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CANADA

**REPORT 5, CANADIAN ARMED FORCES
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION—NATIONAL
DEFENCE, OF THE FALL 2016 REPORTS OF THE
AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA**

**Report of the Standing Committee on
Public Accounts**

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson
Chair**

JUNE 2017

42nd PARLIAMENT, FIRST SESSION

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THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

has the honour to present its

THIRTIETH REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(3)(g), the Committee has studied Report 5, Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention—National Defence, of the Fall 2016 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada and has agreed to report the following:

“REPORT 5—CANADIAN ARMED FORCES RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION—NATIONAL DEFENCE,” *FALL 2016 REPORTS OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA*

INTRODUCTION

According to the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG), “National Defence is composed of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF),”¹ the latter being comprised of the Regular Force and the Reserve Force.² In order to “carry out its missions effectively, the Canadian Armed Forces needs an appropriate number of trained personnel with the requisite skills for the Canadian Army, the Royal Canadian Air Force, and the Royal Canadian Navy, known as the three environments.”³ This requires the selection and development of “thousands of recruits each year and [retaining] a significant number of its members.”⁴

The OAG also notes that the “Military Personnel Command has functional authority on personnel-related matters and must ensure that sufficient trained personnel are available to fulfill the Canadian Armed Forces’ requirements.”⁵ The Command recently reorganized recruitment activities and became responsible for all aspects of the recruiting program, as well as “individual training and education and for retaining military personnel.”⁶

The OAG previously conducted audits on CAF recruitment and retention in 2002 and 2006:

- “2002 April Report of the Auditor General of Canada, [Chapter 5—National Defence—Recruitment and Retention of Military Personnel](#); and
- 2006 May Status Report of the Auditor General of Canada, [Chapter 2—National Defence—Military Recruiting and Retention](#).”⁷

Previous findings indicated the following:

1 Office of the Auditor General of Canada [OAG], “[Report 5—Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention—National Defence](#),” *2016 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, para. 5.1.

2 Ibid., para. 5.2.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., para. 5.4.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., para. 5.5.

- “ongoing, systemic recruiting challenges for the Regular Force in its efforts to counter higher rates of attrition and fill certain chronically understaffed occupations;”⁸
- recruiting targets “did not match the needs of the Royal Canadian Navy or the Royal Canadian Air Force, and there was no comprehensive plan to attract more applicants, particularly women, Aboriginal peoples, and visible minorities;”⁹
- “issues with training recruiting staff, the quality of the tools used to assess applicants, and applicant processing, which caused many potential candidates to withdraw their applications.”¹⁰

In the fall of 2016, the OAG released a performance audit whose focus was to determine “whether the Canadian Armed Forces implemented appropriate systems and practices to recruit, train, and retain the Regular Force members needed to achieve its objectives.”¹¹

On 3 May 2017, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts (the Committee) held a hearing on this audit. In attendance from the OAG were Michael Ferguson, Auditor General of Canada, and Gordon Stock, principal. From the Department of National Defence were John Forster, Deputy Minister; Lieutenant-General C.A. Lamarre, Commander, Military Personnel Command; Colonel André Demers, Commander, Canadian Forces Recruiting Group; and, Susan Truscott, Director General, Military Personnel Research and Analysis.¹²

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Meeting its Target for the Number of Regular Force Members

“According to National Defence, the maximum number of members in the Regular Force was established at 68,000 (plus or minus 500). To accomplish its mandate, the Regular Force needs 60,500 members who are fully trained and effective in their roles. The difference between these two numbers includes members who are on training, ill, or injured.”¹³

CAF duties are organized into 95 “occupations,” about 85 of which are staffed through external recruiting; the remaining occupations are staffed internally. CAF

