

FINNISH DEFENCE FORCES**DEFENCE STAFF****Conscription Division****POB 919, 00131 HELSINKI****28.3.2003****1(16)**

EXPATRIATE FINNISH MEN ARE ALSO LIABLE FOR MILITARY SERVICE

Every male Finnish citizen is by law liable for military service at the beginning of the age of 18 till the end of the age of 60 and therefore also subject to call-up.

The year 2003 call-up applies to men born in 1985 (who will be eighteen in 2003). The Military Provinces will send a notice of call-up also to **persons liable for military service living abroad**. If no notification has been received from the Military Province by June, such persons are advised to contact the nearest Finnish legation (embassy or consulate) immediately and make their whereabouts known.

Those who have been required to have a new check-up same year due to their state of health are also subject to call-up. Furthermore, all those who have failed to respond to previous call-ups and have not attained and will not attain the age of 30 during the current year must attend to call-up in Finland or be responsible for take care this matter through a Finnish legation abroad. All persons who have gained Finnish citizenship before reaching the age of 30, and those who are under 30 and citizens of both Finland and another country, and have not responded to a call-up, must also report in.

A foreigner who has been granted Finnish citizenship is liable for military service in exactly the same way as native citizens of Finland.

A Finnish citizen who is a citizen of more than one Scandinavian country and who has lived in a Scandinavian country other than Finland for over two years, being through his dual citizenship a permanent resident of that country, is not subject to call-up in Finland during the time that he is considered to be the citizen of a Scandinavian country other than Finland (23§ of the Conscription Act).

CALL-UPS

Call-ups are organized annually, beginning no earlier than September 1 and ending no later than November 30. The purpose of the call-ups is to assess the fitness of each enlisted man, and to decide on when he must report for duty (time and place) or whether he will be granted deferment. This decision is given in writing.

Each enlisted man is sent a questionnaire, the call-up notification and a special information booklet (VARUSMIEHEKSI) to his home address. Failure to receive this letter as the result of a change of address does not exempt a person from responding to the call-up.

Male Finnish ex-citizens living abroad and persons who have had dual citizenship but **are no longer Finnish citizens** should always check with the nearest Finnish legation to ensure that the relevant information has been conveyed to the Finnish

authorities. An ex-citizen is naturally no longer liable for military service nor subject to call-up in Finland.

The call-up decision is always given to the conscript in writing. Failure to respond to the call-up and neglect of the call-up duty without legitimate cause is a punishable offence under the Finnish Conscription Act.

A person liable for military service under Finnish law while living abroad should be aware that failure to deal with matters connected with call-up, military service and control of conscripts will generally prevent him from getting a Finnish passport. Such failure may also have unprecedented consequences for the validity of work permits and residence permits. If a male Finnish citizen neglects to fulfil the responsibilities stipulated in the Conscription Act within the appropriate time, or if he 'dodges' military service, a warrant will be issued in Finland for his arrest. Once apprehended, he will be inducted into military service in Finland practically without exception.

If a conscript has violated the Conscription Act because of not being familiar with its provisions, it is to his advantage to attempt to correct the situation on his own initiative. Such initiative is considered an extenuating circumstance by the authorities in nearly all cases. Thus, a Finnish citizen living abroad should, in military matters, always contact the headquarters of the military province within which his home address in Finland is located. Abroad, he should contact the nearest Finnish Embassy or Consulate.

Finnish citizens and persons with dual citizenship who have never lived in Finland are usually registered according to where their parents were lived in Finland, if not registered elsewhere they are filed with the Headquarters of the Helsinki Military Province. The street address is Laivanvarustajankatu 6; the postal address is PO Box 169, 00141 HELSINKI, tel. +358-9-1812 4511, web address www.mil.fi/maavoimat/joukot/helsle, e-mail helsle@mil.fi.

PHYSICAL CHECK-UPS

Medical examinations for those liable for military service are conducted at the health centres of municipalities or federations of municipalities as required by law. This check-up is not a substitute for the call-up itself. **Those living abroad need not travel to Finland for the check-up.** The material sent out by the headquarters of the relevant military province at the beginning of the year includes a form on fitness to be filled out by a physician. Finnish legation abroad can provide more information on the kind of medical examination required. They generally have an agreement with a local physician on obtaining the necessary medical statement.

The legation can also provide a translation of the form included in the call-up letter and directions for filling it out. The conscript is also recommended to enclose any earlier medical statements or copies of them certified at the legation.

EXPATRIATE FINNS

When dealing personally with call-up matters, the person liable for military service should carry a driving licence or some other official identification card with photo.

