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Chair

Mrs. Karen Vecchio

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC)): Good afternoon. Welcome to the 144th meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Today's meeting is in public.

Today we'll continue our study on the treatment of women within the Department of National Defence. For this meeting I am pleased to welcome as individuals Dr. Karen Breeck, a retired military physician; Professor Grazia Scoppio, associate professor, Canadian Defence Academy and Royal Military College of Canada; and from It's Just 700, Marie-Claude Gagnon, who is a founder.

I'll turn the floor now over to Marie-Claude.

You have seven minutes.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon (Founder, It's Just 700): Hello. I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to present today. I will be sharing my views as a former Canadian Armed Forces servicewoman, a military sexual trauma survivor and a founder of the group It's Just 700.

It's Just 700 was built as a result of the online reprisals surging from the 2015 external review of sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces. I wanted to create a safe space in which military victims could connect with peers and learn about services and opportunities available to them.

It did not take long before we identified trends and gaps in the services provided to us. Here are a few issues that in my opinion are worthy of study.

First is that the lack of independence of the SMRC from the Canadian Armed Forces leadership has been hurting victim support. The sexual misconduct response centre's annual report 2017-18 seems to indicate that the SMRC has been enhancing its consultation and training support to the CAF leadership while the victim support remains the same. This means that while the SMRC is providing hands-on services to CAF leadership, victims are getting over-the-phone active listening and a referral service. We do not get a case manager, help with accommodations or someone advocating for our needs. I am sure you can see how these kinds of services would have been helpful to some women who testified in front of you last week.

Maybe this is the reason that, according to the same report, from CAF leadership who use the services SMRC has an overall satisfaction of 87%, while from victims the overall satisfaction rate

is 64%. Maybe this is the reason there has been a decrease of victims using the SMRC and an increase of CAF leadership using it. Offering this kind of limited victim support means that only 2% of the 21% of victims who reported a sexual misconduct contacted the SMRC between 2017 and 2018. Given this very small sample, even the SMRC within its report expressed concern about its own ability to provide an accurate picture of the issues, trends or needs of the victims.

Second, government-funded programs for the ill and injured should not focus only on male-dominated types of injuries. The same report revealed that more than half of the military sexual trauma victims indicated that the SMRC should include peer support and face-to-face consultation. According to the fourth Canadian Armed Forces progress report on sexual misconduct, in-house peer support will not happen.

This means that while Canadian Armed Forces members dealing with operational stress injury—mostly men—and even their spouses are getting peer support through the military, we MST survivors would be referred to sexual assault groups for women in the community we just happen to be posted in. Giving us a subsidiary standard of care away from military view and our peers using a temporary budget is not the solution.

Third, policies, programs and research are still being built without the GBA+ lens and are not being challenged. I have two recent examples of Canadian Armed Forces initiatives that did not use a GBA+ lens. The first example came when I tried to navigate the Canadian Armed Forces transition website released on March 25, 2019. As you can see in annex A to my speaking notes, the only care advertised for the ill and injured on this website is through OSISS, which is operational stress injury social support services.

OSISS does not have a mandate to help MST survivors. The only group support tailored to women, military and civilian, that I ended up finding while navigating was The Royal Ottawa mental health centre website, where I was greeted by the phrase, "Come and join us for self-care, learning and shopping."

•(1535)

I found the second example when I read the 2019 “Suicide and suicide prevention in the Canadian Armed Forces” report. Just like the report of 2016, it only covers male suicide. By being a minority group, female Canadian Armed Forces members will never meet the required threshold to be studied in a survey designed for a homogeneous population. The Canadian Armed Forces must invest additional resources if they want to understand the needs of its women.

I would like to conclude with a few open questions. Where is the independent oversight? Who advocates for victims' needs and their well-being during studies such as this one? Where is the accountability?

No entity should be policing itself. It never works. It never has and it never will. Unless the Deschamps commission is fully implemented with complete external and independent oversight, a deep knowledge of the military and its structures and challenges, as well as an ability to hold the military and National Defence accountable for oversight, as I stated previously, I can't foresee impactful results for women.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're now going to turn the floor over to Dr. Karen Breeck.

Karen, you have seven minutes.

Dr. Karen Breeck (Retired Military Physician, As an Individual): Good afternoon and thank you to the chair and committee for inviting me to attend today. I apologize up front to everyone in the room and those listening; I'm still finishing up a cold.

First, I want to thank the witnesses who gave testimony last week. Listening to their stories gave me the courage to agree to be here today. As a retired military physician, I was deeply touched by the fact that two of your four witnesses last week were medics. I've always had an interest in medical support needs specific to female soldiers. I spent most of the 20 years of my regular force career supporting the air force. I had the good fortune to be selected for advanced medical education, completing both a master's of health sciences in occupational medicine, and a certificate in women's studies.

My subsequent medical residency was in aerospace medicine, which is a preventive medicine sub-specialty. I also had the honour of being a past president of the Federation of Medical Women of Canada and I have continued, since my release in 2009, to advocate for equitable health outcomes for all Canadian military women.

•(1540)

Last week's testimony provided the committee with a number of first-hand experiences that have occurred after the implementation of Operation Honour. I think we can all agree that despite the sincere efforts and hard work of many, Operation Honour has not achieved the levels of effectiveness we all had hoped for.

There is no question that the military has come a long way and deserves acknowledgement and credit for that hard work. However,

as a physician, I want to highlight that a lot of that hard work has been on the backs of those most impacted. All of your witnesses last week were first impacted by their workplace incident and then made to feel responsible to name the problem with their subsequent treatments, determine how to best solve that problem and advocate for the needed systemic changes.

The chronic stresses related to these and other workplace aftermaths consistently, in my experience, end up having negative impacts on people's health and well-being, with these health issues, therefore, for the most part, to me being preventable service-related injuries and illnesses. If I had closed my eyes and listened to last week's testimony, it easily could have been confused for listening to conversations that I regularly would have had in my same doctor's office 30 years ago. Although much has changed, much has not.

CAF has ordered its people to stop harassment. It hasn't worked. CAF has ordered its people to follow the harassment policies. It hasn't worked. However, my question is, why is this a surprise and is this anything unique to the Canadian Armed Forces?

In the medical sphere, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine in the United States released a comprehensive report in June 2018 on sexual harassment and its effects on women in male-dominated fields of study. They found no evidence that policies, procedures or legal focuses alone would result in any reduction in sexual harassment rates. These are all necessary but not sufficient drivers of the changes needed to address sexual harassment. Their summary advice was that we need to be focusing on system-wide holistic change, inclusive of culture and climate.

There has been much ado about the Canadian Forces military culture and whether it's sexualized or just simply male normative. Either way, it's a culture that is proud to boast that it eats policy for breakfast.

It was Einstein who warned us that we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them. Perhaps what is needed most here is a moment of pause: a reboot, a paradigm shift. Maybe what is needed is a transformational solution instead of yet one more committee with committee recommendations resulting in the same levels of downstream impact as moving deck chairs around on the *Titanic*. Maybe it's time that we moved from traditional political and military linear thinking and acknowledged that culture and gender are both context-specific topics that are best addressed as complex systems. They're also known as wicked problems.

As physicians, we use these approaches within health care. We know that if we want to make improvements in a health care system, we have to be looking at it in a holistic, dynamic approach. As military physicians, we have a basic framework on how we try to maximize healthy workplaces and fulfill our mandate of conserving manpower, and it's never one thing. It's always a multitude of things that all have to happen at the same time.