8 Ibid., para. 5.6.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., para. 5.7.

12 House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 3 May 2017, [Meeting 54](#).

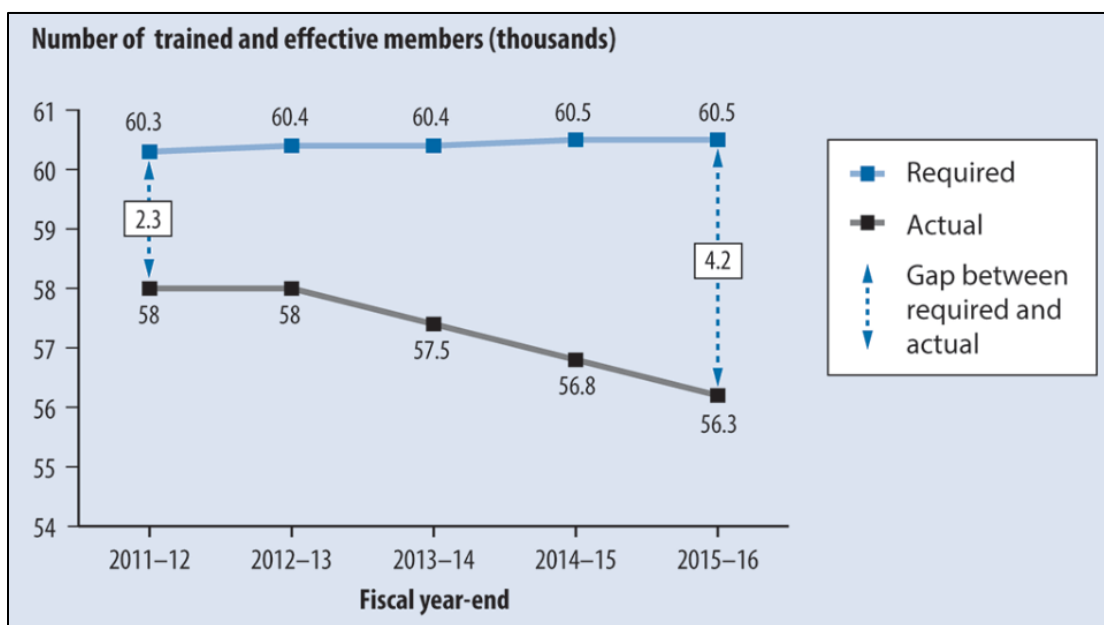
13 OAG, “[Report 5–Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention–National Defence](#),” *2016 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, para. 5.14.

considers occupations to be “stressed” when they are staffed at less than 90% of the required number of qualified members.¹⁴ Furthermore, under the “*Employment Equity Act*, [CAF] must identify and eliminate employment barriers and take measures to ensure that women and other designated groups are appropriately represented, taking into account the need for operational effectiveness.”¹⁵

The OAG believes that it is “unlikely that [the Regular Force] will be able to recruit, train, or retain sufficient personnel to meet its target of 68,000 members by the 2018–19 fiscal year,” and “found that the number of Regular Force members who were trained and effective was lower than its required number, and the gap between its required number and the actual number had increased.”¹⁶ However, the OAG “made no recommendations in this area of examination.”¹⁷

Figure 1 below shows the “gap between the required and actual numbers of trained and effective Regular Force members increased from about 2,300 at the end of the 2011–12 fiscal year to about 4,200 at the end of the 2015–16 fiscal year.”¹⁸

Figure 1 – Number of Required vs. Actual Members, 2011–2012 to 2015–2016



Source: Office of the Auditor General of Canada, “[Report 5–Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention–National Defence](#),” 2016 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada, Exhibit 5.1.

14 Ibid., para. 5.15.
 15 Ibid., para. 5.16.
 16 Ibid., para. 5.17.
 17 Ibid., para. 5.20.
 18 Ibid., Exhibit 5.1.

B. The Representation of Women

The OAG found that the CAF established overall goals for female representation, but not by occupation.¹⁹ According to the OAG, the “goal was [25%] during the audit period; meanwhile, women represented [14%] of the Regular Force.”²⁰ This is important given that it is “difficult to attract, select, train, and retain more women in the [CAF] without implementing special employment equity measures.”²¹

Therefore, the OAG recommended that the CAF “should establish appropriate representation goals for women for each occupation. It should also develop and implement measures to achieve them.”²²

In its action plan, National Defence agreed with the recommendation and stated that in addition to establishing a “systematic and holistic approach to [requirements, recruiting, and retention],” it has “developed a recruiting, advertising and marketing campaign in support of key recruitment priorities including women, a more diverse CAF, priority occupations and the Reserve Force.”²³ Furthermore, National Defence plans to undertake a Gender-Based Analysis (Plus) of its current recruitment process, including “attraction, recruitment, training and retention strategies.”²⁴ Lastly, in order to improve the representation of women—in addition to other employment equity groups—CAF will introduce “initiatives such as priority processing, advertising and marketing, reopening of closed or inactive files, and the stand-up of the Recruiting and Diversity Task Force.”²⁵

