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Chair

Mrs. Karen Vecchio

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• (0845)

[English]

The Chair (Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC)): Good morning, and welcome to the 146th meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Today's meeting is in public.

Today we will continue our study of the treatment of women within the Department of National Defence. For this I am pleased to welcome, as an individual, Professor Alan Okras; and from The WPS Group, we have Kristine St-Pierre, director.

I now turn the floor over to Professor Okros.

You have seven minutes for your opening statement.

Dr. Alan Okros (As an Individual): Thank you.

Madam Chair and honourable members,

[Translation]

I'll be giving my statement in English.

[English]

I thank you for the opportunity to speak on the important topic of the employment of women in the Canadian Armed Forces. As background, my experience with changes in the employment of women in the CAF started in 1978. I have been conducting research, contributing to policy development, monitoring evolutions and teaching on gender in the military at the Canadian Forces College since.

I interpret that the current study is informed by the objectives of the original royal commission to ensure the full participation of women in all aspects of Canadian society. In this case, it is to set the conditions to enable women to make an optimum contribution to delivering defence and security for Canadians.

I'll start with changes in the CAF over time to inform the current context. Faced with the six recommendations for the CAF in the 1970 royal commission report, the 1970s and 1980s was a period of denial and resistance by many, but not all, in uniform. A number of men could not envision women as able to perform core operational roles. A narrative was constructed that accentuated gender differences. All men could leap a tall building in a single bound; no women could climb a flight of stairs.

While no longer widely held, the focus on male supremacy still echoes in parts of the CAF. The 1990s and the early 2000s saw a

shift to grudging tolerance and eventual acceptance but with women constantly on trial. Poor performance by a man could be ignored or excused while that by a woman could be met with dismissal. We knew she couldn't cut it.

With the intensive operations conducted in Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa and elsewhere, the evolution since 2005 was seen by many as full acceptance. Women have been there, done that and earned the T-shirt and the medals. This has come, however, with a new narrative that replaced the constructed gender differences with the belief that the CAF is gender neutral. A common phrase is, "I don't see gender. I don't hear accents. I don't see colour. I just see soldiers, and they all compete on a level field". The CAF is not gender neutral, and the field is not level.

Women have demonstrated very capably that they can perform military roles in ways that earn the respect of their male superiors, peers and subordinates, but most do so by adopting highly masculine behaviours and, for some, masculine world views, attitudes and values. This is no surprise as the military engages in very intentional processes to convert the civilian into the soldier, sailor, aviator, leader, commander. The challenge is that what is produced is highly masculinized. The CAF is just now beginning to ask at what cost.

In what ways are women, men and others prevented from making an optimum contribution when they are socialized into one specific way of thinking and acting?

I'll now turn to Operation Honour and harassment of women with two initial comments. First, I cannot see another organization in Canada or the military internationally doing more than the CAF. The challenge is, it's still not enough. Second, it's complicated. There are a number of reasons why women, some men, LGB individuals and non-binary folk are subject to unwanted and unprofessional behaviours. The efforts you have been briefed on by CAF leaders are all necessary actions, but the CAF has yet to really tackle two key factors.

The first is that the military is a very judgmental profession. Individuals judge each other constantly and for good reason. They want to know that those around them will have their back when the brown stuff hits the rotating object, but this becomes problematic when excuses are made for men who trip in mud puddles but, as you have heard, not for women or other non-conforming people.

Second, as part of this process of constantly judging, the military creates very clear social hierarchies indicating who is the most important and who is the least. CAF is not alone here. The order of seating in committee rooms serves the same purpose. The key issue is that this pecking order is established and policed through the use of social power. Research has clearly demonstrated that many, not all, cases of harassment are about power. Labelling actions as sexual misconduct is misleading.

●(0850)

If I hit you with a shovel, you wouldn't call it gardening.

The challenge for CAF members is to thread the needle where all still have confidence in the capability of their peers—everybody has to measure up—and where those who are given power—some still need power—know how to use it properly, while removing the risk that judgmental assessments and constructed power are used to marginalize women or others who don't fit the hyper-masculine norm.

A number of researchers have suggested that the solution is to amend this norm and allow alternate ways of being seen as an effective military member. This would include shifting from the current focus on normative conformity to practising inclusive leadership.

Finally, I'll return to the comments of General Lawson when Madame Deschamps surprised senior military leaders with her findings. He stated that the CAF had been taking actions and things had been improving since the 1994 Maclean's articles. He was right, but he missed a key point. The expectations of women as to what was and was not acceptable had shifted significantly. We've seen this more broadly in the #MeToo movement. Social expectations will continue to evolve and could result in another sharp break, where tolerated practices suddenly become unacceptable.

This is not just restricted to women. A common phrase among young Canadians these days is “check your privilege”. An old phrase among military officers is “RHIP”, which means rank has its privileges. There's a culture clash.

I would conclude that the CAF is going to continue to have to find ways to create the individual and group characteristics needed for operations, while also meeting ongoing evolution in how individuals expect to be treated and how they will expect to be able to contribute to mission success.

I have a short list of recommendations that I will table for the committee's consideration.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're now going to turn it over to Kristine St-Pierre. You have seven minutes.

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre (Director, The WPS Group): Good morning, Madam Chair, members of the committee, and distinguished guests.

Thank you, Alan.

Thank you for inviting me as part of your study on the treatment of women within the Department of National Defence.

I am here on behalf of my organization but also as a member of the steering committee of the Women, Peace and Security Network—Canada.

A few weeks ago I watched a TVO documentary that first aired in September of 2018, on what remains a little-known part of our Canadian history, a campaign waged against the Canadian LGBTQ+ community in an attempt to remove members of this community from public office. Men and women believed to be homosexuals working in the Canadian public service, including the Canadian Forces and the RCMP, were put under surveillance and interrogated. Their privacy was invaded to the highest degree, with their careers ruined and lives destroyed.

Apart from the incredible injustice that was committed to Canadians in Canada, there was something else that I found very powerful in that documentary. All of those affected recounted their time in the Canadian Armed Forces or the RCMP with much pride, “I was a great soldier” or “I was a great police officer.” All of them had signed up willingly for this type of career, wanting to make a difference, wanting to serve their country. All of them knew the sacrifices it would take, and they were physically and mentally ready. What they weren't ready for and what they hadn't signed up for was the pervasive culture of discrimination and harassment they faced, including bullying and abuse, which ultimately forced them out.

While laws have since changed and important progress has been made, as Alan mentioned, let's be very clear: We're not there yet. Many of your guests in the last few weeks have demonstrated this very clearly, including Sandra Perron, Laura Nash and Julie Lalonde. We are forcing out the very people we say we want, at least on paper.

I'd like to offer today a few tangible steps that I believe are key to addressing the problem.

First, I think we need to rethink the education and the training system overall. One of the objectives of the Canadian Armed Forces diversity strategy is to “Inculcate a Culture of Diversity”, which the strategy says, “is to develop the military's organizational culture to be more inclusive and respectful which will demonstrate to Canadian society that the CAF truly values and embraces diversity.” Cultural change is not going to happen with a one-hour online GBA+ training or a one-hour sexual harassment training. Cultural change will happen by ensuring that the principles of equality, diversity and human rights are at the very core of the education that a soldier receives. That needs to be embedded in everything they do and reinforced at every level. It also needs to be complemented by strict zero tolerance policies for any such behaviour and a process for complaints that are properly investigated.

My second point is that I believe we need an honest conversation on the role of the military in the 21st century starting within the CAF. As mentioned, there has been important progress made within DND and the CAF regarding the treatment of women; however, we know that women and men experience their military careers very differently, as we've heard in the past few weeks. That being the case, there is a very real need to have an honest and frank conversation about what it's like to be in the military from these diverse perspectives. We need to hear these very voices, and then we need to analyze the findings and be ready to meaningfully address them. It's about committing to examine the very structures we bring women and other diverse groups into. It's about changing the way that it has always been done.

This takes effective leadership, which is my third point. Effective leadership is one that drives change from within by empowering others to believe in that change.

● (0855)

This is where I think we've been failing. Transformational change towards gender equality and inclusivity requires everyone in the organization to believe in that change from top officials to students at RMC to cadets. This is far from being easy, but in hierarchical institutions bold statements followed by bold actions should go a long way, and they can't just be one person, but many across the organization who become champions and stand up and challenge the "well, we've always done it this way" and are empowered to do so.

To conclude, I truly believe there is a huge opportunity for the Canadian Forces to change its culture and truly be an inclusive place for everyone.

The Chair: That's excellent. Thank you very much.

We will now start with our first round of questioning.

I'm going to pass the floor to Bob Bratina for seven minutes.

● (0900)

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Thank you.

Thank you, both, for your very interesting submissions.

