, Alberta TOM 1N0

Associate Memberships: Donation

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____