When questioned about this matter, John Forster, Deputy Minister, National Defence, explained the following:

[Our] ad campaigns are getting much more targeted and focused on trades, on women, on visible minorities. It's not a generic one-size-fits-all, but getting much more focused on who we're trying to reach and who we're trying to excite about a career.²⁶

15. LGen C.A. Lamarre, Commander, Military Personnel Command, added the following:

We'll do the same thing [as the Bold Eagle and Raven programs] with the women in force programs that are going to take place both in Borden and in Saint-Jean—two pilot

19 Ibid., para. 5.25.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., para. 5.27.

22 Ibid., para. 5.34.

23 National Defence, [Detailed Action Plan](#), 29 November 2016, p. 1.

24 Ibid., p. 6.

25 Ibid., p. 5.

26 House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 3 May 2017, [Meeting 54](#), 1620.

projects, one in an August time frame and the other one in the fall—where we're going to bring in women to have a chance to see what it's like so they experience this as well.²⁷

Notwithstanding this evidence, the Committee recommends the following

Recommendation 1

That, by 30 April 2018, *National Defence* provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to achieving the representation goals of women in each occupation in the *Canadian Armed Forces*.

Recommendation 2

That, by 30 April 2018, *National Defence* provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to achieving the representation goals of other designated groups—including visible minorities and members of Canada's Indigenous peoples—as identified in the *Employment Equity Act*, for each occupation in the *Canadian Armed Forces*.

C. Setting Recruiting Targets

The OAG found that although “the Regular Force had a well-defined process to identify the number of recruits it needed in each occupation,” the “recruiting targets that resulted were significantly lower than the numbers needed.”²⁸ Additionally, the OAG found “that the gap between the needs identified by the Regular Force and the recruiting targets of the Military Personnel Command reflected the processing capacities of the recruiting group and the school that provides basic military training. Increasing the capacities of the recruiting group and of the school was considered but determined to be too costly a fix for a problem that, in the Canadian Armed Forces' opinion, would be resolved by the 2018–19 fiscal year.”²⁹ However, given its findings related to actual enrolments compared with targets, the OAG is of the opinion that “it is unlikely that the Regular Force will achieve its target of 68,000 members in this time frame.”³⁰

Therefore, the OAG recommended that the CAF “should review its recruiting and training capacity and align this with its planning process to ensure that the recruiting plan reflects the personnel required in each occupation.”³¹

27 Ibid., 1635. For additional information, see [Bold Eagle](#) and [Raven Aboriginal Youth Initiative](#).

28 OAG, “[Report 5–Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention–National Defence](#),” *2016 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, para. 5.35.

29 Ibid., para. 5.43.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., para. 5.44.

In its action plan, National Defence agreed with this recommendation and stated the following:

Through the Annual Military Occupations Review (AMOR) process, a multi-year strategic intake plan identifies the occupational recruiting requirements to generate the personnel requirements to restore and or maintain occupations at their authorized manning levels.³² The CAF will increase capacity at its Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School (CFLRS) to accommodate increased recruit processing. Once suitable candidates are enrolled as quickly and efficiently as possible, actions will be taken to ensure trainees reach their Operational Functional Point and assigned to an operational unit.³³

With respect to the issue of increasing recruitment capacity, LGen Lamarre noted some progress:

By the middle of the month of June, we'll have 20 new file managers who are going to be working for Colonel Demers down in Borden. They're being hired specifically to look after the processing of files. To also increase the throughput, he will be receiving another 20 of those by the end of the fiscal year. Within the military personnel command, we also have the responsibility for basic training. Down at our leadership recruit school in Saint-Jean, we are right now increasing their throughput capacity by the provision of 26 contracted instructors. They will be there specifically to take on the qualifications that we must give our incoming recruits, such as first aid and other types of skills like that, so that we can actually get moving forward on these pieces.³⁴

To address these matters, the Committee therefore recommends

Recommendation 3

That, by 30 April 2018, *National Defence* provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to improving recruitment and training capacity in the *Canadian Armed Forces* and how it aligns with the planning process to ensure that recruitment reflects the personnel required in each occupation.