Persons residing abroad need not travel personally to Finland for their call-up. They can manage their call-up business by proxy or by visiting the nearest Finnish Embassy or Consulate or by sending the relevant documents there; the consulate officers will forward them to Finland. The conscript can also send a proxy through the legation to the headquarters of the relevant military province in Finland.

UNDERGOING MILITARY SERVICE

In peacetime, conscripts enter military service on the basis of a written induction order, generally in the year when they reach the age of nineteen or twenty. However, a conscript aged eighteen can apply to the relevant military province in Finland for voluntary induction into military service no later than in the year in which he attains the age of eighteen, i.e. in practice before he would normally be required.

On the basis of a written application, deferment of military service can be granted for no more than three years at a time in peacetime. However, deferment will not be granted beyond the end of the year in which the applicant attains the age of 28. Deferment can be applied for because of professional training, studies, economic considerations or other pressing personal reasons.

Applying for deferment is not recommended if the conscript is much older than the normal call-up age. It has been observed that many older conscripts find military service arduous because of economic reasons, family matters or other worries.

It is generally best to complete one's military service after finishing school but before starting a family, commencing long-term studies, moving abroad or going into business.

WOMEN IN ARMED FORCES

Since 1995 also women have had a possibility to do military service in Finland on voluntary basis. They do not have call-ups. Instead of call-up military provinces will arrange information briefings for women on April or May; acts and information are the same. All women between 18 and 29 who are qualified suitable and fit for service and are healthy enough will be approved to women voluntary military service. It is conducted under same conditions and rules as the men's conscription service.

Before reporting into service a woman can retract her intension. She has also right to quit within 45 days. After 45 days service a woman is until age of 60 as liable for military service as a man. All tasks and duties are possible for women, there are no restrictions or limitations, only talent and capabilities are crucial factors. Women have no privileges, benefits and responsibilities are the same. Some minor differences exist such as women get 0,35 euro per diem for personal stuff and long hair is allowed for women.

Application for women voluntary military service shall be sent to headquarters of military province.

MILITARY SERVICE PERIOD

The shortest military service period in Finland is 180 days. Longer training periods are required for specialized rank-and-file duties (270 days) and for officers, NCOs and highly technical rank-and-file duties (362 days).

Where and when a conscript is stationed is determined primarily by the needs of the Defence Forces, the health of the conscript and his mother tongue. The conscript's own wishes, training, hobbies and social situation are taken into account as far as possible. Best efforts are tried to take in consideration for expatriates' wishes. Those whose mother tongue is Swedish receive their basic training in their own language at the Uusimaa (Nyland) Brigade in Tammisaari (Dragsvik). Expatriate conscripts are recommended to apply for those units, which can provide social counselling services. The social counsellors of the Defence Forces are professionally qualified to deal with the special concerns of expatriate servicemen. At the moment, there are social counsellors almost at all military units (army, navy, and air force).

UNARMED MILITARY SERVICE

A man whose religious or ethical values preclude his undergoing armed military service shall in peacetime be exempted from armed service following application and be inducted into unarmed service. The service period for unarmed military service is 330 days. Application shall be sent to headquarters of military province.

EXEMPTION FROM MILITARY SERVICE FOR HEALTH REASONS OR FOR CONSCIENCE REASONS

Exemption from military service is possible only owing to health reasons or if a special application of an expatriate dual citizen or of a Jehovah's witnesses or of a registration to civil service is approved.

If a conscript is not fit for military service proved by a medical certificate he will be exempted from peace time duty only or also from war time duty. Call-up board or special inspection board will make the decision on exemption.

Baptized and active Jehovah's witness will get first deferment 3 years at a time until he is 28 and he will be exempted from peace time duty at the beginning of the age 29.

Application shall be sent to headquarters of military province.

A man who declares that religious or ethical considerations absolutely forbid him from undergoing any kind of service in the Defence Forces in accordance with the Conscription Act shall in peacetime be exempted from military service and inducted into non-military service instead (= civil service).

In Finland, non-military civil service is carried out under a government department, a municipality or federation of municipalities, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland or the Orthodox Church, or some 100 corporations or foundations defined by decree. The purpose of civil service is to work for the benefit of society. The Ministry of Labour coordinates and controls non-military service. The civil service is

lead by Civil Service Centre. The period of service is 395 days (about 13 months). Application shall be sent to headquarters of military province.

