

# Entertainment Outlook

## Harboring reservations about the reserves

Gosh Perrin Beatty is just full of ideas, isn't he?

First, the defence minister decided we need \$15 billion worth of nuclear submarines to keep our Arctic waters safe. And... well, he has another idea he wants us all to spend next summer in the Canadian Forces reserves.

Wow. And just when you had begun to resign yourself to the prospect of yet another summer of playing golf and going to barbecues.

It seems the defence minister is urging employers to give workers two weeks of paid leave every summer in which to train as members of the reserve.

Says Mr. Beatty: "To achieve our ambitious goals... reserve service must once again become a regular feature of Canadian community life." He adds: "By involving more Canadians in their country's defence, we can improve public understanding of national security issues."

Well, let me be honest. I have nothing against people who want to join the reserves. But my views on Mr. Beatty's proposal are bound to be biased, since I have a problem with the basic argument that we must bolster our defences in the first place — the argument being we must be strong and prepared should the Russians decide to invade.

Quite frankly, I'm just not sure I see the point. If the Red Army should come marching in, then it seems to me a country the size of Canada has approximately one viable option. We learn to speak Russian. And like it.

I'm further biased by the fact I read about Mr. Beatty's plan the morning after watching the video, Full Metal Jacket.

If you're not much of a militarist in the first place, this particular movie will leave you feeling about as keen on joining the armed forces as the average Swedish pacifist — or the Republican vice-presidential nominee.

But I've tried my best to assess the plan fairly.

At first, to be honest, I was doubtful about the notion that we should do our stint in the reserves by taking two weeks paid summer leave.

Let's not mince words, here. You know perfectly well what "two weeks paid summer leave" is — it's your va-



**Weir's View**

**By Ian Weir**

Thomson News Service

cation, bucko.

You may or may not like the notion of spending your vacation at boot camp. But try to look on the bright side — at the very least, it'll give you a ready excuse when the kids start hounding you about going to Disneyland.

However, I'm still pretty antsy about Mr. Beatty's statement that signing us up in the reserves would improve our understanding of national security issues.

Two questions come to mind. How, precisely, would our understanding of these issues be improved? And what role would drill-sergeants play in this process?

"So, Maggot — you don't understand why we need the nuclear subs, eh? Well, let's have 300 pushups, and see if that helps clear your mind."

Perhaps this is pure paranoia. But wait — there's more. Mr. Beatty not only wants us to join the reserves — he wants to buy \$850 million worth of tracked troop carriers and minesweepers for reservists to operate.

Now, troop carriers sound like nice things to drive. But minesweepers?

Imagine — for the sake of pure conjecture — a defence minister sitting at his desk with furrowed brow, pondering the thorny question: "How shall I deal with the fact the voters seem to scorn

my plan to spend \$15 billion on subs?" And in a flash of inspiration, the answer comes: "Let's send the voters out to look for mines!" (BLAM! Good work — you found one.)

Which leads to my most fundamental misgiving.

Mr. Beatty paints a nice, benign picture when he refers to reserve service as "a regular part of Canadian community life." But what happens if some turkey starts a war?

Spending your vacation in basic training might be tolerable. Spending it

in the Persian Gulf would be no fun at all, no matter how hard you tried to think of it as Club Med without the tennis.

Somehow, the government always neglects to mention such possibilities when it extols the virtues of the military life. Funny, isn't it?

A few years back, an acquaintance of mine became so inspired by those "No life like it" TV commercials he decided to pursue a military career. In fact, Tom got so carried away with the romance of it all he decided to bypass the

Canadian Forces entirely, and announced his plan to join the British Navy.

Two weeks later, the Falklands War broke out. By the end of the following week, Tom had found a nice job at Burger King.

Now, I'd certainly hate to sound like a less-than-patriotic Canadian. But on the whole, it's not terribly likely I'll be spending next summer in the reserves.

I do hope Mr. Beatty will be able to bear the pain of my absence. If not, he can always drop by the golf course.

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