D. Meeting the Recruiting Targets for All Occupations

The OAG found that “although the recruiting group met its adjusted target for the total number of enrollees, it did this while not enrolling the number of people needed for some occupations,” and “also found that several occupations have been understaffed for many years because of issues with recruiting, training, or retention.”³⁵ This is important

32 National Defence, [Detailed Action Plan](#), 29 November 2016, p. 7.

33 Ibid.

34 House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 3 May 2017, [Meeting 54](#), 1610.

35 OAG, [“Report 5–Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention–National Defence,”](#) 2016 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada, para. 5.45.

given that “having enough staff available and trained in each occupation—not just the right overall number of members—is important for accomplishing [CAF] operations.”³⁶

Thus, the OAG recommended that the CAF “should develop and implement a three- to five-year target with an action plan for each occupation to meet recruiting needs, track progress, and take corrective action where necessary.”³⁷

In its action plan, National Defence stated that it agreed with the recommendation and that it will “continue with the [Annual Military Occupations Review] to develop the Strategic Intake Plan and Annual Recruiting Targets,” and develop “a Strategic Intake Plan Model to define Primary Reserve requirements.”³⁸ Moreover, it added that “CAF is implementing measures to improve its five year long-range planning model, to ensure that adjustments can be made to the recruiting requirements by occupation, when needed.”³⁹

Mr. Forster also stated that National Defence is “putting in place measures to improve our five-year recruitment planning and to ensure that adjustments can be made as needed to recruiting requirements for specific occupations.”⁴⁰

Therefore, the Committee recommends

Recommendation 4

That, by 30 April 2018, National Defence provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to improving the *Canadian Armed Forces*’ three- to five-year recruitment target planning including action plans for each occupation to meet recruiting needs, track progress, and take corrective action where necessary.

E. Attracting Qualified Applicants for Certain Occupations

The OAG found that the “Regular Force did not attract a sufficient number of qualified applicants for several occupations” and “recruiters lacked the necessary support to provide detailed information on every occupation.”⁴¹ This is important “because attraction is the first step in the recruitment process. To be successful, the recruitment process requires a sufficient number of qualified applicants.”⁴²

36 Ibid., para. 5.47.

37 Ibid., para. 5.52.

38 National Defence, [Detailed Action Plan](#), 29 November 2016, pp. 7-8.

39 Ibid., p. 8.

40 House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 3 May 2017, [Meeting 54](#), 1550.

41 OAG, [“Report 5–Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention–National Defence,” 2016 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada](#), para. 5.61.

42 Ibid., para. 5.63.

According to the OAG, to make a career in the CAF “attractive—and to be able to offer accurate occupational information—recruiters needed sufficient knowledge of the occupations, including their entry plans. Potential recruits needed to know what to expect in terms of lifestyle, compensation, and training options to make informed decisions about joining the Canadian Armed Forces. Misconceptions about these aspects could lead recruits to leave their positions prematurely.”⁴³ However, the OAG found that it is “unlikely that each recruiter could have had in-depth knowledge of so many individual occupations,”⁴⁴ and that “special attention was not provided to all stressed occupations.”⁴⁵

Hence, the OAG recommended that the CAF “should implement targeted measures to attract enough qualified applicants for all occupations for which it has difficulty attracting applicants.”⁴⁶ National Defence agreed with this recommendation and stated that an “advertising and marketing campaign targeting qualified applicants for priority occupations is being developed. The campaign includes a social media capability with a significant presence on various social media sites. In addition, [stressed] occupations, for which it is difficult to attract applicants, will remain a priority for advertising and marketing activities.”⁴⁷

When questioned about this situation, Mr. Forster explained some of the challenges of recruiting for certain specialized professions:

We simply cannot afford not to engage quality candidates. However, we do compete with employers across the country in specialized occupations such as doctors, engineers, social workers, and others in high demand. The recruitment of mental health professionals is especially difficult due to the short supply of psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health care nurses, and case workers. The challenge is made greater by the demands associated with a military career. It's an exacting and sometimes hazardous profession. Realities such as deployment, separation from family, relocation, and the general rigours of military life do not appeal to everyone.⁴⁸

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 5

That, by 30 April 2018, *National Defence* provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to implementing targeted measures to attract enough qualified applicants for all occupations in the *Canadian Armed Forces* for which it has difficulty attracting applicants, as well as the progress in recruiting them.

