TO: Chair and Members
Emergency & Community Services Committee

WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE

COMMITTEE DATE: March 3, 2010

SUBJECT/REPORT NO:
"Red Friday" Events (CS10018) (City Wide)

SUBMITTED BY:
Joe-Anne Priel
General Manager, Community Services

PREPARED BY:
Jennifer Kaye (905)546-2424 Ext. 4807

SIGNATURE:

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That the report, prepared by Carrie Brooks-Joiner, Carrie Brooks-Joiner and Associates, respecting Red Fridays and Troop Recognition (attached as Appendix “A” Report CS10018), be received.

(b) That the Director of Culture be directed disseminate information to appropriate community organizations regarding the Red Friday’s campaign and provide guidance, when requested, to Red Friday community event organizers.

(b) That the Hamilton Veterans’ Committee be directed purchase a Support the Troops banner, for display at appropriate veterans’ events at a cost of $65, to be funded from the Veterans’ Committee 2010 budget.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its meeting of September 10, 2008, City Council directed staff to prepare a report to investigate how the City of Hamilton could host, on an as-needed basis, a “Red Friday”
event to appropriately recognize military personnel from the Hamilton area departing for combat and/or peacekeeping missions.

Report CS10018 considers the issues that pertain to municipal delivery of military personnel support events and evaluates options for how the City of Hamilton (the City) could approach their delivery. Staff recommends that the City play an encouragement and advisory role for community organizers who wish to deliver Red Friday events, as this role will best ensure their effective delivery, while demonstrating Council’s support of Canadian troops.

**Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 4**

**FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Financial:**
The cost of $65 plus tax for a Support the Troops banner will be paid from the Hamilton Veterans’ Committee 2010 budget, upon approval of the budget, with no adverse financial impacts.

**Staffing:**
There are no staffing implications associated with the recommendation of Report CS10018.

**Legal:**
There are no legal implications associated with the recommendation of Report CS10018.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The concept of Red Fridays is that citizens wear red coloured clothing or symbols (such as a looped ribbon or pin) on all, or designated, Fridays to show appreciation of military personnel, and at times, support of military activity. Related events are “Red Rallies” and “Support the Troops Rallies,” sporadic community-wide gatherings and activities, which also sometimes mark the homecoming of a troop.

Nationally, Red Fridays are promoted by the Red Fridays Foundation of Canada. This organization is a private foundation with the objective: “To raise awareness of supporting our Canadian troops by the sale of recognizable products (e.g. pins, badges, bumper stickers/magnets, clothing, etc.) in order to show a non partisan Canadian citizen support for our men and women serving our country.”
At the February 25, 2009 meeting, Council referred correspondence from David Sweet, M.P., to the General Manager of Community Services respecting the purchase of a banner to hang in support of the Canadian Forces for inclusion in the Red Friday report. The banner described in Mr. Sweet’s letter is produced by an Ontario company based on a design by a Newcastle, Ontario resident. This individual has received encouragement from Ontario’s Lieutenant-Governor in having these banners placed in provincial and municipal sites across the country as a way of showing support for Canadian Forces on either an on-going basis or for specific events. The banner could be hung in the lobby or on the exterior of City Hall.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no policy implications associated with the recommendation of Report CS10018.

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

The Veterans’ Committee reviewed Report CS10018 at the January 12, 2010 Veteran’s Committee meeting. The Committee discussed the staff recommendation and the other options outlined. The Committee concluded that the staff recommendation was the most appropriate option and passed a motion to support the staff recommendation.

A briefing memo was commissioned from Carrie Brooks-Joiner and Associates to inform the development of Report CS10018 (attached as Appendix A to Report CS10018). It details the military appreciation practices of a number of other Canadian municipalities.

**ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

There are two primary issues to consider regarding municipal affiliation with Red Friday events:

1. **Possible perception of municipal support for the Afghan mission**

   The deployment of Canadian troops in Afghanistan is federal policy, but is not unanimously supported by Canadians. Polls over the past few years have shown that public opinion is divided on the involvement of Canadian troops in Afghanistan. (More detailed information about public opinion polls can be found in Appendix A to Report CS10018.)

   The Red Friday’s campaign is intended to show support for Canadian troops. However, the line between support for the troops and support for the Afghan mission can be easily blurred. If the City of Hamilton chooses to directly deliver
Red Friday events, members of the public could misperceive this as partisan support for the Afghan mission.