First, we always, always have to focus on prevention. Also, it's not either-or. It's prevention and screening, and it's early diagnosis, immediate care and rehabilitation. As well, how do we get you back to work, and if we can't get you back to work, how can we make you the best you can be? Last, this is with feedback loops with constant quality assurances between all of these levels. It is that last bit—the feedback loops—that is often the most important key to success.

How can we apply this approach and address these necessary culture changes so that we can truly, finally and fully integrate women into CAF? I do have specific recommendations under each of those four categories, but for reasons of time, I will move to my conclusion.

● (1545)

This committee was set up with terms of reference specifically to explore if the Government of Canada has given CAF all the resources it needs. I leave you with a clear and simple answer to that question: no.

It was only one career length ago, 30 years, that CAF was very legitimately a workplace and culture designed by men, for men and about men. In the 1980s, when the military was ordered to open to women the 75% of its jobs previously held by men only, a crucial Government of Canada decision was made. It was decided that the legal ruling was to be implemented into CAF with no concurrent, systemic top-down review or designated financial support to ensure gender integration was set up for success.

Gender integration was instead left largely to the women on the front lines, such as the ones testifying in front of you last week and who, for the last 30 years, have said, “We need help.” For 30 years Canadian women have stepped up, signed the dotted line and tried to make the military a better place to work in for those behind them, often at the cost of their own health and well-being. For 30 years they've been waiting to be met at least halfway by the Government of Canada, their employer, to be enabled their proper top-down systemic reviews.

CAF needs more money, more people, more training and more data. The Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Veterans Affairs need strategic funding for the full integration of not just GBA+, but SGBA, sex gender-based analysis, throughout DND, CAF and VAC. Furthermore, these departments need money to develop a health and policy partnership with CIHR, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, to accelerate the quality of sex and gender science for military women. Service injuries and illnesses from chronic sexual harassment and assault perpetuated within our own workplace is not the war any women I knew signed up for.

There are many other issues that impact military women other than just sexual trauma and sexual harassment, and we look forward

to working together with the Government of Canada, as our employer, to address them all.

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

We'll now move over to Grace.

Grace, you have seven minutes.

Dr. Grazia Scoppio (Associate Professor, Canadian Defence Academy and Royal Military College of Canada, Department of National Defence, As an Individual): Good afternoon, everyone.

[Translation]

I will make my comments in English, but I can answer your questions in English or in French.

[English]

I'm honoured to be here, and I would like to thank the chair and the committee for inviting me.

I'm Grazia Scoppio, dean of continuing studies and professor in the department of defence studies at the Royal Military College of Canada, RMCC. I've been asked to appear as an individual, based on my expertise, so I'll speak on my own behalf and not on behalf of the Department of National Defence.

I will give you a brief overview of my research on diversity, provide some observations standing on my recent research on gender in the military colleges, and I will conclude with a few comments drawing on my own personal experience as an academic at RMCC and DND.

One of my main research interests as an academic is multiculturalism, immigrant integration and diversity. Since joining RMC in 2002, I've led several studies on diversity in organizations, including in the CAF. For example, I did a comparative study looking at diversity strategies in military forces and police forces in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. In a follow-up study, I travelled to New Zealand to see how the Maori were integrated in the New Zealand defence force.

For the past few years I have led a study with a team of researchers investigating gender issues in the Canadian military colleges. I'm currently organizing an international panel looking at international perspectives on immigrant participation in the military. That's just to give you an overview.

On this international research on diversity in military organizations, comparatively speaking, Canada is doing well in some areas such as opening all military occupations to women since 1989 with the exception of submarines, which were open in 2001 following a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision directing the CAF to remove all employment restrictions and integrate women in all military occupations.

Canada also has an Employment Equity Act that has applied to the CAF since 2002, which requires the collection of self-reported data on designated groups and the establishment of EE plans and goals, among other things. Clearly, all these changes were a reaction to legal and legislative obligations rather than proactive initiatives.

I will now provide a few observations stemming more specifically from my research on gender in the Canadian military colleges.

In 2016 my research team and I started a study, which was requested by RMC, to investigate whether gender bias existed in the recruiting process for the colleges as well as to look at the experience of officer cadets in the military colleges versus those attending civilian universities. The study adopted a gender-based assessment plus, GBA+, as a framework for the design and the analysis, and it involved three stages.

In the first stage, we analyzed existing data on ROTP—regular officer training plan—applicants and recruits from 2006 to 2016. This revealed that there was a downward trend in the representation of ROTP female applicants and recruits. Also, the proportion of female applicants was consistently higher across the years than the proportion of females who were recruited. On average, female applicants were about a quarter, whereas female recruits were only 17%.

• (1550)

The highest percentage of women were recruited in support occupations such as health care, administration and logistics. Many females were not enrolled in their preferred choice of occupation, and the percentage of female recruits who were offered their academic program of choice was lower than that of the males.

In the second stage, we conducted surveys and interviews with ROTP officer cadets in the military colleges and civilian universities. The key findings related to the recruiting process revealed that, although there was no gender bias identified by the respondents, they experienced delays and other challenges during the process. Also, gender and ethnicity differences were found in the reasons for joining the CAF, which suggests that more effort is needed to tailor marketing and outreach to such groups as females, visible minorities or males specifically. Also, recruiters should provide information that is more realistic and consistent to ensure that both females and males are equally informed about military careers.

The key findings related to the experience at the military colleges or at civilian universities revealed that, overall, both males and females in military colleges perceived more gender differences than their counterparts in civilian universities. For example, more female cadets experienced gender bias than males and fewer females than males reported that they were treated in a respectful manner. Some officer cadets, both males and females, cited the difference in the fitness test for males and females as a source of concern regarding equal standards across genders.

Over 80% of females and males in civilian universities would recommend to friends that they apply through the ROTP to attend a civilian university. However, only half of the officer cadet males and females in the military colleges would recommend to friends that they apply through the ROTP to attend a military college, for various reasons. In the qualitative analysis, some of the reasons included

poor leadership, harassment and what they perceived to be an inferior learning environment in the military colleges compared with civilian universities.

Overall, these findings suggest that the organizational climate, culture and environment of the military colleges should be improved, while at the same time also increasing women's representation in order to enhance gender integration and make the experience of female and officer cadets more positive.

The third and final stage of the study included surveys and interviews with ROTP applicants, and the report is still in progress.

Finally, I will conclude with a few comments drawn from my personal experience as an academic at RMC within the Department of National Defence. I began my academic career with DND in 2002 as section head at the Canadian Defence Academy, transitioning in 2013 to associate dean of continuing studies at RMC, culminating in my current appointment in 2017 as dean of continuing studies at RMC. Concurrently, I continue to teach in the RMC's department of defence studies.

I believe that, to be an effective female leader in the defence environment, it is important to have a strong understanding of military culture and also of the culture of other organizations that work in collaboration with defence.

It is also important to have the ability to work in a male-dominated environment, as the percentage of females in leadership positions in DND is not very high. For example, at RMC less than 25% of the civilian faculty is female. Currently I am the only female dean. Before me, there were only two previous women deans. One was dean of arts for two years, so did not finish her term. One was an interim dean of arts for one year.

To be effective as a woman in defence, it is important to have a combination of hard and soft skills, including quite a bit of resilience, empathy, interpersonal skills, cross-cultural skills and strong communication skills.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide my perspective.

• (1555)

The Chair: Thank you very much for your testimony.

Now we are going to do our seven-minute round of questioning, and we are going to start off with Eva Nassif.

Eva, you have the floor for seven minutes.

[*Translation*]

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

First, I would like to thank the witnesses for their most helpful presentations.

My question is for Ms. Scoppio.

You said that you were a cadet and a dean.

Dr. Grazia Scoppio: I was not a cadet. I am a dean. Our research was on the cadets.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Okay.