First of all, Alan, I'm interested in your comment that the 1970s were a time of denial and resistance. How much history do they teach the military in terms of women in combat? There's a very profound history of women in combat. It seems women are better snipers generally speaking than men. I almost hate to go into the dark issues of war and behaviours, but women have functioned very well in the worst scenarios.

Is that covered at all in the curriculum?

Dr. Alan Okros: Neither the history nor the changes, and particularly the legislative changes, are addressed in a systematic way. Individuals can come across it as a result of studies or courses or, commonly, comments from leaders.

Mr. Bob Bratina: I go back to another point that Ms. St-Pierre made about how you can't just have a one-hour session of something. It has to be embedded.

The Soviets had three all-female regiments: the mechanics, the pilots, the bomb aimers. There were a couple of exceptions. You

needed a tall guy in the tail gun of one type of aircraft so they needed a couple of tall guys, but the rest were virtually all female with remarkable outcomes. I find it hard to believe. Then there are numerous examples in the war for Israel. We could go on and on.

Is there some virtue in filling out the curriculum when people come into the military?

Dr. Alan Okros: There are two aspects of this. One is the history. There are places where it is visible. The Canadian military has drawn on the talents of a broad cross-section of Canadians—first nations, indigenous peoples, Japanese Canadians during the Second World War. There are many examples. Some are aware of the different ways in which the military has drawn on the diversity of Canadian society over time, but I'm not sure those examples are as clear to those who are joining.

The other part is I don't think the vast majority of those who are joining the military are aware of the history. You have been hearing some of the history, and some of this is recent history. Some of this goes to, again, the changes after the 1970 report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, changes after the charter came into effect. Significant changes were implemented within the military. New people are joining the military and encountering a new status quo, but the issues, the challenges and the requirements for changes aren't necessarily being discussed. The concern with it right now is new people are believing that the military is gender neutral because that's the narrative. I think that's the real barrier at the present time.

Mr. Bob Bratina: Ms. St-Pierre, could you give me more of the background of your organization Women, Peace and Security.

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: Yes. Women, Peace and Security is a network of about 70 individuals and organizations formed in 2012. It's a network of volunteers. However, we just incorporated in a non-governmental organization, but we all remain volunteers.

We advise and monitor the government on the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, resolution 1325. We've been very active over the years advising the government on the development of its national action plan, working with Global Affairs, DND, RCMP, Status of Women, and going through the first and the second national action plans.

Mr. Bob Bratina: You have a particular interest in peacekeeping.

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: Yes, I do.

Mr. Bob Bratina: We're not going to flip a switch where everything's good tomorrow, but I think the notion of women in peacekeeping might be an excellent opportunity for women in view of the nature of that versus all-out war. What would you say about the peacekeeping issue?

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: I think we're still at the same.... In terms of peacekeeping, it's still 95% male-dominated.

Mr. Bob Bratina: Yes.

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: There's been a tremendous effort to raise the number of women as part of the military and as part of the police, but it remains that in order to raise the number of women in peacekeeping, we need to start at home. A big part of the national action plan in Canada....

In terms of the first national action plan, we were very outward-looking: This is what we're going to do in the world when we deploy in other countries. A big part of our advocacy for the second national action plan was to say that we can't just say we're going to do things outward; we have to look internally. In terms of the RCMP and DND, we have to look at our processes. We have to connect the dots in terms of Operation Honour. We have to look at what we're doing internally to make sure that we can have more women as part of the military and then be able to send more women as part of peacekeeping.

• (0905)

Mr. Bob Bratina: Thank you.

Alan, can you correlate in terms of women in policing and women in the military? A lot of women have been in policing for a lot longer than they've been in the military. Is there crossover data that's useful there?

Dr. Alan Okros: I would suggest two perspectives. One is that the challenges that women in policing have faced are the same as the challenges women are facing internally with the Canadian Armed Forces. I worked with the RCMP when they went through their gender and respect program. The internal issues that Kristine pointed out are common.

I think both organizations are still trying to understand the benefits that women and diverse others bring to their core tasks. Again, both put huge pressures on women to conform to predominantly masculine behaviours and masculine norms. That includes ways of thinking in the decision-making, not just the acting. Both organizations, I think, are still trying to figure out how to capitalize on and optimize what women may bring. I don't think either have recognized it yet.

Mr. Bob Bratina: Thank you.

The Chair: We'll now turn the floor over to Ron Liepert for seven minutes.

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Professor, I grew up on a farm in Saskatchewan. When I was growing up, my dad would be at the breakfast table and he'd say, "Helen, I need a cup of coffee." So Helen would bring him a cup of coffee. This went on consistently. Obviously, that culture has changed pretty significantly. I think if I asked my wife to bring me a cup of coffee today, if she actually did she'd dump it over my head.

How has the change in culture mirrored the change in society, or has it been 20 years behind and slowly creeping up? Using my analogy as a comparison from a cultural standpoint, where was the military when I was growing up and where is it today?

Dr. Alan Okros: I guess the comment I would make is that I don't think Canadian society is monolithic. Some individuals are more progressive than others, and the same, I think, applies internally within the military. I think there are some individuals, both men and women, who are being very progressive and who are being very open. They are looking at new ways to work together. Some are resistant.

To go back to your analogy, most of the research in Canadian society still points out that women are doing far more unpaid work in the family than men are. This continues to be one of the challenges. When organizations make assumptions that men do not have to spend time looking after family, it puts pressure on them. For example, internally within the Canadian Armed Forces, both men and women can take parental leave with the arrival of a new child. It's an expectation that women will do so. It can be seen for some men as the organizational loyalty test: Where's your loyalty? The data continues to show that new fathers are not taking as much time off as they could. Some of them, after three days, go to open sporting events in the Netherlands.

There are examples being set in society that are sending signals that I think both men and women are grappling with: What is expected of us? What is the role? How much do I put into my career? How much do I put into my family? I think that's a constant challenge still.

Mr. Ron Liepert: Did you want to make a comment, Ms. St-Pierre?

• (0910)

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: I fully agree.

With the work that I've done with the RCMP specifically, this is exactly what I hear: "I didn't take paternity leave because I didn't think I could."

Mr. Ron Liepert: I'm subbing in for a regular member of this committee, and I wasn't here when the motion was approved. However, the motion seems to focus much more on sexual harassment than the culture of the military, or really any of the forces.

How much is the culture that has been ingrained in the various organizations potentially responsible for the sexual harassment, and if we change the culture, is that going to help change the issues of sexual harassment?

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: I truly believe so.

I think the culture is allowing.... I mean, I think it's completely linked. I think there are power dynamics at play. There is a culture of impunity. All of that combined with the need for strict policies is key, and I think leadership is key. When I say leadership, it's really at all levels. They say the same thing, toe the party line, but the party line should be that there's a zero tolerance for this.

Dr. Alan Okros: I fully agree, and yes, there are aspects of the culture that I would suggest need to change.

As I tried to indicate in my comments, the challenge is that the military goes out of its way to create the soldier. With everybody who joins the military, there are three key things that everybody learns. The first is normative conformity; when in doubt do what everybody else is doing. Number two is obedience to authority; do what the boss tells you. Number three is group loyalty—fit into groups. That puts huge pressure on people to fit in and to conform.

There are many individuals—this is part of what I do with the groups coming through Canadian Forces College—who fit that.... When they joined the military, they didn't have to change who they were very much. It was them. There are others who don't.

The military is continuing to try to find ways to help them become like everybody else, rather than changing the culture to say, “You can still be who you are. You can be a military member in a different way than what we're currently doing.”

That, to me, is the central challenge, and I'm not sure that anybody has sorted that out yet.

Mr. Ron Liepert: Would you like to ask a question, Madam Chair?

The Chair: With approval from the committee, may I ask a question?

We talk a lot about Operation Honour. We've seen the data come back, and the results haven't been fantastic.

What are some of the recommendations you would make to change Operation Honour to make it so it does what it is supposed to do to take away sexual and physical harassment from women?

Dr. Alan Okros: I'll start with a couple of recommendations.

One of the key things in Operation Honour is the duty to report. The challenge with duty to report is that it makes incidents very formal right away. There are individuals who have been on the receiving end of stupid behaviour who don't want it formally reported.

My recommendation is to change that to a “duty to respond”. If somebody were asked, “You were there. You witnessed. You saw something going on that was unprofessional. How did you respond?” It may simply be support. It may be talking with them. That would be one of the issues that I would suggest.

I would also suggest that the military take a very long, hard look at the social events that emphasize alcohol consumption. We know that's part of it. It contributes to it.

I would suggest that it would be beneficial to have professional counselling available to individuals when they're on the receiving end, particularly of sexualized military trauma.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you very much.

Irene, you have seven minutes.