Some municipalities in Canada have eagerly embraced the Red Friday’s campaign, especially cities with military bases. Other municipalities have chosen not to involve themselves directly in the delivery of Red Friday events in order to avoid the appearance of partisan political support for the Afghan mission. There are a wide range of organizing bodies for Red Friday events across the country, including community groups, individuals, mandate-related groups, private sector organizations, and governments.

The Hamilton Veterans’ Committee, which is advisory to Council, provides a mechanism through which the City of Hamilton can address issues pertaining to military troops with reduced risk of perceived partisanship. For this reason, staff recommends that the Veterans’ Committee purchase the “Support the Troops” banner described by Mr. Sweet for display at appropriate veterans’ events.

2. **Optimum means of Red Friday event delivery**

Whenever possible, the Events Section, within the Culture Division, leverages community resources to ensure the delivery of successful community events. If the motivation and capacity to deliver an event exists within the community, it makes little sense for the Culture Division to assume direct responsibility.

Organizations with a mandate that directly relates to the Red Fridays campaign are the most appropriate ones to deliver effective Red Friday events. These would include veterans’ associations, cadets’ associations, and other organizations with a military-related mandate. Given the flexible nature of the campaign, Red Friday events can be very simple, such as corporate initiatives encouraging staff to wear red clothing, or they can be more public and complex, such as Red Friday Rallies.

The Veterans’ Committee already delivers a number of Veterans events, such as Remembrance Day Services, Decoration Day, and significant anniversary commemorations such as D-Day and VE-Day, which are significantly supported by Culture Division Events staff. The capacity of the Veterans’ Committee and the Culture Division Events staff to assume responsibility for additional events is limited. However, the Veterans’ Committee could easily disseminate information to related community organizations and individuals about the Red Friday’s campaign and could make themselves available to event organizers to provide guidance and expertise.
There are four possible options for consideration:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 is low</th>
<th>3 is medium</th>
<th>5 is high</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option 1 – Direct staff to organize and implement Red Friday events</td>
<td>Option 2 – Direct staff to work with the Hamilton Veterans’ Committee to deliver Red Friday events</td>
<td>Option 3 – Direct staff to work with the Hamilton Veterans’ Committee to encourage the delivery of Red Friday events by relevant community organizations</td>
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| Demonstrates Council’s support for Canadian troops | 5 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Avoids potential for misperceptions regarding Council’s stance on the Afghan mission. | 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| Avoids impact on staff resources | 1 | 1 | 5 | 5 |
| Avoids impact on Veterans’ Committee | 5 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| Degree of fit between mandate of event organizer and Red Fridays campaign | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 |

Although Option 4 ranks highest, it does not effectively demonstrate Council’s support for Canadian troops. Therefore, staff recommends Option 3, as it will allow Council to
demonstrate its support in a way that will be most effective and least prone to misperceptions of political partisanship.

**Option 1**
Direct staff to organize and implement Red Friday events.

**Financial:**
Until the type of Council directed event is determined it is difficult to calculate a financial impact. Previous Council directed events, such as VE Day, have cost up to $50,000. There is no funding identified for a Red Friday event or events in the current Arts & Special Events Section operating budget. If directed by Council, current projects would have to be realigned against the Red Friday event or events. This realignment may result in some current projects not being completed or scaled back in order to accommodate a new project. If projects can not be realigned, an additional 0.5 staff may be required. The approximate cost of a 0.5 staff would be $40,000.

**Staffing:**
The delivery of a Red Friday event or events is not currently in the Arts & Special Events Section workplan. If directed by Council, current projects would have to be realigned against the Red Friday event or events. This realignment may result in some current projects not being completed or scaled back in order to accommodate a new project. If projects can not be realigned an additional 0.5 staff may be required.

**Legal:**
Direct delivery of a Red Friday event or events by City staff has legal implications related to the requirements of mounting events, which is variable depending on the events that are held. All events held in the City of Hamilton are required to adhere to the City of Hamilton Special Event Policy.

**Option 2**
Direct staff to work with the Hamilton Veterans’ Committee to deliver Red Friday events.

**Financial:**
Similar to Option 1, until the type of Council directed event is determined, it is difficult to calculate a financial impact. There is no funding identified for a Red Friday event or events in the current Veteran’s Committee operating budget.