You mentioned a time around 2001.

Which year was it?

Dr. Grazia Scoppio: I am sorry. You want to know in which year

Mrs. Eva Nassif: In which year did you become dean?

Dr. Grazia Scoppio: In 2017.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Okay.

In terms of comparative analysis, could you tell us about your personal experience and whether that analysis is practiced in the Canadian Armed Forces?

Dr. Grazia Scoppio: Which comparative analysis are you referring to?

Mrs. Eva Nassif: The one dealing with the recruitment of cadets and the behaviour in that situation.

Dr. Grazia Scoppio: Okay.

As I said, we found that cadets enrolled in military colleges and cadets recruited by the Canadian Forces but studying in civilian universities perceived their experiences differently.

There are fewer of the latter, of course. By way of illustration, if I recall correctly, our sample of officer cadets enrolled in military colleges was 925, almost 1,000, compared to fewer than 150 cadets enrolled in civilian universities. However, we were still surprised to see as many differences in the perceptions that those cadets had of their experience. It was generally more positive in civilian universities than in military colleges.

Did you also ask me to talk about my personal experience?

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Yes.

Dr. Grazia Scoppio: Madam, it is very difficult to be the only female dean in an environment that is completely dominated by men. It is very difficult.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: In your opinion, what percentage of the public servants working in the Department of National Defence identify as women?

Dr. Grazia Scoppio: That is a good question.

In support positions, there are a lot of women. However, in the management positions you were talking about—

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Positions like your own.

Dr. Grazia Scoppio: Not many.

I am sorry, but I do not have the exact percentage at hand.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Is it possible to compare the number of women in management positions such as you mentioned just now—by which I mean middle and upper management, like your own position of dean—with the number of women in the department? Is it similar or less?

Dr. Grazia Scoppio: In the department, many units include both military and civilian employees. The situation is similar in the

military college, where civilians and military employees work as a team. However, what I want to tell you is that management positions are often held by men. For example, the deans provide the college's academic leadership and there are no women.

• (1600)

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Can we briefly talk about diversity and the number of women from minorities in the Canadian Forces?

Dr. Grazia Scoppio: Of course. There are employment equity objectives. However, those objectives have not been achieved for visible minorities or for indigenous minorities, any more than they have been achieved for women.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Based on your experience as a dean in a military college, what needs to be done to improve the inclusion and retention of women?

Dr. Grazia Scoppio: As Dr. Breeck said, having policies to encourage employment equity is a good start. However, they are part of an overall process that has to cover the entire career path, from how to make positions attractive, to recruiting people and keeping them in those positions. We have to have a holistic approach, especially with organizations with very closed and male-oriented mentalities that are not particularly open to other points of view or cultures.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Thank you very much.

Dr. Breeck, you have told us about your 20 or 30 years of experience in the Canadian Forces and you mentioned Operation Honour. You said specifically that none of the current policies are working and we have to go further, to identify the problems and find solutions. Could you be specific about your thinking?

[English]

Dr. Karen Breeck: If I'm understanding correctly, the question was to talk more about how to further improve Operation Honour.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Yes.

Dr. Karen Breeck: Again, with the translation for clarification, certainly I think a lot of positive things have come as a result of Op Honour. I'm not suggesting everything is not going well with it. It's just probably not as quick and as diverse as what most people would have hoped for.

I'm not an expert on Op Honour specifically. I've been released for quite a few years. I keep finding recently released women who have had issues as part of their time in the military as well, for whom clearly things have happened since Op Honour has been in place. Marie-Claude Gagnon would certainly be much more able to speak to that first-hand.

What problem are we trying to solve? When we look at other locations and other road maps, all the stats suggest that climate and culture have to be part of the package. Areas have to be further developed in Op Honour that include those aspects.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're now going to move on to the next seven minutes, and we'll hear from Rachael Harder.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Thank you so much, each of you, for taking the time to be here and to share some of your personal reflections as well, based on your interactions with others.

Ms. Gagnon, I received an email from an individual who experienced sexual assault over a number of years during her tenure in the CAF. She served as a medical technician for 22 years. During her time she experienced horrific things. One of her statements caught me. I would like your reflections on it.

She said that, based on her reflections and going through court proceedings—she took it all the way through—at the end of the day the individual who had assaulted her multiple times over the course of years, pleaded guilty and was given a \$1,000 fine, essentially a slap on the wrist.

She said, “it breaks down any trust in men and your trust that the CAF will protect you as a soldier in combat or a women while in garrison. There is no safe place for victims. Victims are treated horribly once they come forward!”

Would her story align with the other stories you're hearing from the women you engage with on social media platforms and throughout the last number of years that you've been engaged in being an advocate?

• (1605)

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Unfortunately, this is a fairly common situation. A lot of people see the action of what happened as the trauma, but there's a neglect of looking at what we call the sanctuary trauma, which is the way you get treated after it happened. This is not necessarily unique to the military, but it's really strong in the military.

The duty to report makes it very difficult because you don't have safe disclosure anywhere. Your partner or your spouse may have a duty to report. Your neighbour may have a duty to report. Your co-workers, the people you live and eat with, all your support after you move over and over again, and even maybe your family members in service all have a duty to report. Your health care provider and your priest have a duty to report. That means it's extremely isolating because if you talk, things will take place without you wanting it—you lose control—and that service....

When you look at the bill at this point, there's less support provided to victims in service. The military justice system has less services and support for them than in the civilian system, where they have victim support with people who are qualified to do this. Even with the new bill right now, those kinds of services will be diluted for a person where it's one more hat added to their position. It could be an artillery officer who is doing this once in a while. They're not equipped and they're not trauma informed.

The accommodation and all of these things are not something that is given to a professional. It is left to the chain of command. It's inconsistent. There's no support if you're lost and you're re-traumatized through the whole process.

I made an informal query with my group asking how many people disclosed what happened to them and how many were able to stay within the services. Only 7% said they were able to stay after they disclosed their sexual trauma in the military.

What makes a person who speaks leave? Most of them didn't have the intention to leave, but the way they were treated created that place where they had to leave.

The universality of service is also another thing that people don't consider. If you're not recovering fast enough, you can be considered mentally unfit to stay in service and then you don't just lose your job; you lose your career. You need to retrain in something new. This isn't going from one place to another, you have to redo your whole career path sometimes, depending on the types of trades you have.

Yes, there's been a pause in some ways for this release, but it's still happening. What makes so many people leave the military after disclosing an incident is usually the lack of support and the sanctuary trauma that happens within their workplace and their living environment. If you're on a ship, obviously it's where you live and eat, so this is usually the same people.

In my opinion, that's what creates sanctuary trauma. That is what the person is talking about.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Thank you very much.

What do you think can be done to prevent these types of scenarios from happening in the first place within the Canadian Armed Forces?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Are you asking about preventing incidents or preventing additional sanctuary trauma?

Ms. Rachael Harder: I would say to prevent the actual incident from taking place to begin with.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: I would say that there's a lot of push maybe to put women in places without necessarily thinking about their safety. For example, the gender advisers are looking at the civil society and how safe they will be when the military people come in, but are they looking at the people in uniform and their safety when they're deployed? I was not allowed to lock my shower when I was at sea. I was told to not lock my shower. When I said to them that people were walking in when I didn't lock it, I was told to take my shower at night. You're not allowed to lock your shower because if you hit your head, somebody needs to be able to help you.

Those kinds of things haven't considered the gender factor. I would rather take the chance of hitting my head on the wall and lock my shower. Same with your bedroom. When you're asleep, you can't lock your door because the next person has to wake you for your shift. For me, there's an intercom system that could have been used. I was the only one in my dorm.