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you very much for being here. We truly appreciate the advice and the insight that you bring.

Professor, I would particularly like to thank you for your observation regarding the hierarchy in a committee and how power is used.

I'm sure most of us have been to a mess, and my God, you have to know the protocol or you're in trouble. You may not get dinner if you don't understand the hierarchy there.

I was very interested in the comment in regard to education. You mentioned the RMC, and it reminded me of a situation in the town where I come from with cadets. For whatever reason, because of friendship, because somebody had access to a vehicle, a child predator was allowed in to be an instructor. The reservist who tried to bring attention to that went right up the chain of command. He was drummed out and the predator remained. It seems to me that this education you spoke of does indeed need to start very early. I wondered if you would comment on that.

● (0915)

Dr. Alan Okros: Yes, I agree. I think people are aware that the cadet organization is a separate construct, as are the rangers. The Canadian Armed Forces and the cadet organization certainly ensure that when people are joining, they are made aware of the policies, the standards and the expectations. I think there's been a lot of effort on clarifying the standards up front. I think the difficulty and the challenge with it is there's still confusion on occasions as to what to do when people encounter circumstances of what I will continue to call “unprofessional behaviour”.

Then we get into the difficulties of when people step forward to say something, and that's where I think there's the potential for things to go off the rails. You've heard of some examples of people where it hasn't been dealt with. There are many that are dealt with very effectively, but I think the organization is still grappling with.... I don't think it's the upfront initial education. I would suggest that equipping leaders effectively to deal with these issues is one area that could do with some more emphasis.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Thank you.

Madame St-Pierre, did you have anything to add?

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: I want to mention that I do some work with a police project in Ukraine. One thing, as part of their national action plan on resolution 1325, was to revise their education system. Within their ministry of interior, they launched this revision of the education system for all law enforcement agencies to look at their curriculums from a gender perspective. I thought that was quite ambitious, but also extremely important to do to make sure that, as I mentioned in my comments, it's really embedded as part of the entire curriculum from the beginning.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: That's interesting. In terms of gender-based analysis, governments are still grappling with that.

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: Certainly.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: It is tricky and it makes significant demands.

You talked about the national action plan, and I wondered how government has responded. Are you happy with the response? What more could happen, if anything?

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: We are in the second year. The second report will be tabled, if I'm getting my years correct. The second national action plan was actually a real step forward. There are specific implementation plans for each department, so for each implementation partner. As a network, we've been working specifically with DND, the RCMP and Global Affairs to advance that and advise. Certainly, I can send some of the reports that we've done, but we've been pushing on a number of issues, including the women, peace and security champion, which we're told is somewhere, or in development; and funding for women's organizations. There are a number of specific things that we've been pushing forward on that front.

• (0920)

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Thank you.

It's interesting that you mention the funding for women's organizations. There has been a decline, in terms of that funding—a very serious decline. There's no core funding anymore. Everything is piecemeal. I'll be very interested in your report. I think the discontinuation of that core funding has created a real vacuum, in terms of women's organizations' ability to respond to some very important issues.

I also had a question in regard to the 2016 Auditor General's report. The recommendation was to increase the representation of women in the Canadian military. Despite whatever good intentions, that hasn't happened. What do you think the main barriers are to recruiting and retaining women, because they may come along. We've seen some at this committee who enlisted with incredibly positive attitudes and intentions, and felt that they were not able to continue.

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: As Alan mentioned, I've met so many women who have joined, but after a number of years have left, because they aren't able to be themselves, in addition to everything else they may have encountered. Certainly, their voices are not being recognized.

Another point I will make is about making sure we collect data, because there has been, throughout the testimonies, a lack of data and analysis to understand what's really happening.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're now going to move it over to Sonia Sidhu, for seven minutes.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for giving us insight, and thank you for coming.

This is the fact. Women have less representation—I want to echo my colleague—almost 50% to 60% less.

How can we increase the representation of women? What can the federal government do? I want to ask both of you.

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: I think changing the organization, and changing the culture, as we've been mentioning, would go a long way to making it a more accessible organization. If women, or young women, are looking at this organization, and what they see in the media, it's not always very positive.

The second part is that there are so many women who want to join the military. Once they join, if they encounter all the barriers and everything that we've heard as part of this committee and other testimonies, they're certainly not going to want to stay.

Retention is a huge part, but I think it's so connected with making sure they are able to contribute to the organization in a way that they can and want to. It's about feeling empowered. Certainly, you have to go through the training. There's a standard, and I'm not questioning that, but as Alan mentioned, it's also about allowing them to be themselves.

Dr. Alan Okros: I'll offer a couple of comments, one particular to the level of government. One depends very much on the image of the military and the ways in which the Canadian Armed Forces are supposed to contribute to defence and security. We had a period of time when it was very clear the military was engaged in major combat missions. There were types of advertising that went on at that time, which very clearly attracted certain Canadians to want to join the military, and they dissuaded others, particularly women and members of several of the minority communities.

As Kristine has mentioned, if the Canadian Armed Forces is engaged in providing positive contributions in the world, trying to set the conditions for peace and security, there are likely going to be a lot more women who are going to be interested in joining. So that's one from a government level.

The second one from a government level is that the Employment Equity Act does allow for and hints, encourages, the use of special measures, again, as we know, to address the historical marginalization of the four designated groups. Both the Canadian Armed Forces and the RCMP have been very reluctant to use special measures. Both tend to cling to the merit principle, and from there my internal recommendation is the military continues to rank order. If they have a thousand people who want to join to go to the Royal Military College, they rank order them from number one to a thousand. They actually aren't rank-ordering them from one to a thousand. The measures aren't that precise. They would be better off to put them into groupings of outstanding, acceptable and weak, and if you did broad groupings of equally qualified individuals, you could then have the principle of selecting first amongst equals. So you could select individuals based on demographic identity.

That goes not only to joining. That goes to promotions. That goes into appointing people into command appointments. There's a host of things right now where women, in particular, can commonly be the next on the list. They just didn't quite compete enough to be the top on the list, and challenging this assumption that it's a gender-neutral, level playing field, I think the principle of first amongst equals would help overcome that. There are actions that can be taken.

• (0925)

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Thank you.

Ms. St-Pierre, you mentioned education and training systems, that it was the chief strategy. Do you think it should be starting from the school, or should it be in the cadet program?

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: As Alan mentioned, the cadet system is a separate system. In terms of the schooling, the education in the public system, if you look at national action plans that look at women, peace and security around the world, there are a number of these plans that actually advise changing the education curriculum to ensure that we discuss these issues, that we have this as part of the curriculum. So that's a much broader issue.

In terms of the education of soldiers, whether at RMC or at other levels, certainly I think there's a lot of things that could be revised, could be changed, and it's really about the approach that you take, the content, the language, the examples, the scenarios. It's a whole breadth of things that could be reviewed to ensure that it promotes equality, human rights, women's rights, and diversity and inclusivity.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Thank you.

Some 27% of the CAF are victims of sexual assault. It's a big number. How are the victim support staff trained?

Professor, what are your thoughts about that?

Dr. Alan Okros: As you have heard, the sexual misconduct response centre has staff who are responsible for providing initial responses and supports to individuals. My understanding is that work is ongoing to move from that which is really a 1-800 number to actually providing some capacity at large bases for face-to-face support, which I think most people would recognize would be important.

So I would suggest at the present time there are some levels of support. I think more can be done, certainly, including in understanding the circumstances that individuals can find themselves in.

Again, we know broadly, particularly when women are on the receiving end of sexual assault, that there's a reluctance to speak up and speak out. There are a number of broad social reasons for that. We know that there are concerns with regard to how peers and family and others are going to respond to the individuals. So I think it's a broader system that we need to look at and that's why one of my comments is about providing psychological counselling to individuals when they first encounter the circumstances, not once they get into formal investigations and hearings, but just dealing with it initially. It's trauma, and I'm not sure that we provide the right support yet for those at early stages of experiencing that type of trauma.

• (0930)

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you very much.

We're now going to start the second round. With your consent, I'm going to ask some questions.

Within RMC, Alan, what is the protocol, the process, if there is a sexual harassment or a sexual assault case?

Dr. Alan Okros: My teaching is done at Canadian Forces College, not at the Royal Military College.

I am aware, yes, that there are protocols that have been developed and established specifically for the cadet body, based on certain issues. You heard Julie Lalonde talk about her experiences there. I don't have the specific details of how that is dealt with.

The Chair: Are you familiar with it? It's still in the chain of command that we're hearing...when people are actually and they... It's the same type of process.

Dr. Alan Okros: Yes. It is still within the chain of command.

The Chair: Okay.