43 Ibid., para. 5.68.

44 Ibid., para. 5.69.

45 Ibid., para. 5.70.

46 Ibid., para. 5.71.

47 National Defence, [Detailed Action Plan](#), 29 November 2016, p. 8.

48 House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 3 May 2017, [Meeting 54](#), 1550.

F. Ensuring that the Recruiting Process Meets the Applicants' Needs

The OAG found that “the recruiting process was lengthy for many applicants, with delays in key areas. In addition, files were closed in some cases while applicants were still interested, and the organization’s timelines for file processing took priority over the applicants’ circumstances. This contributed to qualified candidates leaving the recruitment process.”⁴⁹

The OAG believes this is important given that “recruiting is about people—and people need time to transition to a new job in the [CAF].”⁵⁰ Additionally, the OAG found the following challenges with regard to some specific elements of the recruiting process:

- The time required for recruitment—although some delays are unavoidable, “the time needed for other steps in the process—such as assessing educational equivalencies or conducting medical screening—could have been reduced.”⁵¹
- Possible premature closure of applicants’ files—“cases in which files were closed while applicants were still interested in pursuing” a CAF career (such as when an applicant was waiting for medical information or assembling their references);⁵² and
- Processing of applicants’ files—“Canadian Forces Recruiting Group was too rigid in scheduling screening appointments and in making offers of employment. The group prioritized the organization’s timelines over the applicants’ circumstances, contributing to qualified applicants leaving the process.”⁵³

In light of these concerns, the OAG recommended that the CAF “should review its selection process with a view to improving its efficiency—including better file management methods and increased flexibility in the recruitment process—in order to maintain a sufficient pool of qualified applicants.”⁵⁴

In its action plan, National Defence stated that it agreed with the recommendation and that in addition to producing “a CAF Recruiting Strategic Initiating Directive which defines the expected changes to the Canadian Forces Recruiting System” and several other initiatives,⁵⁵ it will undertake the following:

49 OAG, “[Report 5–Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention–National Defence](#),” *2016 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, para. 5.72.

50 *Ibid.*, para. 5.74.

51 *Ibid.*, para. 5.78.

52 *Ibid.*, para. 5.81.

53 *Ibid.*, para. 5.83.

54 *Ibid.*, para. 5.87.

55 National Defence, [Detailed Action Plan](#), 29 November 2016, p. 9.

- “Exploit and improve the recruiting information management systems;
- Optimize the recruiting process and supporting structures;
- Optimize marketing and attraction activities;
- Implement improved benchmarking and data analysis;
- Improve mechanisms for selecting and career management of recruiting staff;
- Revitalizing training of recruiters to deliver all training each September after arrival of new personnel at their units, instead of over an entire year;
- Assist with the development of an expedited enrolment process for Reserves; and
- Transfer Reserve Force Recruiting over to the Services/Environments.”⁵⁶

LGen Lamarre further explained some other improvements to the process:

[A] number of initiatives have already been undertaken to simplify the recruiting overall. Those include making sure that recruiting can be done online and that the recruiting candidates can actually track their file online once it is opened. Sometimes we are held to having to have original documents so we can actually confirm that documents are accurate, but the intent each time is to make sure that we can speed up the process by which the applications are coming forward.⁵⁷

To ensure the continued progress of this matter, the Committee thus recommends:

Recommendation 6

That, by 30 April 2018, *National Defence* provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to improving the efficiency of the selection process, including better file management methods and increased flexibility in the recruitment process, with a focus on better meeting *Canadian Armed Forces* applicants’ needs.

G. Timeliness of Training

The OAG found “considerable delays from one training phase to the next for some occupations” and “that the Regular Force lacked a consistent reporting method for personnel who were in training, including members awaiting training.”⁵⁸ This is important

56 Ibid.

57 House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 3 May 2017, [Meeting 54](#), 1555.

58 OAG, “[Report 5–Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention–National Defence](#),” *2016 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, para. 5.88.

because “the availability of Regular Force trained personnel depends on each member’s prompt progression through training.”⁵⁹

DATA ISSUE

For example, because of unreliable data, the OAG could not calculate delays for pilots’ training. Data showed that 78 members were attending a course, but the course had been over for many months. The OAG was told that this error was due to the inability of some training units to update data in the main system used to record training activities.