**Staffing:**
The Hamilton Veteran’s Committee does not directly operate events. Direct operation of Veteran’s events, such as Remembrance Day, is done by the City’s special events staff under the direction of the Committee. The delivery of a Red Friday event or events is not currently in the Arts & Special Events Section workplan. If directed by Council current projects would have to be realigned against the Red Friday event or events. This realignment may result in some current projects not being completed or scaled back.
back in order to accommodate a new project. If projects can not be realigned, an additional 0.5 staff may be required

**Legal:**
Direct delivery of a Red Friday event or events by City staff have legal implications related to the requirements of mounting events, which is variable depending on the events that are held. All events held in the City of Hamilton are required to adhere to the City of Hamilton Special Event Policy.

**Option 4**
*Leave the delivery of Red Friday events entirely to community organizers.*

**Financial:**
There are no financial implications associated with Option 4.

**Staffing:**
There are no staffing implications associated with Option 4.

**Legal:**
There are no legal implications associated with Option 4.

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**CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN (Linkage to Desired End Results)**


**Skilled, Innovative & Respectful Organization**
- Council and SMT are recognized for their leadership and integrity.

**Financial Sustainability**
- Delivery of municipal services and management capital assets/liabilities in a sustainable, innovative and cost effective manner.

**Intergovernmental Relationships**
- Maintain effective relationships with other public agencies.

**Healthy Community**
- An engaged Citizenry.
APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

Appendix “A” to Report CS10018.
MEMO

To: Anna Bradford, Director of Culture, City of Hamilton

From: Carrie Brooks-Joiner, Carrie Brooks-Joiner & Associates

Re: Red Fridays & Troop Recognition

July 6, 2009

OVERVIEW

The City of Hamilton Council directed staff to prepare “for the consideration of the Emergency and Community Services committee, a report as to how the City of Hamilton can host, on an as-needed basis, a “Red Friday” event to appropriately recognize military personnel from the Hamilton area departing for combat and/or peacekeeping missions” (City Council Minutes Wednesday, September 10, 2008). Support the Troops banners are also to be addressed. The report is due December 2009.

This briefing note provides a background on Red Fridays, other forms of troop recognition, practices in other municipalities and some of the inherent issues related to military appreciation initiatives by municipalities.

HISTORY AND OVERVIEW OF RED FRIDAYS

While troop recognition and military appreciation activities are common within Canadian history the “Red Friday” event appears to be a more recent trend. While there is no consensus in the literature, Red Fridays appear to have started in the United States in 2005 and are visible in Canadian communities by 2006.

The concept of Red Fridays is that citizens wear red coloured clothing or symbols (such as a looped ribbon or pin) on all, or designated, Fridays to show appreciation of military personnel and, at times, support of military activity. Related events are “Red Rallies” and “Support the Troops Rallies” which are one-off community-wide gatherings and activities, some of which also mark troop homecoming.

Nationally, Red Fridays are promoted by the Red Fridays Foundation of Canada. It is a private foundation with the objective: “To raise awareness of supporting our Canadian Troops by the sale of recognizable products (e.g. pins, badges, bumper stickers/magnets, clothing, etc.) in order to show a non partisan Canadian Citizen support for our men and women serving our country”.

As part of its mission the Foundation actively promotes Red Friday initiatives by:

- encouraging Canadians to wear red on Fridays;
- offering a website portal to organizations that support the movement to wear Red on Fridays for their events and assistance in organizing their events;
- creation of brand recognition the Red Fridays Ribbon as a nationally recognized symbol for support of our Canadian troops; and
- by offering media information on Red Fridays activities nationwide.

The Foundation sells products such as T-shirts, pins and badges to help fund its activities (www.redfridays.ca).

Across Canada Red Fridays include a mix of unofficial and officially designated activities. The organizing bodies vary and include:

- individuals (e.g. Red Friday Ladies, Petawawa)
- existing groups (e.g. Scouts Canada, Valley East Community Action Network- Sudbury, churches, schools)
- mandate related groups/organizations (e.g.the Red Fridays Foundation, North Bay Military Family Resource Centre, Legions)
- the private sector
- government (all tiers)

The majority of events are community led. Municipalities with military bases and a military-based population tend to have regular troop recognition activities.

OTHER FORMS OF TROOP SUPPORT OR RECOGNITION

In addition to Red Fridays, there are countless other forms of troop support and recognition initiatives. These include signed banners, cards, songs, gift boxes, discount programs, events and so on. Some initiatives directly involve military personnel such as homecoming events while others are symbolic (ribbons on trees) and do not necessarily have any level of involvement by, or contact with, military personnel or their families.