Kristine, I'll switch over to you. We were talking about, and Bob talked about, how some of the armed forces had women troops and things of that sort. Are there any countries that we can look at, among our allies, that have seen an increase in women? Have you seen anything like this that we can adopt some best practices from, or do you think that many of these other countries are suffering from the same issues that we are?

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: I would argue that, yes, they are suffering the same challenges. I'm not as familiar with the other countries. I do know that Australia has done a lot in terms of putting policies in place and really trying to change that culture within the armed forces. That would be something to look at, but I'm not as familiar with it.

Maybe Alan would be.

Dr. Alan Okros: Having worked with the Australians, I would agree. Australia and the Scandinavian countries are definitely ones that we can turn to, but I wouldn't restrict it just to there. There are several nations in the African Union that have taken really progressive strides in terms of their policy changes, as well as the increase in the number of women. We have some countries with armed forces that are now up to 30% women.

We tend to look at the usual, similar countries all the time. I think that we can learn lessons by looking elsewhere as well.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you very much.

Kristine, I'll come back to you. You talked about watching *The Fruit Machine* a couple of weeks ago. We were fortunate enough to have Michelle Douglas and Martine Roy here for our first committee meeting.

Because of watching that documentary, which is very, very powerful, you may have done some research after, or you may have looked further after. However, where are we looking when we're looking at the LGBTQ+ community? Are we seeing changes there, or are we still finding the "you're part of this community; you're still below a cisgender person"?

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: I wouldn't be the best person to answer. I haven't worked with the LGBTQ+ community. If we're hearing this from women on this committee and we're getting all this data about what women are going through, then I would argue that, certainly, there is a lot that we don't know in terms of the LGBTQ+ community and what these members within the Canadian Armed Forces are going through.

I would think that there is a lot to uncover in terms of what they are still going through.

The Chair: Alan, please.

Dr. Alan Okros: I have two quick comments. One of the primary markers—to go back to some of my comments—in the military is the basic question “Can you do the job?” As long as individuals demonstrate that they can do the job, most of them—not all—are accepted on the job within the team. There are, certainly, individuals who then get the pressures in terms of their personal lifestyle—don't bring it into the workplace; don't bring it into the socialization places; don't bring your partner to the mess. Of course, socialization is huge in the military, so there are still some individuals who definitely get that signal that they do not fully belong.

You've heard from one individual from the trans community. I've done research in that area. That one is much more complicated. I think, as with many in Canadian society, Canadians and Canadian Armed Forces members are learning more about transgender identity and what it means. Some are very uncomfortable with it. Some are very uncomfortable, particularly—and this is work I've done with international colleagues as well—those who transition from male to female, which tends to be more common in the military. I would suggest that part of the reason for it is that this person was somebody who fit the prototype ideal—this person was masculine, was a guy—and consciously chose to give it up, abandoned the ideal. That becomes problematic.

• (0935)

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you very much.

I'm now going to move over to Eva. You have five minutes.

Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.): Thank you.

[*Translation*]

My first question is for Ms. St-Pierre.

Do you speak French? Do you need the earpiece for interpretation?

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: No, I'm fine.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: You talked about women in peacekeeping operations, and you said the field was 95% male-dominated. Are you talking about now?

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: Yes. I'd have to check the most recent figures, but that's generally where things stand.

It depends on the type of operations. In policing, 15% or 16% of officers may be women, and that number may have gone up slightly. In the armed forces, however, the proportion of women still sits at 3% or 4%, so it remains very low.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Can you tell us what you'll be doing under the national action plan to recruit women? What's your strategy?

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: The national action plan is a Government of Canada plan mainly targeting the Department of National Defence and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

On the foreign affairs side, there is an international desire to increase the number of women who join the United Nations as peacekeepers. In that connection, you may have heard of the Elsie Initiative, launched by the Government of Canada. It is an international cooperation initiative to promote the deployment of more women in peacekeeping operations.

As a member of civil society, our organization provides advice whenever possible, including through participation in various forums.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: How much do you think that will help to improve the female-to-male ratio among peacekeepers? What is the target, in terms of women peacekeepers?

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: The United Nations has various targets. For its entire workforce, the target is 50% women. For peacekeeping operations, various targets were put forward for 2010 to 2020, but I'm not sure whether there is a specific target right now.

For example, in policing, the target was 20%, but it hasn't been met yet.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Are you talking about Canadian participation?

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: No.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: My question was about Canada.

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: I see.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: What is the target?

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: Are you asking what the Government of Canada's target is?

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Yes.

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: I don't think there's an actual target for the participation of Canadian women in peacekeeping operations, other than to increase their numbers.

The RCMP would say the situation is changing. It is, in fact, sending more and more women to take part in these operations. There may be a target I'm not aware of.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Mr. Okros, would you like to add anything?

[*English*]

Dr. Alan Okros: I think it's important to recognize that it's not a random distribution of military members who deploy. If the decision is that we're sending a battle group for deployment, those are combat arms and women are 2% to 3%. Therefore, we need to look at—and this is a discussion that's going on across NATO—the composition of which CAF badges and which skill sets you need to deploy. If the military continues to focus on combat arms or other occupations, the numbers are not going to go up significantly.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Eva Nassif: According to the results of a 2018 Statistics Canada survey on sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces, the rate at which incidents were reported went from 28% in 2016 to 30% in 2018. The Canadian Armed Forces has a low reporting rate. What isn't it working? Why do you think the reporting rate hasn't increased more? Are women afraid to report misconduct?

• (0940)

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: Mr. Okros could probably answer that better than I could, but I would point to the tremendous stigma that still exists. Those who have successfully filed complaints have had to deal with negative feedback in the media, and that can be a deterrent.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: It prevents people from reporting misconduct, does it not?

Ms. Kristine St-Pierre: Yes, and it's even tougher in an organization like the armed forces.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: What is the process, Mr. Okros?

Sorry, but I see I've run out of time.

[English]

The Chair: Sorry, there wasn't enough time for another question.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Thank you.

The Chair: We're going to end this session now.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you both for appearing today. We're going to suspend until a quarter to the hour, so we can change up our panels.

We are suspended.

• (0940)

(Pause)

• (0945)

The Chair: Welcome back to the 146th meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

For the second hour, I am pleased to welcome Brigadier-General Virginia Tattersall, deputy commander, military personnel generation; Brigadier-General Lise Bourgon, defence champion for women, peace and security; Lisa Vandehei, director of gender, diversity and inclusion; and Sean Cantelon, who is the chief executive officer of the Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services.

I'm going to turn the floor over to Brigadier-General Virginia Tattersall.

You have seven minutes to open.

Brigadier-General Virginia Tattersall (Deputy Commander, Military Personnel Generation, Department of National Defence): Madam Chair and committee members, good morning. Thank you for inviting me to speak to you today about the treatment of women in the Department of National Defence, something I have both personal and professional experience with, having been a member of the Canadian Armed Forces for most of my life.

I am Brigadier-General Virginia Tattersall, and until last week, I was the commander of the military personnel generation group. This group, which we in the military like to call MILPERSGEN, is responsible for, among other things, recruiting, training and educating the future of the Canadian Armed Forces. I have some expertise in this area, and I will be happy to answer specific questions about the recruitment of women.

Diversity—and this includes representation of women—is of primary importance to the Canadian Armed Forces. This is not just

so that the organization reflects our society—although that is important—but it is also because diversity ensures we are drawing from the entirety of the Canadian talent pool and the richness of thought, capabilities and skills that comes along with it.

Women have served in Canada's military for over a century. It has not always been an easy road, but we, as an institution, continue to improve. As we identify issues, we endeavour to tackle them and find solutions, although perhaps not as expediently as some would like.

Today women and men may serve in any occupation they choose so long as they meet the enrolment criteria, and I'm proud to say we were one of the first military forces in the world to allow women to serve in all occupations.

Why do women join the military? For the same reasons as men—the chance to serve their country; to have a respected, challenging and rewarding profession with good pay and benefits; and friendships that last a lifetime.

As you are aware, we have an institutional goal to have women make up at least 25.1% of the Canadian Armed Forces by 2026. It is an ambitious target, and we are making progress. As of January 2019 there were 1,316 more women in the Canadian Armed Forces compared with 2015.

The CAF recruiting strategy for women focuses on raising awareness of career opportunities. This is done through engagement in outreach, advertising, job postings, media partnerships, social media and individual recruiter efforts. National Defence has undertaken of late a number of specific initiatives to increase representation even further, including the Women in Force program—a trial at an experience of what it's like to serve in the military—and our efforts to re-enrol women who have previously released.

Our military colleges are playing a role in recruitment by giving priority to female applicants who meet enrolment standards, with women now making up 19.7% of the officer cadet population this past academic year. Most importantly, we continue through Operation Honour to reinforce respect and inclusivity, and combat negative culture that has subjected women and men to harmful and inappropriate sexual behaviour.