PERSONS WITH MULTI CITIZENSHIP CAN BE EXEMPTED FROM MILITARY SERVICE

Persons who have gained Finnish citizenship under the age of 30, and persons who are under 30 and citizens of both Finland and another country are required to do military service like all other male Finnish citizens of the same age, unless they have been granted limited or permanent exemption for health reasons.

Persons who have gained Finnish citizenship under the age of 30, and persons with dual citizenship as outlined above can apply to the Defence Staff of the Finnish Defence Forces for exemption from military service if the applicant has completed the compulsory peacetime service of another country or at least six (6) months of it. The exemption application will be processed at the applicant's request, and an applicant of this kind can be exempted from military service in peacetime.

A Finnish citizen who also has the citizenship of another country and whose domicile proper is not in Finland can be exempted from military service in peacetime if he proves that he has family ties and other personal ties which in fact link him with some other country than Finland. The applications shall be submitted to the Conscription Division of Defence Staff for decision. The address is: Fabianinkatu 2, P.O. Box 919, 00131 HELSINKI, FINLAND, tel. +358-9-1812 2131 (also -2128, -2395) fax +358-9-1812 2127.

INDUCTION

The induction order is issued at the call-up or sent by mail (to absentees) after the call-up. The order states at which unit and when the conscript is required to begin military service.

If, before reporting for service, the conscript meets with an accident or falls ill in a way that prevents travel or impedes the performance of military service, he should apply through the local Finnish legation to the headquarters of his/hers military province for deferment of the induction date. It is important that a medical statement approved by the legation concerning the illness or injury, the impediment this represents and its probable duration be appended to the application.

Applying for deferment of the induction date is not in itself sufficient cause for failing to report for service. In urgent cases, if reporting for service is delayed for health reasons, the conscript must obtain an acceptable medical statement, notify the unit indicated on the induction order of what has happened, and try to travel to Finland and to report for service as soon as possible. If in doubt, it is worthwhile checking with the local Finnish legation about the correct procedure.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

An **induction order** is a valid ticket for travel within Finland. It contains detachable bus and train tickets, which entitle the bearer to free bus and train trips within Finland from the Finnish border (e.g. from Helsinki-Vantaa airport) to the unit where

the conscript has to report for service. The tickets are generally valid for one month for conscripts arriving in Finland from abroad; the validity is indicated on the tickets.

The State will refund the induction and discharge travel costs of a conscript residing permanently abroad, plus a food allowance if the trip lasts over six hours. This refund will be paid on the basis of a written application submitted by the conscript once he has reached the unit designated. The refund is calculated on the basis of the cheapest form of travel for conscripts residing in Sweden and Norway (by ship, train, bus and - only if special permission has been obtained beforehand through a Finnish embassy or consulate - by plane). Conscripts arriving from other countries can be refunded the price of the cheapest possible airline ticket from their country of residence to Finland.

Seat reservation charges are refunded only if they are compulsory and included in the ticket price. If a conscript travelling from a distant country is forced to use paid accommodation on the way because of using the cheapest possible mode of travel, the expenses of such accommodation can be refunded as part of the travel expenses.

The original tickets and any other documentation must be appended to the refund application immediately after induction. A conscript arriving from abroad must obtain a certificate verifying that he is permanently resident abroad from his local authorities or from his local Finnish legation. This certificate must indicate his address abroad. In Sweden, a domicile certificate can be obtained from the local tax authority.

A conscript arriving from abroad will not be refunded for the price of the induction or discharge trip if his stay abroad is temporary, i.e. due to short-term studies or a job assignment.

The company quartermaster will provide instructions on how to submit the travel expense refund application.

ADVICE FOR SERVICEMEN

An expatriate serviceman is entitled, under the Administrative Procedure Act, to receive guidance and counselling in his native tongue. Any necessary applications can also be submitted in his native tongue. In such matters, the serviceman can see the social counsellor, doctor or chaplain of his unit, in addition to the company commander and quartermaster. The Conscript Committee elected by the servicemen of the unit is also available for help. Through the Conscript Committee and the social counsellor, a serviceman can request legal advice or help if necessary. There is also a social worker stationed at the Central Military Hospital in Helsinki.

SOCIAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS FOR THE EXPATRIATE SERVICEMAN

All conscripts have the same social services and benefits as follows:

Accommodation, health care, military clothes and meals (except leave and free time) are free without any charges during the conscription period. There are about 1 duty weekend and 3 free weekends a month. There are 6, 12, 16 or 18 leave

days depending on the period of service (180, 270, 330 or 362 days). Extra leave days for deserved military achievement are possible. For compelling personal reasons extra leave days (not count as effective service days) are also possible.