Those are the kinds of things where, if you are in a setting of deployment of submarines or anywhere, you can look at the environment and ask what we can do to prevent things. What things are unnecessary but we're just doing them because we're so used to being with men only and we haven't really had to think about these things?

•(1610)

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you very much.

We're now going to move over to Rachel Blaney.

Rachel, you have the floor for seven minutes.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Thank you.

I want to thank you all so much for being here today.

I'm going to start with you again, Marie-Claude. I'm sorry, you're just trying to drink.

Really, one of the things that had an impact on me was when you talked about the self-policing, and then your question to the last member as well. It's that same sort of idea of not having that safety and security. I'm wondering if you could tell the committee what makes military sexual trauma different from other workplace sexual traumas.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: I would say it's the combination of so many factors. We talk about a male-dominated working environment, yes, but people who join the military are extremely young. I was 18. Some people are even 16. You're really young, uneducated and very naive at this age. You're going to an isolated place without your family and without your support system. You're going into an unknown work environment where people tell you what to do and you just listen and absorb it. You really believe everything you hear. It's a high hierarchy, with lots of power—it's decentralized—given to people who are not necessarily qualified to handle these things. There are no policies or set definitions of safety concerns. What is a safety concern? We don't know. It's given to the chain of command to make a decision.

There's little expertise on workplace harassment among the people who have to make decisions on accommodations and granting things when people come and ask for help. Other workplaces have those needed experts. Of course, it's a male-dominated workplace in an environment with old policies that haven't necessarily been redone and practices that don't always align with GBA+, which means there are additional things you have to fight for in the system.

There's uniformization and assimilation, like the brotherhood. It's really strong. When you go and rat out someone, it is considered a ratting out. It's not considered otherwise. There are reprisals for that. That's what usually generates the sanctuary trauma within your little community of workers.

Of course, we have separate health care and separate justice systems. These are not reviewed as often nor are they necessarily gender-centric. That is also an issue when you're looking for care and support, because the update is not done at the equivalent.... Maybe Dr. Breck could tell you about that.

Slow recovery can cause you to not meet universality of service. That means career loss. This is another thing that you don't get in many other workplaces.

The duty to accommodate isn't there. There is a caveat in the military from the duty to accommodate, because you don't have to accommodate if you don't meet that universality of service.

Of course your social life and your work conditions are all mixed together, even who you marry usually. It's all intertwined, so there's no separation. When you come forward, it's your neighbours, it's who you live with, it's who you're married to.... Everybody is within that same bubble.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: One of the things you made very clear in your testimony, and we've definitely heard it repeatedly, is the lack of services and support out there for women who have this experience. If you had one thing that you would like to recommend to improve the way things are for women, what would that be?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Considering there's already an idea of having more women, because obviously that would eventually make some change, I think it would be to have a standard, a little like the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, to push the agenda on certain things.

Right now, just like Dr. Breck said, it's a bottom-up approach where women are in it and we have to fight the systemic things ourselves. A lot of us are in the lower ranks at the beginning, so we don't have that power to impose these things. Somebody should be coming out and imposing standards so that it's not up to the people within the ranks—the few women—to be the ones challenging everything. That results in unnecessary dismissal, which leads to having fewer women, so it's kind of a vicious cycle.

•(1615)

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Yes, it's the cycle that continues.

Another thing that stood out in what you said earlier was with respect to suicide, suicide prevention and the fact that the reports are only looking at male suicide. I'm just wondering if you could speak a little more about that.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Again, the way the survey was conducted, it was done for a homogenous group. It was a qualitative data survey. They were going for numbers. If there weren't enough women who committed suicide, they wouldn't be able to see the needs.

I would be shocked if you ever get enough women, with 15% representation, to be able to do a decent survey on these things and a decent study. You need to find other ways to do these kinds of studies when there are minorities. If you use the same format that applies to the male-dominated groups, you'll never get that. You need qualitative data or you need to lump it together with other first responders or compare it with the U.S. There are other ways to do it.

That requires additional resources, additional expertise. If people want to know, they can find out, but they need to put the money out for it.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Thank you.

Dr. Breck, you spoke in your presentation about the need for feedback groups. Can you just tell me a bit about what that would look like?

Dr. Karen Breeck: I think feedback groups especially in a military context are part of what is really missing. How do silos talk to each other? How does data get shared properly, and how can you get immediate feedback? When we start thinking about people, we have this political designation that the day that I retire I suddenly belong to a different department than what I did the day before, but my medical issues and requirements are exactly the same. All of a sudden I'm split within these two departments.

I may be now retired, in which case only Veterans Affairs knows what injury I have now been diagnosed with. Maybe it's an injury that very clearly other people are going to have while still in uniform. We don't have the resources and the mandates to be able to pick up those trends when they happen in VAC.

The feedback upstream is, "Hey, we're noticing you're hurting people in a way that is preventable because it's through different departments and we haven't put the extra money in to gather the data in that format and to make those bridges happen."

We don't have to keep re-inventing wheels, which only happens in the federal government. In the provincial government, all of those feedback groups are mandated. We're missing them.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're now going to move over to Rachel Bendayan. You have seven minutes.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank you for your testimony today.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Gagnon, I will ask my question in English, since your testimony was in English, but feel free to reply in French too.

[*English*]

I was a lawyer previously, and we've heard testimony from several witnesses now regarding the lack of their ability to pay for legal representation as the victim, and the reasons, in processes in the armed forces. I was wondering if your organization of volunteers included lawyers who provided legal counsel to victims, and if you would be in agreement with the proposal that we should be paying for, or at least assisting victims with their legal fees in order for them to have professional counsel during the dispute resolution process.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: On the first question, no, we don't provide that but we do have some people with a legal background who do, and links to people who can provide it if people are willing to pay for it. Absolutely, you should get a legal counsel. The U.S. went that way. When the bill, which is the equivalent of Bill C-77, came to them, they said that the liaison was not enough and they actually had to give full-blown counselling because of the way the process was done. There are so many policies that are old and so on. They need additional help to just reach the same level as what civilians get as a service.

I would say also that the fact that we have a duty to report makes it that even more important because if you force somebody to go to court, what happens if she gets sued afterwards? It happened in my group a couple of times already that afterwards they were the ones

who were being sued. Who pays for that? Who foots the bill even if they were forced to be the ones disclosing?

Let's say you're a supervisor and you say that your employee, your subordinate, assaulted you. If there's an acknowledgement that there was a sexual act but the consent part was uncertain, then in the military you could be charged afterwards for having an adversarial relationship—and it doesn't stop at that. We have another person who got charged for underage drinking after she reported the incident. The incident got sent to the civilian...but she got charged in the military under the disciplinary act for underage drinking.

If we're forcing people to disclose, I think that they need equal protection because they quickly can become the accused.

● (1620)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Thank you very much. That's very helpful.

Dr. Breeck, you mentioned in your testimony that you had four specific recommendations. I know your time for opening remarks was very short. I wonder if you would like the opportunity to let the committee know your recommendations.

Dr. Karen Breeck: Unfortunately, I have more than four recommendations. I have four categories of recommendations. Maybe I'll just pick the ones at the top end.

Having listened to last week's testimony, I know training came up quite often. If I were to focus first on prevention, number one, it isn't just after they come to us. It is how the Government of Canada is communicating to Canadians about what the military is and who we are, and who is already being attracted to come to us. What do Canadians know and understand about the military and how do we attract them to us? How are we then screening them? Once they're in the door, how are we training them about the culture of CAF and what we want it to embody. Again, with that reboot idea, do we need to do a conscious re-look at the profession of arms doctrine and a re-look at what a good Canadian soldier is? Instead of all the documentation and visualizations, and stories of yesterdays, what are the attributes and skills sets? What does a good Canadian soldier of tomorrow look like?