Currently, women are well represented in eight primary occupations, and we continue to work to increase representation across all occupations in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Madam Chair and members of the committee, the Canadian Armed Forces is an organization that recognizes excellence and welcomes all who want to pursue that as their personal goal, and we will continue to recruit and encourage more women to join the force. I am but one example of what a woman can accomplish by serving in the Canadian Armed Forces. I would tell you that my own career has been rich with opportunities and experiences. Were I given the chance to do it again, I would not hesitate to do so.

Thank you for your attention. I'm pleased to answer any questions you may have of me.

•(0950)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're now going to turn the floor over to Brigadier-General Lise Bourgon.

Go ahead. You have seven minutes.

Brigadier-General Lise Bourgon (Defence Champion, Women, Peace and Security, Department of National Defence): Madam Chair and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to appear alongside my colleagues today, and thank you for your interest in this important topic.

[Translation]

It has been more than 30 years since I began my military life as a cadet at the Royal Military College in Saint-Jean. Since then, as an officer and a helicopter pilot in the Royal Canadian Air Force, I have seen and experienced many of the unique challenges faced by women in the Canadian Armed Forces that you are hearing about in this study.

[English]

Nevertheless, I believe in the importance of the CAF and its mission, as well as its ability to learn and adapt as an institution. My career has provided me with the opportunities and experience that I could not have found anywhere else, and I still love coming to work every day. I joined the military to get a degree, and then I was going to quit and join the civilian forces. I had so much fun that I just forgot to quit, and I'm still here 32 years later.

In my current role as defence champion for women, peace and security, my interest is focused first and foremost on making us stronger and more effective in military operation. Beyond being a place of work for thousands of Canadians, DND and the CAF are important tools in Canada's effort to bring security, stability and humanitarian relief to fragile and conflict-affected places around the world.

[Translation]

To do this effectively in a modern operational context, the CAF must be able to understand how conflict and other crises affect populations of women, men, girls and boys differently, as well as how gender-related challenges can be exacerbated by, and even contribute to, security and humanitarian problems.

The 2017 national action plan on women, peace and security recognizes this requirement and calls for a coordinated approach across all Canadian efforts—both military and civilian—to improve security, promote gender equality and build sustainable peace.

[English]

As we finalize the progress report for fiscal year 2018-19, I am pleased with our degree of effort and success related to the following four pillars: governance and accountability, training and education, recruitment and retention, and integration into operations.

Since I am the deputy chief of operations at the Canadian Joint Operations Command and in my role as champion for women, peace and security, integration into operations is indeed my main focus area.

Of course, this operationally focused lens of women, peace and security is intrinsically linked to the more institutionally focused issues being studied by this committee, since to succeed in operations we must be supported by a strong institution and the right mix of people.

[Translation]

To support this target, the CAF must be able to engage with and understand all segments of a population, including those who may have difficulty interacting with a predominantly male military force.

[English]

This is why attracting, training and retaining adequate numbers of female CAF members in key roles and at all rank levels is so important. Beyond increasing the gender equality of our own workforce, which is a really worthy and important goal in itself, it also serves to make the CAF a better-prepared, more adaptable and more effective military force.

[Translation]

I look forward to this morning's discussion and would be happy to answer any questions about the importance of gender and gender perspectives in CAF operations.

[English]

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you very much.

We're going to pass it over to Sean Cantelon for seven minutes.

•(0955)

Mr. Sean Cantelon (Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services, Department of National Defence): Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

The Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services works on behalf of the chief of the defence staff and under the authority of the Minister of National Defence. We provide morale and wellness programs and services that support the physical, mental and social well-being, and the financial well-being of the Canadian Armed Forces members, veterans and their families.

[Translation]

As chief executive officer of the Canadian Forces welfare and morale services, my job is to ensure that our services and programs promote the operational readiness and effectiveness of the Canadian Armed Forces and contribute to the resiliency and self-sufficiency of Canadian Forces members and their families. We do this in a way that combines public and non-public funds in a social enterprise model.

Our activities cover a wide range of services, including retail sales, financial and insurance services, fitness and sports, recreation and family support. We also manage the Canadian Armed Forces' official charity, Support Our Troops.

The Canadian Forces morale and welfare services support prevention and response to gender-based violence in the Canadian Forces community in several ways.

[English]

First, as a funded partner of the federal strategy to address and prevent gender-based violence, military family services is implementing teams, at bases and wings across Canada, to provide education and to support those affected by violence. These teams are made up of both military and civilian specialists to provide a wide range of support services and programs, in a multidisciplinary, holistic and collaborative way. This includes violence prevention, education and awareness tools, as well as survivor and perpetrator support services.

These teams include staff from the local military family resource centres, such as social workers, family liaison officers; Canadian Armed Forces health services staff, such as social workers, mental health nurses; the Military Police, which may include victim services; chaplains; and personnel support program health promotions. The teams also collaborate with professional health and social service workers from the civilian community to share expertise and increase awareness of community programs and services.

The importance of this initiative is also highlighted as initiative 22 in Canada's defence policy, "Strong Secure Engaged". As part of this initiative, military family services has administered training on a broad range of gender-based violence topics to social workers who work directly with families and members. In fiscal year 2018-19, military family services provided \$380,000 to local Canadian Armed Forces communities to implement activities, workshops and training targeting gender-based violence. Military family services operates a 24-7 family information line, with trained bilingual counsellors, to help support members and families who have been affected by violence. It offers the option of virtual short-term counselling sessions.

Under our personnel support division of the Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services, our health promotions team delivers the Respect in the CAF program. This is delivered directly to bases and wings across Canada. The aim of this program is to promote respect through awareness and understanding, empower CAF members to take a stand against sexual misconduct and educate CAF members on victim support. This program is executed in partnership with the Canadian Armed Forces strategic response team on sexual misconduct.

Another support option we offer for members and their families is the support our troops fund, operated by our non-public funds. This can offer financial assistance, in the form of emergency grants. Individuals who have been affected by violence can access funding for such things as emergency housing, transportation and essentials, such as food and gas.

The Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services will continue to work with all defence and community stakeholders to ensure that CAF members and their families affected by violence are supported. Our organization will continue to focus on education and prevention, while ensuring a variety of intervention services exists, so that those affected can determine how and where they will access support.

That concludes my comments.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I'm going to move over to Lisa Vandehei.

Lisa, you have seven minutes.

Ms. Lisa Vandehei (Director of Gender, Diversity and Inclusion, Department of National Defence): Thank you very much.

Honourable members and Chairperson, thank you so much for having us here today. I'm pleased to be included in the meeting this morning.

My name is Lisa Vandehei. My role within the defence team is to provide expertise that assists in the implementation of gender-based analysis plus, GBA+. All of us here today work collaboratively towards a more diverse and inclusive defence environment.

Canada's defence policy makes a commitment to integrate GBA+ in all defence activities across the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence. The defence team is committed to institutionalizing the use of GBA+ so that we can make effective, equitable and evidence-based decisions. We're working to develop sustainable practices and systems that support our leadership to hold all accountable in conducting a GBA+ analysis, and to developing policies and programs that are informed by the findings of these analyses.

We are working to apply GBA+ in everything we do, from the things we buy, the buildings we build or maintain, our science and technology, our policies, practices, programs and projects. GBA+ is an analytical process to improve how things work for everyone in the defence team, and how the defence team affects others as well. This includes supporting culture change and creating a welcoming, inclusive workplace designed for the people we want to attract and retain.

• (1000)

We've heard already that SSE recognizes that diversity and inclusion are indispensable capabilities that enable the defence team's ability to innovate, work locally and globally and ultimately successfully fulfill its mandate, but how exactly does it do that?

We know that diversity fosters innovation and creativity through a greater variety of problem-solving approaches, perspectives and ideas. People being able to bring their lived experiences to the table matters when you're trying to solve complex problems. A diversity of informed views enables objections and alternatives to be explored more efficiently and solutions to emerge more readily and be adopted with greater confidence. A defence team that reflects the Canadian population in terms of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and all aspects of each of our lived experiences is better positioned to understand its changing security needs and develop winning solutions.

I'd like to share three key messages with the panel and chair today.

We've made progress and we're having a positive impact by conducting GBA+ analyses. Thus far, we've conducted GBA+ analyses or scans on approximately \$40 billion in projects, programs and policies. This has led to some tangible changes and will lead to more.

For example, the MINDS program, which provides opportunities for collaboration between academia, the defence team and the defence and security expert community, now has GBA+ as a 20% rated criteria for funding. In another example, the Canadian Armed Forces provides an allotment of \$160 per year towards the purchase of bras to help ensure comfort and safety at work. This allotment doubles during an overseas deployment. For the first time, this policy includes maternity and nursing bras and chest binders.