MUNICIPAL INVOLVEMENT

Government involvement in Red Fridays and other forms of troop recognition varies across the country. Few municipalities have strongly endorsed such initiatives and take a lead in their organization. Most endorse community-led activities and in general,
municipalities, when involved, tend to provide such support as public gathering space, official designation of a special day, speakers and media relations. Others have consciously chosen not to participate.

Municipal-Led Initiatives

**City of Edmonton**

Edmonton is home to Canadian Forces Base Edmonton, one of Canada’s premier army bases. The City of Edmonton is taking a growing lead in the promotion of recognition of military community contributions.

The Edmonton Salutes Committee was created in 1997 by various business, civic, military and community stakeholders to welcome and recognize the importance of Edmonton’s military when troops were moved from the Calgary garrison to Edmonton.

In July 2007, City Council passed bylaw 13900 Edmonton Salutes Committee Bylaw to formalize the committee as a committee of Council. Based on the staff report to Council, “The Edmonton Salutes Committee has determined that the Committee requires a formal structure and it is recommended that it be a committee of Council, established by bylaw. One reason the Committee should be developed as a committee of Council is that official recognitions, such as bestowing “Freedom of the City”, must be approved by City Council so the Committee will need the ability to make recommendations to Council”. The Committee has 30 members. Financial and administrative support to the Edmonton Salutes Committee is provided by the City of Edmonton.

The mandate of the Committee is to:

i) recognize local military community contributions, both at home and abroad, towards world peace, security and stability; and

ii) reinforce, through the recognition, that military personnel and their families are valued members of the Edmonton Capital Region.

Edmonton Salutes supports the military community by:

- holding annual Red Fridays ceremonies
- greeting and welcoming soldiers at the airport upon their return from missions
• providing a police escort for return to CFB Edmonton
• putting up yellow ribbons on the soldiers' return route
• sponsoring a military family discount program.

Municipal Endorsement of Community-Led Initiatives

The Town of Petawawa

Petawawa is home to Canadian Forces Base Petawawa and as a community with a high military population, is active in military appreciation. The municipality promotes the Red Friday Campaign on its main page of its website. The text notes that the campaign to:

“…..show support for our Canadian Military is fast becoming a popular Friday event with everyone out and about sporting as much red as they can.

Why? Because it's easy to do, doesn't cost a penny unless you don't own something red and is so powerful in itself. During these troubled times worldwide, many Canadian feel helpless, they want to support our troops but are not sure how. Well, wearing red on Fridays is a very visible, tangible way to acknowledge the sacrifices of not only our troops but also their families.

Please join in this wonderful campaign and let's see Canada turn red from coast to coast.”

Two citizens, known as the Red Friday Ladies, are the organizers of Red Friday events and other support of “military forces families” initiatives in the community, often in partnership with other organizations. Billed as the “first and original” Red Friday Ladies, Karen Boire and Lisa Miller were also involved in the major Red Friday Rally on Parliament Hill, Ottawa in 2006 (Petawawa municipal site www.petawawa.ca and Red Friday Ladies facebook site, www.facebook.com/pages/The-Red-Friday-Ladies/92824721461).

City of Burlington

The City of Burlington has not officially endorsed Red Fridays or other forms of recognition and does not appear to have been asked to by the community. However, there is informal support provided by the municipality. Former Councillor Lougheed made a statement to Council at the Oct 10, 2006 meeting to
remind “Council about the “Red Friday” campaign started in Petawawa by families of our military and encouraged citizens to show their support by wearing red shirts on Fridays. It was also announced that the Burlington Legion Branch 60 will be selling the red Support Our Troops t-shirts and magnetic Ribbons” (City of Burlington, Minutes Regular Meeting of Council No. 20 October 10, 2006).

On Friday December 15, 2006 a community-led Red Friday Rally was held at civic square outside City Hall “to show support for our Canadian troops”. Citizens were invited to sign a giant banner in the City Hall reception area. The banner was sent to the troops along with a recording of the Rally. The event also encouraged donations to the Mike McTeague Wounded Warriors fund. That evening there was a “Support the Troops” Junior A hockey game between the Burlington Cougars and the Hamilton Red Wings. Fans attending the game were asked to wear red.

The press release from the community organizers noted that “Red Friday Rally’s (sic) have become a Canada wide effort with various communities gathering to show there (sic) support for our troops. The idea is to show our hero’s overseas, the men and women of our Armed Forces who perform their duties under difficult conditions that we support them in their efforts. And to let them know their sacrifices do not go unnoticed at home. This is especially important for this time of year. Our movement is non partisan of any political party or policy.” There was no media release issued by City of Burlington.

