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## Local & National

### Ex-Mountie is new Police Ombudsman

Tuesday, June 26, 2007

By Sam Lister

A retired Canadian Mountie was last night appointed the new Police Ombudsman.

Al Hutchinson will take over the £122,000 a year job from Nuala O'Loan in November and can hold the position for up to seven years.

He will be responsible for overseeing the service, which deals with complaints about police by members of the public.

The 59-year-old is from Canada but has strong links with the province. He is a Queen's University graduate and has been based in Belfast since 2001 when he was appointed as chief of Staff for the Office of the Oversight Commissioner to monitor the implementation of policing reforms in his roles.

He later took charge after the retirement of Tom Constantine in January 2004.

Mr Hutchinson said: "As Oversight Commissioner I have witnessed at first hand the tremendous changes made in policing within Northern Ireland."

He served in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) for almost 34 years at executive rank of Assistant Commissioner responsible for operations in Ontario, Canada's largest province.






Nuala O'Loan, his predecessor in his new job, has overseen controversial investigations into cases such as the police handling of the Omagh bombing.

Reports are still due to be published into a number of high profile cases including allegations that the police failed to act properly when death threats were made against human rights lawyer Rosemary Nelson who was murdered by loyalists in Armagh in 1999.

Secretary of State Peter Hain, who made the appointment, said: "Nuala O'Loan has done an outstanding job in establishing a reputation for rigour and independence and has set a template for the future.

"This appointment was made after a rigorous selection process which adhered to public appointment guidelines.


"I am impressed by the strong public record and extensive knowledge of policing issues in Northern Ireland that he will bring to the post."


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