Our second message is that the institutionalization of GBA+ is a complex process. It's much more than raising awareness about inequality and issues of diversity and inclusion. It requires medium- and long-term planning to build a capability: to have skills, knowledge, leadership and access to relevant disaggregated data and research. We have a strong start. We have a full leadership support and have been allocated resources for this work.

Lastly, changing an organization's culture is one of the most difficult of leadership challenges. An organization's culture, we know, comprises interlocking sets of goals, roles, responsibilities, values, communications practices, attitudes and assumptions. GBA+ is a tool by which we can challenge all of these things and change the way we work. This is what we're doing.

Thank you.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you very much.

We're going to start off with our seven minutes of questioning. We'll start with Emmanuella Lambropoulos.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Hello. I'd like to begin by thanking all of you for being here with us to answer our questions this morning.

I've heard about all of the great things that are happening within the department, but other witnesses have discussed a lot how culture is the main reason for what happens in the armed forces when it comes to how women can sometimes be treated and to sexual harassment and all of that stuff. Is there anything that happens on the ground to change the culture? Are there any programs that are currently in sight to help us get from where we are to a better place for women?

That question is for any of you.

• (1005)

BGen Virginia Tattersal: Perhaps I'll start by first explaining two pieces that I can speak to.

From a recruiting perspective, part of the pre-enrolment process includes actually educating those who are about to take the oath on our values, and certainly we have a number of ideas on how we can further expand that to reinforce how important those values are. When they arrive at our leadership and recruit school in Saint-Jean, they spend a total of 60 periods—or 40 hours out of the 10-week program—engaged in briefings, lectures and command engagement, all on the subject of Operation Honour, ethics and Canadian Armed Forces values, which is a fairly significant investment.

For structured training, that doesn't begin to identify that ongoing engagement and mentoring throughout their time at the recruit school by the staff, through their example, to reinforce to them the culture within the Canadian Armed Forces, recognizing, though, that the recruit school piece is your assimilation into the Canadian Armed Forces. We're taking you from being a civilian and getting you closer to being a trained member of the Canadian Armed Forces.

BGen Lise Bourgon: I'll just add from an operations perspective because I'll kind of focus my interactions today on the operations side.

We have gender-based analysis plus, but we also have a gender-based analysis planning aspect that our soldiers, airmen and sailors take before they deploy so that they better understand the application of a gender perspective in operation, on the ground, the difference, that balance. It's kind of throughout their career now. They get it from the beginning, the training aspect. They get it throughout their career, before deploying. We are changing that culture one day at a time at every step of the way.

Mr. Sean Cantelon: I'd just add that the other formal part of that, which we've set up in partnership with this, is the Respect in the CAF program. Unlike the deployment training, this is available on all bases and run across the country specifically focused on the Canadian Armed Forces culture, but it also spills over to the community culture. We will also sponsor through the family resource centres and community workshops. That touches across the three paradigms of the original enrolment as a recruit, the deployment support and the Respect in the CAF program, focused on sort of the day-to-day lifestyle on base.

Ms. Lisa Vandehei: I would add that the GBA+ efforts across the defence community are a complementary part of this effort. All the CAF members and public service members are responsible. For example, if they are putting in place a program or project or even landing a contract, they're responsible to go through a GBA+ analysis on the work that they are doing. It's not intuitive at first; it's not easy.

You're asking people to understand the lived experiences of other people who would be interfacing with this program or project. We now have a team of 13 people inside the defence team to assist people working through that process. As we partner with folks working through it, you can see the change in attitude. You can see the change in even the excitement level of saying, "Oh, I never understood how this could have affected someone that way. Thank you so much." It's very gratifying to see that level of change just right before our eyes sometimes.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: That was my next question.

Have you noticed, over the course of time that you've been applying GBA+, that change at all levels? Do you see it taking place?

You just answered that question.

It's at other levels as well, I assume?

BGen Virginia Tattersal: I would comment by using some practical examples at our recruit school.

One of the obstacles that the recruits go through involves essentially a set of monkey bars that they have to go hand over hand across. We recognized that the height was causing a lot of injuries, particularly for women with pelvic injuries if they fall. Normally women tend to be on the shorter side. They would fall a greater distance, and they would injure themselves, so we have changed the height of those bars.

Similarly, we looked at the training we conduct for their final leadership practicum in the field. They used to do a 13-kilometre march with a rucksack. We've now changed that because, again, we recognized that we were seeing a lot of injuries, particularly among women, which then forces them in a lot of cases to have to take a time out to heal and then come back to the training.

We've changed that training perspective. Now they do a 7-kilometre march and shoot activity. It seems small, but that's a practical example of how we're changing our thinking when we look at aspects of our training to recognize that it's not just the same old paradigm of 50 years ago.

• (1010)

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Another question I have is that I know there have been gender advisers to help change the situation as well. Can you explain their role a little bit and how that has helped?

BGen Lise Bourgon: The gender advisers are now in all of our major organizations: air force, navy and military personnel. Inside the institution, we have gender advisers who report to the commander directly on gender issues, and gender is more than male and female; it's GBA+, the full spectrum of age, religion, etc. The gender adviser is much more diversified.

We also have a structure of gender advisers in operation. The big Operation Impact, the eFP Battle Group, Operation Unifier, in Mali, NMI have dedicated gender advisers who are there working for the commander to bring that gender perspective for the success of operations. They're deployed.

There's also, on the other deployments, a gender focal point, GFP. It's like a gender adviser. They are dual-hatted. It's not their sole responsibility, but they are responsible to the commander to bring that gender perspective.

We institutionalized the gender adviser role with the general adviser and the GFP.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Harder, for seven minutes.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Thank you.

Over the last number of years, there have been a variety of articles that have come forward as well as a survey that was done by StatsCan with regard to sexual assault within the military. Of course, most recently there was the Auditor General's report that came out with regard to Operation Honour. Before that in 2016, there was another report that came forward by the Auditor General with regard to the participation of women in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Ms. Tattersal, when you gave your opening remarks, you mentioned that the Canadian Armed Forces had a goal of achieving a 25% composition of women by 2026, and you called this a lofty goal or an ambitious target.

You state here that we're making progress. As of January 2019 there were 1,316 more women in the Canadian Armed Forces as compared to 2015. The Auditor General, in the report of 2016, said the success of recruiting women was negligible, that there weren't necessarily the programs or the commitment to recruiting women that were expected.

Do you want to comment on that or offer your reflections?

BGen Virginia Tattersal: Certainly. It's 2019, and since assuming command in 2017, we have focused a lot of effort on recruiting women. As I mentioned, we trialled Women in Force, because we understand that women, and most millennials—because we got comments "Why did you do this just for women, why not for men?"—want to be able to kick the tires, take it around the block and get a sense of what it is.

We conducted a tiger team that essentially reviewed all of the practices that we were doing in recruiting with assistance from the PCO hub to look at the language we were using in our ads. Was it too male-specific? Could we change the wording?

We've done a lot of work in the social media sphere and with our ads to present women within the context of the Canadian Armed Forces, sometimes to our detriment, because one of the things that women do not want is to actually be singled out. It actually works against us where they see just commercial after commercial and all you see is a group of women, because it gives them the sense that they're nothing more than just a figure, they're not actually part of the forces.

We are certainly making progress, but we face the same challenge that we do for recruiting any of the other EE groups within Canada or even Canadian citizens in general. That is the fact that most Canadians, while they know we have a military, really don't know what the military does. They think we're primarily focused on peacekeeping and humanitarian, and they certainly aren't aware of the opportunities available.

If the broader Canadian public doesn't have that awareness, then you can certainly assume that neither do young women have that awareness of what it is we do. We get out into the social media sphere and do recruiter for a day activities, where we will have a young woman who's serving answer questions. We have featured videos, where we provide an opportunity to see what our training is like for both men and women.

It's slow progress, because we're battling that overall general lack of awareness. We are making inroads, we continue to increase the number of women. We have a number of other initiatives that I could describe. It's a long list that we're building. It is slowly making progress, but the biggest challenge is to increase awareness among all Canadians that the Canadian Armed Forces is not just the infanteer you see in *Saving Private Ryan*. It's everything from padres to electricians to aircraft pilots to doctors to logisticians.

•(1015)

Ms. Rachael Harder: I think you raise a good point. That brings me to my next question.

The face of the military is changing. What it does is changing. As a result, then, women and men can step into a variety of roles that maybe in the 1970s, 1980s or 1990s were not a part of the military, but now are.

As a result, it seems appropriate that a woman would be able to enter into the military and have a family, and that she should reasonably be able to expect adequate day care spaces and accommodation for family life. Are there steps being taken within the Canadian Armed Forces for those accommodations to be made in order to make sure that women can, in fact, raise a family and be a part of the military?