All conscripts has daily allowance depending on the period of service; from 1 to 180 days 3,60 euro, from 181 to 270 days 5,75 euro and from 271 days 8.25 euro per day. Special units have some extra allowances (parachutists, pilot students, divers).

Travelling abroad on leave is subject to approval by the unit commander. Civilian clothing must be worn when travelling abroad on leave. Expatriate conscripts should bring with them suitable clothing for all seasons.

During his period of service, a serviceman is entitled to 12, 21, 27 or 30 free round- trip tickets within Finland, depending on his or hers service period (180, 270, 330 or 362 days). An expatriate serviceman entitled to a free induction trip can spend part of his/hers travel allowance on travel to his/hers home abroad (or elsewhere abroad, if there is sufficient justification).

Such free trips can be granted as follows: 2-4 trips to Scandinavia, 2-3 trips to other European countries and 1-2 trip to all other destinations. The number of free trips depends on his or hers service period. For important family reasons (wedding, serious illness or death of a close family member), a maximum of two free trips can be granted on application in addition to the normal allowance. The foreign travel tickets are always given from company quartermaster.

Some shipping lines grant reduced-rate trips to or through Sweden to expatriate servicemen living permanently abroad. When travelling and buying tickets, the serviceman must have his current serviceman's card with him, including a photo and validity indication confirmed by the signature of the company commander or quartermaster and the sub-unit stamp. The serviceman must keep the card with him at all times while on leave; it must not be transferred to anyone else. The card must be returned to the sub-unit on returning from leave. The offices of the shipping lines provide information on free and reduced-rate trips.

MILITARY ALLOWANCE

The family members of a conscript living abroad are entitled to a military allowance if they were dependent on his/hers support before he/she entered military service. A separate allowance can be applied for to cover housing costs. A family member receiving such an allowance need not be a Finnish citizen. Certain special expenses can also be covered through this scheme.

A conscript who has a home abroad can apply for a personal housing allowance during his military service.

It is worthwhile to apply for military allowance in good time, i.e. about a month before induction to the local office of National Pensions Institute in which the conscript is registered in Finland. One who resides abroad has to send the application through local Finnish embassy or consulate to the local office of National Pensions Institute of the place of his/hers coming military unit.

The instructions for submitting the application are available from consular officers, from the "VARUSMIEHEKSI" instruction booklet and from the social handbook called "VARUSMIEHEN SOSIAALIOPAS". These guides are also available in Swedish. Before reporting for service, the conscript can also write to the social counsellor of his future unit and ask for advice. The addresses of the units can be found in the "VARUSMIEHEKSI" booklet. "VARUSMIEHEKSI" booklet can also be found www.mil.fi/varusmieheksi.

AN EXPATRIATE CONSCRIPT MUST DEAL WITH THE FOLLOWING THINGS HIMSELF:

- Ensure the maintenance of housing, job, study and any other rights before entering military service;
- Agree on the management of savings, loans and currency transactions during his military service;
- Arrange his tax matters abroad;
- Acquire the necessary tickets for travel, using the cheapest possible mode of transport.

NOTE: If the conscript has no money to pay for the tickets, a consular officer at any Finnish Embassy or consulate can contact the Conscription Division of Defence Staff of Finnish Defence Forces and arrange that the embassy will acquire the tickets and bill the Defence Staff for them. If this exceptional procedure is followed, the tickets must be acquired no later than one month before the induction date.

- Arrange any matters connected with family members moving to Finland for the conscript's period of service through a consular officer, including any residence and

work permits required. The Finnish Defence Forces will not refund the travel expenses of family members.

THE FOLLOWING POINTS SHOULD BE NOTED:

- The Military Injuries Act and the voluntary serviceman's accident insurance (POHJOLA Insurance Company) also cover trips abroad on leave and any stay abroad on leave that are considered to be included in the period of service;
- The benefits of the Finnish health Insurance Act, including paternity benefit, do not apply to expatriate servicemen;
- A conscript considering repatriation should contact the Finnish employment authorities (Employment Office) in good time if he/she will stay in Finland;
- Many expatriate servicemen require subsistence support from the Finnish social welfare authorities. Further information about applying for this support is available from the social counsellor of the unit;
- If an expatriate conscript incurs housing expenses in Finland during his/hers period of service, it is worth applying for military allowance to cover them. The social counsellor has further information on this, too;
- If an expatriate conscript intends to visit relatives or friends in Finland while on his/hers leave, it is a good idea to agree with them about this in detail well ahead of time.

More information: www.mil.fi