Do a full SGBA on a military person's experience to make sure that from the get-go we have equipment, policies and medical support for everyone who comes in, and that women aren't clearly always "the other" and having to have adjustments made for us. We are then clearly a valued, equal team member. In my opinion, this would also help prevent some of the injuries we see in a higher proportion for women.

Continue all of this training throughout all the ranks and all of the career cycle, because as we move up, we start becoming more of a leader and influencing others. It isn't a one-time education. It has to continue and it has to continue all the way up.

One academic I've heard speak several times is a big proponent of all of our flag officers needing specific training. Because of who they are, it has to be one-on-one counselling that's specifically exploring their own personal implicit-explicit biases so that they're aware of what message they are potentially sending to their subordinates. Again, our culture is often very twofold as to what is said versus what people hear, the formal and the informal. Without that type of training, how do we capture that, when our leadership still sometimes says all the right words but that isn't what's heard?

We also need to actually look at our desired military behaviours and consciously do carrots and sticks. We're getting pretty good with the sticks. We're getting better with sticks, because we are charging. However, as you'll have heard many times, are we charging or doing the appropriate things in a transparent, timely and consistent manner? Are the punishments fitting the crimes? There's still a lot of mismatch there.

We haven't done a lot yet, that I'm aware of, for carrots. How do we reward the correct behaviour? How do we incorporate it into our reporting, our PER system? How do we incorporate it into our promotions and our incentive pays? If we move to screening, how do we potentially come up with early diagnosis?

We all have our phones now. We all have apps. Can we use our apps as an early warning monitoring tool that could actually be climate surveys and climate comments where I can just say, "Hey, I saw this and this happen at work today", and we immediately get, at an organizational level, who is having problems, who needs extra help in their leadership, 360-degree reviews?

Also, we're the only military that I'm aware of that does not have uniformed clinical psychologists. We have a lot who are contracted. We don't have any in uniform. Again, it would be persons for prevention. As a person who did fight surgery, half my job was to be out with the people doing their normal jobs. You'd pick out who was already stressed. You were always trying to fix people before they got sick. Again, the idea of clinical psychologists is very aggressively used in the U.S. It's in all of the workplaces. Your chaplain is there. Your psychologist is there in the workplace to go have a coffee with you, versus waiting until things are already so bad that you're coming into the medical system. There's a lot more we can do on that early-stage prevention.

Restorative justice is a topic that still needs to come up in a multitude of different areas. There are a lot of people who just really love their jobs and their careers, but they want a bit of justice and restorative justice could make that better.

I have another page. I'll hold off on the rest of it in case anyone else has any other questions.

• (1625)

The Chair: Those are some excellent recommendations.

On behalf of the committee, I'd really like to thank Dr. Karen Breeck, Dr. Grazia Scoppio and Marie-Claude Gagnon. Thank you very much for coming.

We will be suspending for two minutes to switch up the panels, and then we'll reconvene.

• (1625)

_____ (Pause) _____

• (1630)

The Chair: Welcome back to the 144th meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

For this second hour, we are pleased to welcome, from the Department of National Defence, Denise Preston, executive director of the sexual misconduct response centre; Alain Gauthier, director general, integrated conflict and complaint management; and Commodore Rebecca Patterson, director general, Canadian Armed Forces strategic response team for sexual misconduct.

We're going to start with Commodore Patterson.

Please begin. You have seven minutes.

Commodore Rebecca Patterson (Director General, Canadian Armed Forces Strategic Response Team – Sexual Misconduct, Department of National Defence): Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this study on the treatment of women in the Department of National Defence and in the Canadian Armed Forces. I understand that as part of your study you're interested to hear about Operation Honour.

The vice-chief of the defence staff was looking forward to being here today to contribute to your study, but he is now required to appear at the committee of the whole this week, so I've been asked to represent him. It's a poor shadow, but I will try.

With me today I have Dr. Denise Preston, as you have stated, the executive director of the sexual misconduct response centre, and Mr. Alain Gauthier, the director general of the integrated conflict and complaint management program. It is our intent to provide you with an update on where the Canadian Armed Forces' efforts to address sexual misconduct are, and we're here to answer any questions you may have.

Operation Honour is increasingly making the Canadian Armed Forces a safer and more welcoming environment for all, and the leadership of the Canadian Armed Forces is absolutely committed more than ever to stamping out sexual misconduct. In February of this year, our fourth progress report on Operation Honour was published. This report offered a comprehensive overview of what the Canadian Armed Forces has accomplished to date in an effort to eliminate sexual misconduct. It also provides an analysis, statistics and information on a variety of initiatives that have been undertaken across the Canadian Armed Forces.

My opening remarks today will constitute a brief synopsis of that report and touch on a few of the more recent developments regarding Operation Honour.

[Translation]

Operation Honour was initiated in 2015. In recent years, we have significantly evolved and are confident that we have completed important foundational work, which was essential to addressing sexual misconduct and effectively supporting those affected by it.

It is important to state upfront, however, that, while we are consistently looking at ways to improve our approach, we have not gotten everything right. We recognize that there is much left to do. We have learned a lot through our own experience and analysis, through the collaborative work we do with the Sexual Misconduct Response Centre, from the assessment of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, and from the feedback provided by external experts and stakeholders.

•(1635)

[English]

Some of the measures we have implemented along the way have resulted in unintended consequences, and some of the initiatives and changes did not deliver the desired outcome. For instance, we've not made sufficient progress in key areas such as policy and strategic cultural change. That has hampered our overall effort.

We've acknowledged that more work is required, specifically with respect to the 10 recommendations made by the external review authority, Madame Deschamps. Those 10 recommendations remain the primary barometer for our progress, and we're committed to implementing them to the fullest extent possible. This commitment is explicitly stated in the defence policy—"Strong, Secure, Engaged".

Sexual misconduct, however, is a difficult and a complex issue, as Dr. Breeck mentioned, and there is still much to learn. In light of the Auditor General's findings and our own internal review of Operation Honour, we have assessed our progress on the implementation of the recommendations and determined the adjustments required in our approach in order to achieve that intent.

Currently we feel that two of the external review authority's recommendations have been fully achieved. The first is to acknowledge the problem: The Canadian Armed Forces has acknowledged that we have a significant problem. The second is to undertake and to address it, and to simplify the harassment resolution process, which includes sexual harassment.

One more has been achieved in a manner that meets the intent of the recommendation, while maintaining consistency with the Canadian Armed Forces' structural, functional and jurisdictional parameters. That is to allow victims of sexual assault to request the transfer of the complaint to civilian authorities.

We continue to make progress to varying degrees on the remaining seven recommendations, which are to establish a cultural change strategy; to establish a centre of accountability; to allow independent reporting without triggering a formal complaint process; to develop definitions and terminology; to develop a unified policy approach; to assign responsibility for providing, coordinating and monitoring victim support to the support centre; and to assign to the centre the responsibility for the development of the training

curriculum and for the monitoring of training on matters related to inappropriate sexual behaviour.

I will now briefly expand on what we are doing to address these deficiencies.

We are currently developing a campaign plan to focus our efforts on moving forward. This plan will be informed by advice from external experts. It will have clear lines of efforts, as well as dedicated resources to ensure success. It will drive our work in areas such as prevention, engagement, policy development, cultural change and victim support.

[Translation]

Support for victims has been, and will continue to be, our main effort for the next phase of Operation Honour. It will be our priority to ensure that victims remain confident that the Canadian Armed Forces will support them through all legal and administrative processes. We will ensure that they have access to the support and services required to recover from the harm done to them.