BGen Lise Bourgon: I'm married and I have two lovely children, so I'll answer that one from my personal point of view. The Morale and Welfare Services and the military family resource centre are there to provide support. Family is the strength behind the uniform. We understand the requirements of women—and men—because as we go forward, the new millennial is looking at that quality of life, of being there for their children. It's not only a female issue, it's also and more permanently becoming a male issue. Access to day care, supporting...I am a military spouse; my husband was military. Throughout our careers, the military has done an exceptional job of balancing our requirements when I was deploying and he was staying behind with the children, and when he was deploying and I was staying behind with the children. At the end of the day, they could have forced one of us out but they would have lost someone, and retention is key.

It's a small force, but we are managing people more and more. We care about our people. Retention is key, and there are quite a lot of initiatives to support both women and men.

BGen Virginia Tattersal: To add to that, we provide the same benefits as the federal government to women who choose to have a family and to their partners in terms of the MATA/PATA benefits. We pay equally, so there's no difference in pay between men and women, nor in their benefits in terms of the allowances they receive. They have the same opportunities. We don't judge individuals on the basis of gender. From my experience on my own base, Borden, there is a day care on the base that we work very hard to ensure can support the population on that base. We have been engaged with the infrastructure and with the Canadian Forces Housing Agency to provide more accommodation. Obviously that has financial implications. There's only so much money we are able to put into new infrastructure.

With respect to career policy, we certainly endeavour as best we can to post service couples together and to support families.

The Chair: Excellent, thank you very much.

Irene, you have seven minutes.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you very much for bringing this perspective.

I'm going to throw out some questions, and please feel free to answer or add to whatever responses I get. I would like to begin with Brigadier-General Tattersal. You talked about the strength of diversity, and absolutely, when we look at any community, that diversity of perspectives and life experiences is indeed our strength. We've also heard that there's a pressure to conform to the male norm in the military. I wonder if you could comment on that.

•(1020)

BGen Virginia Tattersal: My comment would be from my perspective, from my own personal experience. I would have to ask: What is that male norm? I have always looked to those around me and those for whom I've worked as to their strengths, how they conducted themselves and what I could learn from them that would help me to be a better leader. Whether we could consider the fact that if they were in a room and they had a point to make, they would speak up.... Did I learn from that? Yes, I learned that if I wanted to be heard, I needed to speak up. That doesn't necessarily mean I am being forced to adopt more of a male persona. I am doing, I think, what any woman in any occupation does. You look for success to see what is going to enable you to be successful.

In our recruiting, and certainly in our training at recruit school, we do not reinforce any sort of paradigm that says, "You must fit into this block." Are there things we could look at to change from a GBA + perspective and how we assess our leadership models? I think there's scope for that, but I don't think I'm any more male than any of you sitting around the table in terms of my characteristics and strengths.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Thank you.

I came from the teaching realm and I can tell you: when the first female vice-principal at the high school level emerged, it was tough for her. They put her through the ropes. This would be in, I don't know, the late 1980s, not that long ago.

You talked about attracting women who had been released and wanting to bring them back. I wondered what the process was and what kind of success you had. Perhaps you could even identify for us the reason they were released in the first place.

BGen Virginia Tattersal: It was a letter-writing campaign where we went out to women who had released within a five-year time frame. The five-year time frame was so that we don't need to repeat any of the foundational training because they would have had skill fade.

The response was actually very low. We should not have been surprised because the primary reasons that women will release... Certainly there are those who will release because they have had a terrible experience, but a lot of women will release because they have family pressures for which they are making a life decision that they cannot continue in the military. We would have been naive to expect that within five years some of those family situations would change, particularly if it had to do with raising children.

Similarly, a lot of women will release at certain points because of medical injuries. Again, if they are released for a medical injury, the likelihood is that they may not have recovered or healed from that particular injury within five years.

The reasons—and I have just given you three—why they got out hadn't changed, *ergo* they weren't interested in coming back into the Canadian Armed Forces.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Okay.

Is it time for a female chief of the defence staff?

BGen Virginia Tattersal: It's time for a female chief of the defence staff if they have the right experience and the right personal capabilities to assume that job.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Given all of that, do you see a future where we would have a female?

BGen Virginia Tattersal: Absolutely.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Okay. That's good.

Brigadier-General Bourgon, you're the defence champion. I thank you for that.

You spoke about peacekeeping. We heard that there is an important role for women in terms of peacekeeping. Given some of the negatives, like the experience in Haiti and other places, could you speak about the strength that women bring to that role?

• (1025)

BGen Lise Bourgon: Diversity is a strength. Women and men think differently. They bring different perspectives. The more diverse your workforce, the better the solutions will be. In the same way, women peacekeepers can connect with the communities more easily—especially to the women in that community.

Having that strength and capability to connect with the communities, as well as understanding the issues on the ground and being able to solve them is key. It's key to operational success.

That's why we're doing it. We're following the UN gender parity with the numbers that we provide in our workforce to the UN peacekeepers.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: You talked about the crisis on the ground. We know that when Canadians go into crisis situations there's rape, there's displacement and there are all kinds of quite horrendous experiences that the population has been traumatized with.

How are women important in dealing with that? Do you have any direct experience?

BGen Lise Bourgon: I don't have direct deployment experience, but we understand the importance of women on the ground to be there and to be able to communicate. People who have been victims of sexual assault will feel more comfortable approaching women soldiers. That is a known fact. Having women there facilitates that communication and that exchange of information, which is key from an operational perspective.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.)): Thank you. Your time is up.

Is it all right with the committee members if I take the Liberal slot and ask some questions?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Yes.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Salma Zahid): Thank you to all the witnesses for coming out today.

You must have seen this report that has been tabled by the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence called "Sexual Harassment and Violence in the Canadian Armed Forces". They have made some recommendations.

One of the recommendations is that "the mandate and resources of the Sexual Misconduct Response Centre be reviewed to better respond to the needs of the individuals seeking support and that an external review mechanism be established to measure the Centre's effectiveness."

We have also heard in our previous testimonies about this recommendation. What are your views on this?

BGen Lise Bourgon: This is outside my experience in my portfolio, and so I will not make any comments on that recommendation.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Salma Zahid): Mr. Cantelon.

Mr. Sean Cantelon: One of the partners we work with in family services is the centre. It's important to differentiate the centre's mandate for the employers, i.e., the members of the armed forces and the flexibility that morale services brings as it's accessible to spouses in a different paradigm and a different frame, which I touched on in my introductory remarks. We have virtual social workers available to deal with them in a crisis intervention and then to work with the local community partners.

Specific to the centre, again outside my mandate, but related to the centre, and we are working with them, ensuring that we encompass the total experience there, because obviously if a service member and a spouse who is not a service member are involved, there are different jurisdictions, but ultimately it is the family as a whole that needs to be healed and supported, or supported as it moves to the inevitable outcome if it's a dissolution of a family, but you have to deal with those circumstances.

That's one part related to the formalization centre we'll continue to work to ensure—

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Salma Zahid): Ms. Vandehei, would you like to add something?

Ms. Lisa Vandehei: I'm sorry, that's outside my mandate as well.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Salma Zahid): Okay.

My next question is also on the recommendation by the recent Senate report on sexual harassment and violence. They are saying that the CF and DND implement evidence-based policies and practices to ensure that all the CAF members, former CAF members and civilians working for either DND or the CAF have access to the resources and the services they need to heal from the sexual trauma they have faced in the military. Are there currently any efforts by CAF and DND to engage victims of harassment and discrimination in determining the needs in services and resources for this particular group?

Mr. Sean Cantelon: I'll address that because one of the funding items under Status of Women that Morale and Welfare Services received was to conduct a family violence study that incorporates sexualized violence, as well as all other forms of family violence. That draft report has been completed and is just being submitted to the surgeon general. It is a multidisciplinary approach across all providers, which I touched on in my opening remarks. As in all reports, there is some significant room for us to enhance services to the Canadian Armed Forces, to align some of the governance, in particular, to focus holistically across the entire family environment, so the members deal with cultural changes.

We would anticipate being able to release that report publicly by the fall. It has, in essence, 12 recommendations focusing across a wide range of activities to address the points raised in the Senate committee. Note it was started prior to that Senate committee, but it's just being completed now.

• (1030)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Salma Zahid): Ms. Bourgon, would you like to add to that?

BGen Lise Bourgon: No, thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Salma Zahid): My next question is to everyone. Do you think that a gap exists between the policies that are made to address gender-based and sexual harassment and their implementation by the authorities? How do we address the challenges of taking the policies we have on paper and ensuring they are applied? Who will be responsible for the implementation of those policies?