The Rally was sponsored by 900 CHML and the Burlington Cougars Hockey Club.

Others

City of Greater Sudbury, Woodstock, North Bay, and Uxbridge are among the municipalities that support Red Friday celebrations or other forms of recognition indirectly but the municipality does not lead, nor play a major role in, the organization of such events.

In Sept 2007, Ottawa City council voted to put "Support Our Troops," decals on all City of Ottawa vehicles (CBC News Ottawa city council endorses 'Support Our Troops' decals Wednesday, September 12, 2007 | 5:14 PM ET). Vancouver and Toronto (after a reversal of position), also decided in favour of the decals. In April 2009 the Saskatchewan government has announced it will display "support our troops" decals on all provincial vehicles (CBC News Sask. government's
Conscious Limited or Non-Involvement by Municipality

City of Calgary

The City of Calgary decided against supporting a decal program. Following a "contentious and emotional debate at city hall" in August 2007 Calgary councillors voted to not put donated "Support Our Troops" decals on city vehicles. However, Council unanimously approved an alternate plan to sell the decals to the public to raise cash for military families. That decision prompted withdrawal of the donation and the donor was reportedly "disappointed that a simple gesture could become a political issue". A member of Council argued the decals have become politicized and some city workers could equate them as a show of support for the war in Afghanistan and commented that it was unclear what would happen if an employee refused to drive a city vehicle because it had a "Support Our Troops" decal. (CBC News: Wednesday, August 1, 2007; 12:43 PM MT)

However, in September 2007, Mayor Dave Bronconnier kicked off September as yellow ribbon month in Calgary to support Canadian troops, despite city council previous rejection of military support decals on city-owned vehicles. The mayor noted that this is a way for the city to show its respect, gratitude and support for Canadian soldiers. (CBC News Thursday, September 6, 2007 | 2:53 PM MT)

ISSUES

Although it is federal policy that Canada's armed forces are involved in Afghanistan, there is no consensus among Canadian citizens that this is appropriate. Furthermore, there are supporters of both sides of the conflict among residents of Canada.

Canadians are divided about troop involvement in Afghanistan: half (52%) feel troops are performing a vital mission and should stay, the other half (48%) say "bring our troops home" (Ipsos Reid, March 4, 2006). By late 2007, a minority of Canadians (44%) believed troops should be brought home in 2009, while majority (54%) believed Canada should continue either in the current role (14%) or in a training capacity (40%) (Ipsos Reid, October 16, 2007).
Given the divisiveness of Canada’s presence in the war in Afghanistan, Red Fridays and other forms of troop recognition have sparked both controversy and support across Canada.

Slogans such as “Support our Troops” over-generalize complex political and social issues. There are so many segments, and combinations of segments, that one can “support” or “not support” including: Canadian troops, military families, the Armed Forces, the Canadian government; current government foreign policy, the actions of other governments and impacted civilians. Wearing a red T-shirt cannot hope to express the complexity of what is valued and appreciated. On the other hand, Canadian troops and their families have expressed appreciation for such displays of support.

A key issue is the politicization, or the appearance of politicization, of such actions. Some initiatives are intentionally partisan while others state they are non-partisan. Regardless of the declared intent of the organizers, there is the perception that displays of appreciation for the contribution of military personnel are also support for military involvement.

The participation of elected officials such as (Prime Minister Stephen Harper at the May 2007 Red Friday rally in support of Canadian troops in Petawawa) or senior staff from the Department of National Defence (General Rick Hillier, Chief of the Defence Staff, Red Friday Rally at the August 2007 Canadian National Exhibition) blur the line between appreciation for the troops and support for military involvement.

The appropriateness of the organizer(s) also comes into play. A ribbon on a tree in front of a home where a family member is deployed overseas is an individual statement. The same ribbon as a decal on public vehicles can be viewed as a political statement and a declaration of a supporting position on federal war policy. Similarly, Red Friday events organized by military family members, a workplace, community groups, or government, can be perceived very differently.

**Summary**

Canada’s participation in Afghanistan is not viewed positively by all Canadian residents and the sentiment “Support the Troops" is not shared by all. Red Fridays and other forms of troop recognition are a way for citizens to express appreciation for military personnel and their families and such efforts are well received by the military community. However, such events and activities are inherently partisan and risk a level of politicization that the organizers may not intend. Given the wide range of opinions on the war in Afghanistan and Canada’s involvement, community-led rather than municipally-led, events and activities are the most appropriate.