[English]

The sexual misconduct response centre plays an essential role in providing—

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.)): You have 10 seconds.

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: We'll talk about the centre though questions.

The Canadian Forces' relationship with the sexual misconduct response centre is still evolving, and our goal is to achieve a posture that will be effective for the Canadian Armed Forces while not detracting from the independence of the centre.

Let there be no doubt; the Canadian Armed Forces is fully committed to this. Now more than ever, we are humbled by the scope of the problem and challenges we face in dealing with sexual misconduct effectively.

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

Next is Ms. Preston. The floor is yours for seven minutes.

•(1640)

Ms. Denise Preston (Executive Director, Sexual Misconduct Response Centre, Department of National Defence): Thank you.

[Translation]

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak today as part of your study of the treatment of women within the Department of National Defence. I am pleased to be here to give you an update on the evolution of the Sexual Misconduct Response Centre, as well as a snapshot of the projects my team and I are working on.

[English]

Since its inception in September 2015, the SMRC has built its operations on the provision of response and support services to members of the Canadian Armed Forces affected by sexual misconduct. It offers confidential, bilingual, client-centred services to members 24-7 and may be accessed by members no matter where in the world they may be. The centre's counsellors all have expertise in working with survivors of sexual trauma and do not have a duty to report.

While these services filled a critical gap, they are not sufficient to address the range of needs affected members have within the complexity of the CAF environment. There is also a need for better coordination of support services and specialized training for those who provide support.

These observations, together with the results of internal reviews and the recommendations of the Office of the Auditor General, identified a requirement for a significant revision of and expansion to the SMRC's mandate and role. As such, as a priority, we have drafted a revised version of our new mandate, a mandate that will support the defence team's overall approach to sexual misconduct by providing expert advice related to sexual misconduct, by monitoring CAF's implementation of policies, programs and services, and by delivering expanded, comprehensive, evidence-based response and support services.

Here's an idea on how we plan to deliver on this mandate. To start, we're in the midst of developing an enhanced response and support coordination program, otherwise known as a case management service. This program will provide better coordinated and broader support for CAF members who have experienced sexual misconduct, regardless of whether or not they have reported the incident.

Members will have a single point of contact in the centre who will provide case management services, assistance in navigating both internal and external services or processes, in-person support, practical assistance in completing forms or victim impact statements and accompaniment. These services will be available to affected members with consent from the time of first disclosure until such time as they indicate that support is no longer required.

The model is based on best practices in the field. In fact, we hired an external consultant with decades of experience in a parallel provincial victim support program to advise us. It's also based on gaps identified in internal and external reviews of CAF services available to victims and consultations with retired and still-serving CAF members who have experienced sexual misconduct.

We want to focus on ensuring that members are at the centre of our response and that their needs guide our actions.

[Translation]

Second, the centre will also be providing funding, through a contribution program, to centres assisting victims of sexual assault in close proximity to the 10 largest bases and wings in Canada. This will increase support options outside of the Canadian Armed Forces. This program is still in the design phase and has not yet been launched.

Third, the centre will play an important role in informing the national victim support strategy that is in the initial planning stages.

[English]

In relation to providing expert advice, SMRC has provided recommendations on a number of recent policy documents, and on the content and process for developing the new policy on sexual misconduct. Other examples include membership on the sexual assault review program, established by the Canadian Forces provost marshal, to review unfounded cases of sexual assault dating back to 2010; the provision of advice on cases of sexual misconduct within the military justice system or other complaint processes; and membership on numerous relevant working groups with CAF partners.

These examples speak to CAF's increasing recognition of the need for and value of specialized advice related to sexual misconduct and to the increasing credibility of the SMRC. These types of engagements are essential to the improvement of coordinated victim support services.

While I strive to work collaboratively with the Canadian Armed Forces, I remain committed to the centre's independence, as recommended in the external review in 2015. An external advisory council was established last year to enhance and support the centre's independence.

• (1645)

In the last few months, the external advisory council was instrumental in providing expert advice and recommendations on important interim documents directly related to the implementation of Operation Honour and the external review authority's recommendations. These documents include a clearer definition of sexual misconduct and a decision tree tool to guide members of the chain of command in responding to incidents. An important inclusion in the decision tree is guidance on including, consulting and informing affected members at each step of the process.

I believe that external advice and expertise is crucial to the success of Operation Honour as well as to the centre's mandate. I encourage my team to seek outside advice and expertise as often as possible, which is why last December the SMRC hosted a forum on sexual misconduct at which partners from the Five Eyes nations gathered for the first time to advance a common understanding of what is essential to improve support to victims of sexual misconduct in their militaries and to enhance prevention.

I was immediately invested in the forum, because we had an incredible opportunity to exchange best practices on how to effectively address sexual misconduct in our respective organizations and how to best meet the needs of military members.

One best practice that came out of that forum was the importance of grounding our work within an evidence-based prevention framework. I recently hired an expert with many years of clinical, research and administrative experience in the prevention, assessment and treatment of sexual misconduct. She will develop a comprehensive prevention plan and contribute to refining policy regarding perpetrators.

In terms of diversity, the StatsCan survey on sexual misconduct indicated that members of the LBGQT2 community are victimized at higher rates. SMRC staff have received specialized training from community agencies and are researching enhancements to service delivery to better meet the needs of these and other specialized groups.

The needs of diverse clients will also be considered in the national victim support strategy that is under development. I am also seeking to add expertise in these issues to the membership of the external advisory council.

Finally, as we continue to identify and respond to developing trends by providing expert advice and monitoring CAF's efforts, my focus will remain on ensuring the provision of efficient, effective and compassionate support that is responsive to members' needs, helping them return to work in a healthy and respectful workplace.

Thank you.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you very much.

Finally, we'll turn to Alain Gauthier. You have seven minutes...or are you supporting?

Okay, great. We will take your seven minutes back.

We're going to start off with our seven minutes of questioning. Our first round starts with Salma Zahid.

Salma, you have the floor for seven minutes.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Thank you, Chair. Thanks to the witnesses for coming today.

We have been hearing from various witnesses in this study. One complaint that we have heard from many witnesses in the course of the last weeks is that the complaint process is administered by their chain of command, although often the problem resides within that chain of command.

One suggestion given to us is to have the process be completely independent, handled by a separate organization within the Canadian Armed Forces and DND. Do you think this is a feasible suggestion?

I will start with Ms. Patterson.

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: Thank you for your question.

The Canadian Armed Forces is quite a complex organization, and the role of the chain of command within that organization is absolutely essential.

One thing that is absolutely important in order for us to maintain operational effectiveness is to know how and what our people are doing and how they are. Having a complaint system that is completely external to the chain of command would certainly be challenging.

I think, though, there are two parts to your question. One part seems to involve somebody in their chain of command who is actually the perpetrator of the incident. As we move forward—and we've mentioned trying to provide the tools the people at the coal face need in order to manage these—it is very clear that if there's any relationship between the two, then such a person would be removed from the process.

The other thing we have tried to do is put the guidance—

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Is it happening, or are you saying that it will be introduced?

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: It is happening now. We have just issued a number of documents.

While policy does not change things, the training that comes with it does. Things are interlinked, and while we certainly have provided guidance to the chain of command on how to effectively manage a complaint, which is a process issue, what has been absolutely critical there is getting and integrating the advice of the sexual misconduct response centre on immediately putting the needs of the affected person up front.

While I cannot speak to a specific case, if there is a case where someone in the chain of command is alleged to have committed an act, they will be removed and the focus is on supporting the person through the process.

Second, we have also issued a manual. You think, "Oh my goodness, not another manual", but one thing about military culture is that we like to be able to read. This manual focuses on not just doing a process. It focuses on what the affected person needs. The affected person can also read this and know what they can ask for.