BGen Lise Bourgon: I think it's called leadership and every commanding officer, every leader in the armed forces, is clear that is their responsibility. General Vance made Op Honour an operation for

that reason. He truly believes this is a duty for the command team and every member to support. So it is a leadership issue and it's clear across.

Mr. Sean Cantelon: I can speak specifically. One of the functions of welfare services is we provide advice for the chief of military personnel and policy development on DAOD 5044-4, which is family violence. DND is currently rewriting it as a result of the study and other inputs, so that's one specific, and working across that with both the sexual response team and the centre to ensure that gets done.

Other policies are being considered. We expect to be putting out a Canadian Forces general instruction, signed by the chief of the defence staff in late summer or early fall, again addressing these policies.

I would note for the committee that it always takes longer than one expects to revise policies, due to the complex size of National Defence.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Salma Zahid): Our previous witnesses have identified the lack of expertise in issues of gender and sexuality as one of the major barriers to addressing the problems of discrimination and harassment within the Canadian Armed Forces as well as DND. They also identified a lack of expertise in handling the grievance process, the training and the education surrounding these issues. Would you like to comment on that and how can we address those issues?

Mr. Sean Cantelon: I'll comment a bit on that. One of the points we noted in the draft report was that we need to adjust the composition of expertise in these areas. I would specifically address that. The latter part, in terms of gaps, of your last question is really a bit outside my lanes. In regard to the overall services of families, it's to ensure that we reflect all of those capabilities that exist in civil society, in local communities, and what we can replicate either through contracting or through specific services provided through National Defence or family services. There is room for improvement in that mix.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Salma Zahid): Thank you.

We'll pass the floor to Ms. Harder for a five-minute round.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Thank you.

I'm not sure who to ask this to, so I'll let you decide which person is the best to answer.

Can you comment on not only procedure but also practices that are being put in place in order to best serve women when they face sexual assault or misconduct?

The reason I ask this question is that we've heard from many witnesses who say it's not a matter of having more procedure, more paperwork, more platitudes or more good intention; it's simply a matter of practice. They would say that many of the procedures are already in place; many of the expectations have already been stated.

Ms. Tattersal, you mentioned that 40 hours out of that initial week, I believe you said—

• (1035)

BGen Virginia Tattersal: It's 10 weeks.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Sorry—40 hours out of 10 weeks are spent on ethics and conduct and things like that, which is exceptional. There still seem to be some weaknesses within the culture of the Canadian Armed Forces.

I understand that no one individual is fully responsible for changing this. Clearly, it's a massive undertaking, and it's one that each and every individual member has to commit to upholding.

I guess I'm looking for some further reflection with regard to what the practice looks like rather than just the procedures.

BGen Virginia Tattersal: I'll take that with respect to our recruit school.

When there is an incident at the recruit school, there is obviously a duty to report. We can't respond to what has not been reported. It's not always the victim who will report that something has occurred. Our immediate step, as soon as we are aware that there has been an incident, no matter who it is reported to, is to ensure that the leadership then engages and creates that separation. Whoever it is who has allegedly—because we are innocent until proven guilty—done something inappropriate is removed from that platoon, removed from that accommodation space and placed elsewhere. Why? Because the alleged victim needs to have that separation for their own sense of safety and security to allow them to receive the support from the staff. I think that's a very practical immediate response that we take. We do it at our recruit school, at all of our other training establishments as well, and in all of our units.

Ms. Rachael Harder: What does it look like to shift culture?

I understand this is a really difficult undertaking in any organization. In particular, I would imagine that in the Canadian Armed Forces it's huge. What does that look like? How do you undertake that? How do you ensure that there is in fact a culture of camaraderie and mutual respect among all people?

BGen Virginia Tattersal: The challenge with changing culture within the Canadian Armed Forces is the same challenge that we face within Canadian society, because we are a mirror of Canadian society. As I explained, because I usually do this as a little bit of a soapbox rant, when I watched TV growing up, it was *The Waltons* and *The Beachcombers*. You can judge me by how old I am, but they carried with them certain values they expressed in how you related and how you conducted yourself.

Nowadays, if you turn on TV on Sunday night, you're going to be watching *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, which involves a very different expectation as to how one conducts oneself, what is acceptable, and what is not. Anyone we enrol is bringing with them what they have learned from their parents, from their families, and

from society writ large into the Canadian Armed Forces. So as we work to instill in them—and that's the value of our recruit training—the values of the Canadian Armed Forces to reinforce that through our processes, our policies, and our training, at the same time, we are trying to change that still prevalent culture, because when they go home at night, they're still faced with that. That is why you will hear us say that culture takes a while, but it's culture in the broader Canadian public as well.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Thank you. I appreciate it.

BGen Lise Bourgon: I think too, when you look at it, it's to educate. Educate about the values and what we expect. Monitor throughout. Take action when required because some people will make mistakes. You need to put them back on the right path. You also need to have leaders in position as examples.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Salma Zahid): Now we will turn to Mr. Bratina for the last five-minute round.

Mr. Bob Bratina: Thank you.

I want to ask about something that Ms. Harder touched on. I'll just put it in a different way.

I appreciate the testimony you've given. It's positive and inspirational for the future of the armed forces. We've heard other witnesses give sort of the opposite. They say, "Yeah, those people are just telling you what you want to hear, but here's the real story." How would you explain the very upset and critical people? You've seen their stories in the paper and so on.

I'll ask General Tattersal and General Bourgon to comment on those people who aren't being accommodated and are outspoken in a very negative way, versus what we hope is the case.

• (1040)

BGen Virginia Tattersal: It is unfortunate that anyone would have an experience other than something positive in the Canadian Armed Forces.

I can only speak to my experience instead of generalizing it across everyone in the Canadian Armed Forces. My experience has been positive, and I would like to think that there are others like me, but I certainly recognize that there are many who have had a terrible experience. I feel exceptionally demoralized by that because it should never happen. That's not what leaders do. You don't allow that to happen.

Again, that's no different than what I think you would experience in the broader civilian context as well. You will find those who have had positive experiences, and they can be countered by those who have had horrible experiences. It shouldn't detract from what they have had, nor should it detract from what I have experienced.

BGen Lise Bourgon: I agree with Virginia. It's sad. I think we can't look back, we need to look forward and educate, and make sure it doesn't happen again.

Again, just because I've never lived it, it doesn't mean it hasn't happened, so I can't comment. However, we need to accept that we are not perfect, and we need to look forward and make sure we close the gap, so that as we go forward this stuff doesn't happen again.

Mr. Bob Bratina: Is there something in recruiting that...? Perhaps some people aren't qualified to be in the military. I'm sure that's the case.

I remember hearing, in the veterans committee, testimony from an Australian soldier who said, "You have to do more than just fog a mirror to get into our military," which I found interesting.

How do you speak to recruits about whether or not this is the life for them? It's your life, and you love it. For other people, it just may not be good for them.

BGen Virginia Tattersal: I would say that in the recruiting process there are a number of steps we go through, including an interview where we have a discussion with individuals about what it means to serve, what is potentially the career for which they are applying, and why they would want to join. In fact, on our new website you will actually find a letter that is designed for parents, mentors or guidance counsellors that allows them to have discussions about why you would want to join and why you would want to do this for your life.

Certainly with recruits, once we get them to the school, we realize that some of them are going to discover that this is not for them, and that's fine. We're not trying to force them.

We don't conscript you; we recruit you. You voluntarily want to do this, and you can change your mind.

There may be individuals who, down the road, find that they no longer want to serve. Subject to them not being on an obligatory contract—i.e. we've been paying for education—they can leave.

BGen Lise Bourgon: If people do not respect our values, we will force them to leave because they don't belong in the CAF.

Mr. Bob Bratina: My sister had a long career in the military, retiring at 42. There were bumps along the way. She's very proud to have served the country. I think that probably speaks for both sides, whether you're in the military or not. Life doesn't always have a smooth path, and there are issues that you have to confront, whether it's in the military or not. Would you agree with that, General Tattersal?

BGen Virginia Tattersal: Absolutely. My own history is an example of that. I started out to be an engineer. At Christmas the first year, a 37% average in five of seven courses meant that I wasn't going to make it as an engineer. But do you know what? It was a great learning point for me that I have grown from in my career.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Salma Zahid): You have 10 seconds. Is there anything you want to add?

BGen Virginia Tattersal: No, you don't need to hear the rest about my career and its bumps.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Salma Zahid): On behalf of all the committee members, I would like to thank all of the witnesses for appearing before the committee today and providing important insight to this study. Thank you.

I just want to let the committee members know that at the next meeting on Thursday, May 30, the committee will start consideration of the draft report of the senior women study.

With that, the meeting is adjourned.

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