Source: OAG, [Report 5 – Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention – National Defence](#),
Fall 2016 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada, para. 5.99.

With regard to the timing of occupational training, the OAG found that “while waiting between occupational training courses, some trainees were assigned other training, such as security awareness courses or first aid. However, waiting times were identified as a significant source of dissatisfaction that affected the Regular Force’s ability to retain members during training.”⁶⁰ Additionally, the OAG found that “the Regular Force lacked a consistent method to document and account for members on training, including members awaiting training.”⁶¹

Therefore, the OAG recommended that the CAF “should implement mechanisms for tracking members in occupational training in order to improve the timeliness of training.”⁶²

In its action plan, National Defence stated that it agreed with the recommendation and that the CAF “will review its Basic Training List system to decrease wait times for military training by occupation” and “continue its efforts to modernize and improve its approach to training and education by leveraging new learning technologies, creating more efficient processes and building effective partnerships.”⁶³

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 7

That, by 30 April 2018, *National Defence* provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to improving the tracking of *Canadian Armed Forces* members in occupational training in order to improve the timeliness of training.

59 Ibid., para. 5.90.

60 Ibid., para. 5.97.

61 Ibid., para. 5.98.

62 Ibid., para. 5.101.

63 National Defence, [Detailed Action Plan](#), 29 November 2016, pp. 10-11.

H. Implementing the Retention Plan

Overall, the OAG observed that the “Regular Force experienced high levels of attrition in some occupations. Although it knew the causes of attrition, the Regular Force had not implemented its most recent overall retention strategy, nor had it developed specific strategies to respond to the challenges of each occupation.”⁶⁴

The OAG believes this finding “matters because the military’s operational capability depends on the Canadian Armed Forces’ ability to retain highly specialized, trained, and experienced military personnel on a long-term basis.”⁶⁵ Additionally, given the high cost of training, it is therefore more cost-effective if National Defence can retain its trained members.⁶⁶

As part of its analysis, the OAG studied the following elements:

- Actual Attrition—“attrition rates varied significantly among occupations and were particularly high in some. In the 2015–16 fiscal year, 23 occupations had attrition rates higher than [10%];”⁶⁷
- Information on attrition factors—although it had research and information pertaining to attrition, “this information was not used to develop retention plans for specific occupations;”⁶⁸ and
- Retention strategies and measures—CAF had neither implemented nor revised its retention strategy for the Regular Force, and although some initiatives were implemented to address certain attrition situations, they “were developed on an ad hoc basis and did not focus on responding to the specific challenges of each occupation.”⁶⁹

As such, the OAG recommended that the CAF “should develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate measures to optimize retention for each occupation.”⁷⁰ In its action plan, National Defence agreed with this recommendation and stated the following:

The CAF will take a Total Force Approach to Retention. Recognizing the value of trained experienced members, the CAF will balance an environment conducive to easy movement within and between components with organizational requirements to facilitate the retention of skilled, able members. The CAF is on track to developing and implementing a retention strategy in accordance with the key milestones. The overall

64 OAG, “[Report 5–Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention–National Defence](#),” *2016 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, para. 5.102.

65 Ibid., para. 5.103.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid., para. 5.109.

68 Ibid., para. 5.112.

69 Ibid., para. 5.114.

70 Ibid., para. 5.115.

objective is to ensure that our members remain qualified, competent and motivated. The retention of women in particular will be a focus, as we are aiming to increase the representation of women in the CAF to at least 25.1% within 10 years.⁷¹

With regard to the issue of retention, LGen Lamarre explained some of the following initiatives CAF is pursuing:

Retention is probably one of the most important ones as well, because if we can prevent young men and women from leaving the Canadian Armed Forces at various gates by making it more attractive, that will be important for us. One of the key programs we're looking at doing right now is to facilitate the move between the regular and the reserve forces. It used to be a complex process to make the transition, but we now want to make it as simple as a transition of a matter of a week or two after showing intent. The reason for this is that it will be attractive to a lot of the population, whether they are trying to satisfy linking up with spouses on other postings or whether they're at the point in their life where they want to have a family and concentrate more on raising their family.