Then last, I'll go back to the sexual misconduct response centre. It's part of this process making sure the affected person has the right needs and support, connecting them through their immediate chain of command and recommending they call the sexual misconduct response centre, which also provides the support there.

Having a system that is completely external to the Canadian Armed Forces is a complex question, but we do have a process in place that tries to create and avoid that conflict I think you're referring to.

• (1650)

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Ms. Preston, would you like to add something?

Ms. Denise Preston: I can't speak to whether or not it's feasible, or whether CAF can or will implement it, but it is certainly one of the recommendations we made when we provided essentially a briefing note to the CAF on all of the things that ought to be considered in drafting the new policy on sexual misconduct. It was exploring a number of issues around reporting, including the feasibility of some kind of investigative process outside of the chain of command.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Ms. Patterson, how do you do the education and awareness about what rights people have? It is also very important that everyone knows what their rights are and what they can ask for.

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: I would like to refer this over to Mr. Gauthier because the integrated conflict and complaint management is a good illustration of a system that shows you, not only that have we taken aspects out but also how we educate who has the rights for what within the system, including the chain of command, the respondent and the complainant.

Alain, I'll ask you to comment on the work you have been doing.

Mr. Alain Gauthier (Director General, Integrated Conflict and Complaint Management, Department of National Defence): As of July 2018, we've established 16 centres of excellence across the country and invested in 48 brand new civilian positions. Those are people who we have trained within National Defence to provide CAF members a safe place where they can go and ask questions in relation to the issues they are dealing with.

Those specialists have been trained to deal with all the issues or refer people to the right location, whether it's about harassment, discrimination, racism, a pay issue, an alcohol issue, or if it's about mental health. With the team in those locations, we've established protocol with SMRC, with the mental health facilities we have on each of the bases, and even further so that they can even refer to local services such as shelters.

They guide those CAF members in absolute confidentiality because those civilians don't have that duty to report. If it is specific to sexual misconduct and we see there's a need for assistance or guidance, then they are immediately transferred to SMRC. They guide the file and it comes back to us.

It is one way we have added brand new capabilities and services to CAF members to clarify issues and guide them on how to deal with them.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: In the last panel, there was an indication that no uniformed clinical psychologists are there. Do you think there is a need for uniformed clinical psychologists?

The Chair: Please keep it brief, 10 seconds.

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: Unfortunately, that is outside the scope of my work. However, I do know the incredible value of clinical psychologists in supporting members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

•(1655)

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

We're now going to move over to Rachael Harder.

Rachael, you have seven minutes.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Thank you.

Commodore Patterson, you talked about a number of things that are being done in response to the report that was put out about a year ago. In some of the remarks that you didn't get to in your opening statement but are written here, you talk about seeking further action. I'm wondering a few things. Number one, is any further action being taken to account for the fact that we are now in 2019 and, as a number of our witnesses have put it, the Canadian Armed Forces are changing?

Increasingly, they are moving towards a knowledge-based centre, rather than a combat-based entity. As a result, that changes the type of person you want to recruit. That certainly changes things. Within that as well there is more opportunity for women who join the military to also have a family, so children are now involved in the equation, but it is my understanding, based on testimony we've heard from witnesses, that the policies have not caught up to this reality, the fact that someone could have children and could be a single mom or a single dad responsible for the care of those children.

What types of policies are you looking to implement to account for these changes in society?

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: I promise you I'm not try to evade your questions, but again that would be outside my current portfolio. Very generically, there is something called the journey that you may have heard about, which is looking at the whole life cycle of a person who wishes to join the Canadian Armed Forces, from the moment of recruitment through potentially to the end of their life. Within there, putting people at the centre of all we do, involves reviewing policies as they relate to families and how families are managed.

That work is under way. I'm very sorry, I cannot provide specific answers for you, but it is being looked at, trying to look at what the systemic barriers are to allow all people to serve, no matter their family circumstances. It is definitely priority work as an institution under "Strong, Secure, Engaged".

Ms. Rachael Harder: Again—perhaps you can't comment on this either—another recommendation that a witness brought forward was that perhaps a woman could decide whether she wanted to go through the Canadian Armed Forces or an HR tribunal to have her case heard. Do you feel that could be considered?

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: I'm so sorry. I'm not able to comment on this specifically. Very generically, the expectation is to use the processes that exist within the system first and then move forward to human rights.

Alain, are you able to provide a greater comment? May I just share with my colleague?

Ms. Rachael Harder: Sure.

Mr. Alain Gauthier: A human rights complaint is part of my portfolio.

Absolutely nothing prevents a CAF member from going directly to the commission and making a complaint. The commission will decide if they prefer to deal directly with the complaint—and they have the ability to retain, deal with it, investigate and sort it out—or in discussion with the armed forces to say they'll use the existing mechanism.

But for every single case that discussion does happen.

Ms. Rachael Harder: It's my understanding that grievances have to be taken all the way through the CAF before a person can file a complaint outside, let's say, with a human rights tribunal or the commission. Is that not correct?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: If they've launched a process and they're already in the grievance process, once again, nothing prevents them from going to the commission and making their case. The commission will usually ask them to wait until the decision is taken in the grievance process.

If they go early and the first thing they do is go straight to the commission, once again nothing prevents that and there have been cases where the commission has said we will deal directly with these cases.

Ms. Rachael Harder: One of the concerns that has been expressed by a couple of the witnesses who have been brought to this table is that they were in the midst of a CAF proceeding with regard to their grievances and felt that they were being taken on a bit of a merry-go-round ride. They were able to outline that quite well and I would agree with them, based on what they shared with us.

Basically, they were being held within the CAF so that they couldn't go to the commission, because the commission said they wouldn't hear their case until they had closed it with the CAF. It feels like there is perhaps a bit of a ploy taking place there, then, to keep members of the Canadian Armed Forces within the CAF, thus preventing them from being able to go and seek other assistance from the outside. Is that true?

•(1700)

Mr. Alain Gauthier: No. This is not what I saw—

Ms. Rachael Harder: There are no mechanisms like that at play?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: I saw a clear example of where people can go to the commission, and it is a commission decision to deal with it or not. They decide.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Always...?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Always.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Ms. Patterson, another thing you said was that there is a manual, and you kind of chuckled to yourself, knowing that it is somewhat laughable that there is a manual.

Again, a number of witnesses have talked about the fact that, yes, there are policies. There are policies galore, but they're not asking for new policies. They're asking that action be taken on the existing policies. They're asking that the proper protocols be followed and that the culture be shifted.

What would be your response to that?

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: I think we have to start at the basic level. The reason for my comment on the manual was that if you say it's another policy, it's actually not a policy. It's a useful tool and a guide. There is a difference. This is something that's used at the coal face, and I do hear that everything gets labelled "policy" when that is not in fact what it is. Within our culture—we are very large—having that tool available to you, as well as on an app that can be accessed from anywhere in the world, is quite a valuable piece.

As it relates to policy, a unified policy approach is one of the recommendations out of the Deschamps report, and we are actively working on that. As with anything, it is complex. We do want to make sure that it's been through a GBA+ process to make sure all aspects are there.

In addition, my job is to be the universal translator to make sure that the advice we're receiving from the sexual misconduct response centre, and ultimately from the external advisory council, actually can be read and be usable for the CAF. That consultative process and that development process take time. Where we are right now is that we have usable and valuable tools that we have put in place as we come up with unified policy.

I'll go back to your original comment, which was, what does policy do? What people on the ground need is a tool that's usable. It's a decision tree. It's about knowing how to look after people. It is

about having a manual that doesn't just apply to "Here's your cookbook, chain of command". This is also for people who are affected and it can be accessed from anywhere in the world. Putting those useful pieces in place is very important.