Also significant is the change of giving them the opportunity to make sure they have their chance to take a break and come back without a penalty in how they're getting paid, and certainly with the opportunity to continue contributing to their pension fund, so that they can have a full career but with the breaks in their career that are necessary so they can raise their families and so they can achieve other things—for example, pursue another degree—and after that continue as a valued member of the Canadian Armed Forces, perhaps in very bespoke responsibilities and capabilities for which they have the training and for which there might be a short-term contract.⁷²

Notwithstanding the above, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 8

That, by 30 April 2018, *National Defence* provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to the development, implementation and analysis of measures to optimize retention for each occupation in the *Canadian Armed Forces*.

CONCLUSION

The OAG concluded that CAF “implemented systems and practices to recruit, train, and retain the members it needed, but, as noted in [the OAG’s audit], many of these systems and practices did not meet its needs or achieve its objectives.”⁷³ Consequently, the “Regular Force must examine its methods of attracting and recruiting candidates, and training and retaining members. It must manage all phases of the process for each

71 National Defence, [Detailed Action Plan](#), 29 November 2016, pp. 11-12.

72 House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 3 May 2017, [Meeting 54](#), 1615.

73 OAG, “[Report 5–Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention–National Defence](#),” *2016 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, para. 5.116.

occupation. It should tailor and implement different approaches for each occupation to address each occupation's unique challenges."⁷⁴

In order to address the challenges identified in the audit, the Committee has made eight recommendations to help ensure National Defence implements all of its proposed measures to improve the recruitment and retention of members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

74 Ibid., para. 5.118.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND ASSOCIATED DEADLINES

Table 1 – Summary of Recommended Actions and Associated Deadlines

Recommendation	Recommended Action	Deadline
Recommendation 1 (p. 5)	<i>National Defence</i> needs to provide the Committee with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to achieving the representation goals of women in each occupation in the Canadian Armed Forces.	30 April 2018
Recommendation 2 (p. 5)	<i>National Defence</i> needs to provide the Committee with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to achieving the representation goals of other designated groups—including visible minorities and members of Canada’s Indigenous peoples—as identified in the <i>Employment Equity Act</i> , for each occupation in the <i>Canadian Armed Forces</i> .	30 April 2018
Recommendation 3 (p. 6)	<i>National Defence</i> needs to provide the Committee with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to improving recruitment and training capacity in the Canadian Armed Forces and how it aligns with the planning process to ensure that recruitment reflects the personnel required in each occupation.	30 April 2018
Recommendation 4 (p. 7)	<i>National Defence</i> needs to provide the Committee with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to improving CAF’s three- to five-year recruitment target planning including action plans for each occupation to meet recruiting needs, track progress, and take corrective action where necessary.	30 April 2018

<p>Recommendation 5 (p. 8)</p>	<p><i>National Defence</i> needs to provide the Committee with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to implementing targeted measures to attract enough qualified applicants for all occupations for which it has difficulty attracting applicants, as well as the progress in recruiting them.</p>	<p>30 April 2018</p>
<p>Recommendation 6 (p. 10)</p>	<p><i>National Defence</i> needs to provide the Committee with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to improving the efficiency of the selection process, including better file management methods and increased flexibility in the recruitment process, with a focus on better meeting applicants' needs.</p>	<p>30 April 2018</p>
<p>Recommendation 7 (p. 11)</p>	<p><i>National Defence</i> needs to provide the Committee with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to improving the tracking of members in occupational training in order to improve the timeliness of training.</p>	<p>30 April 2018</p>
<p>Recommendation 8 (p. 13)</p>	<p><i>National Defence</i> needs to provide the Committee with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to the development, implementation and analysis of measures to optimize retention for each occupation.</p>	<p>30 April 2018</p>

APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Department of National Defence	2017/05/03	54
André Demers, Commander Canadian Forces Recruiting Group		
John Forster, Deputy Minister		
C.A. Lamarre, Commander Military Personnel Command		
Susan Truscott, Director General Military Personnel and Research Analysis		
Steven Whelan, Commander Military Personnel Generation		
Office of the Auditor General		
Michael Ferguson, Auditor General of Canada		
Gordon Stock, Principal		

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 54 and 62](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Kevin Sorenson
Chair