To go back to the question about education—

The Chair: I'm going to cut you off, because we're quite over time on that one. I'm going to pass the floor over to Rachel Blaney.

Rachel, you have seven minutes.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: I want to thank all of you all for being here today.

I will direct my first question to you, Commodore Patterson. I really appreciate your being here. I'm the proud representative of 19 Wing Comox, and I have to say that I'm honoured to do amazing work with them. I'm always impressed by the people who serve our country.

In your brief, you talked about how you're currently developing a campaign plan to look at how you're going to move forward. I'm curious. Could you talk to us a bit about what that looks like and tell us if women who have gone through these experiences were part of helping you develop that plan?

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: Thank you.

I used to have a unit in Comox. I love Comox.

This is actually a two-part response. We have the campaign plan, but we're also developing that prevention strategy and cultural change strategy we talked about. We are in the early stages of a pan-Canadian Armed Forces campaign plan that is trying to break down some of the different silos that definitely have been mentioned here. How do we start harmonizing all the various approaches?

In the early phase, we have stakeholders from all sorts of groups now. One of those is the sexual misconduct response centre. We're getting to a point where it's going to be basically making sure, for the Canadian Armed Forces, who will be responsible for implementing this and that it makes sense.

Then, as we start moving through the continuous developmental process, it will be going back to the SMRC. Again, this is the group that includes the affected person perspective. Again, we want to stay at arm's length from that so they can retain their independence but also so the advice they're getting is very clean and clear. We've included them at the stakeholder perspective, being represented through the SMRC, and as we move forward with the campaign plan, I'll pass it to Dr. Preston to talk about what would happen then.

•(1705)

Ms. Denise Preston: I would just add a couple of things.

Part of the role of SMRC is to essentially represent a victim's interests, a victim's issues or that perspective on things. We do that in a couple of ways.

One—as I mentioned earlier—is that all of my staff have expertise working with victims of sexual trauma, so they provide their own professional expert advice. We also get advice directly from people with lived experience. We do have a member on our external advisory council who has lived experience.

As well, we actually have a member who is working with us right now to establish a formal stakeholder engagement strategy, because part of the challenge for us—to this point—is that a lot of our engagement has been sort of ad hoc, or one on one with people with whom we have relationships or It's Just 700, which has already been established. We know we don't have the range of voices at the table that we want represented, so we're developing a stakeholder engagement strategy to be able to include those voices in a systematic way on everything we develop.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Thank you.

I'm going to come back to you, though, because I think—and I really appreciated that addition—that one of the challenges is the culture. It's one of these realities that, when it is so normal—this is how it's always been done—it's very hard to change and move it.

I'm just wondering about this strategy around changing culture. What are the specific challenges you're facing that are the ones that, if you could knock those down, it would really make a difference?

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: As you know, this is a problem society faces and we are a microcosm of that society.

The challenge is being able to articulate what that change needs to be. The one thing we do know is that everything we do is founded on respect and dignity. You have to go back to basics, as they say. What is it that the Canadian Armed Forces is? What do we value? What are our ethics and what is our ethos? There was a mention made of "Duty With Honour". That's actually a document that articulates the ethos of the profession of arms.

What we're actually looking at, though, is how we articulate bringing us back to what our ethical bases are, what we believe in and what our culture should look like. That is the first step, and that work is under way.

The challenge is that there is no road map. Therefore, what we are hoping to do, as we look at the actual philosophy behind the cultural change we need to make in the CAF, is to look at it from a prevention perspective, because I don't believe it matters that I'm talking about sexual misconduct. It could apply to harassment, racism or anything if we have a founding principle of respect and dignity for all.

Our challenge, then, is how to articulate that. One thing we value hugely is external advice, and that is why we are happy to.... We were at the Status of Women Canada advisory board this morning. What a fabulous group. What a fabulous organization to help us change and figure out where we need to be.

This is why, when we look at who is trying to articulate the strategy, Dr. Preston and I are collaborating on this as co-chairs to come up with where we want to go. What we want to be able to do is to put these out-of-the-box ideas on the table.

One thing I can confirm to you is that there is a huge desire to figure out how to accomplish this change, and we have been given

some flexibility to try to say that this is where we need to do, where we need to go and how to inform it.

Again, I say external advice is always greatly welcome, especially in academic research, etc., and it is challenging.

Would you like me to pass it to Dr. Preston?

• (1710)

Ms. Rachel Blaney: I'm just wondering...because I think it has to be very centred by the people who've had this experience. That voice just needs to become more robust and loud in this environment.

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: Absolutely.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: One of the recommendations we heard earlier today is that there needs to be actual case management, which I understand from what you said is in the process of happening. I'd like an update on that and also peer support and face to face, because you talk about being able to deliver services, but how often are you able to deliver them face to face?

The Chair: Please give a brief answer, unfortunately.

Ms. Denise Preston: You are right that, to date, what we've been delivering is a 24-7 call centre for people, essentially. However, where we're moving with this case management system is that it's going to be a decentralized function, so we will have people represented across the country and there will be the provision of face-to-face services.

The other thing we're doing is developing—and I referred to it in my comments—a national support strategy. That is going to look at support in a very comprehensive way and at all sorts of different mechanisms, whether it's group support, peer support or the use of technology for people who are in remote locations, for example. It will also look at credentials, training and evaluation.

We are taking a comprehensive look at providing the support people need.

The Chair: Excellent.

We'll now move over to Emmanuella Lambropoulos.

Emmanuella, you have the floor for seven minutes.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Thank you for being here today to answer our questions.

What you have presented here today, and what we have on paper, seems amazing. It sounds like there is a robust plan in place and that everything works really well. Then, when we hear witnesses, we hear the exact opposite, that none of these things are actually implemented in the CAF.

We've touched a bit on how culture is to blame for this. Also, earlier today, we heard witnesses say that coming from the outside in, they notice a difference in behaviour based on how many years the person has been with the Canadian Armed Forces. It seems to get worse as time goes on. The longer they've been in that setting, the worse their behaviour becomes, towards women, let's say.

I'm wondering, Ms. Patterson, since you might have insider experience as well, if there is any comment you would like to add. Can you share your experience as a women in the CAF and where you think this comes from? Does it stem from the lower ranks? Does it stem from above? What is the reason for this?

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: I can certainly talk from my experience, but I think it's very important that we have the evidence, the data, in order to really know where it comes from.

One thing in 2015 that didn't exist.... It really was kind of "I think that's about where we are and that's what the situation is". We recognized the fact that we did not have this type of data available to us. In an organization that is as vast, both geographically and in numbers, as the Canadian Armed Forces, we just started in 2016 to break that data out separately. We're starting to get an understanding, with outputs, as to where this is happening and who it's happening by.

We're also about to get the results of a second Statistics Canada survey—next week, on the 22nd—which may be of interest to this committee as well, trying to identify where this is coming from, who is being targeted, and what's going on.

What we know right now, from the Statistics Canada survey in 2016.... Not only did that validate what Madame Deschamps had to say, but we've also had internal surveys, called Your Say surveys, that started to look at where this behaviour is coming from. One thing we know is that women—validating what's been said—who are of junior ranks, the most junior in the services, usually in the regular force not the part-time reserves, and people from the LGBTQ2 community, are the most likely to be targeted.

Why does it seem to get worse as you get older? I think it's happening differently at each level, depending on how much time people have in. There are generational discussions that could be had, but what we are trying to do now is come up with the data, which we can always track.

For my final point, one of the comments earlier was the fact that there is data all over the place. One of the most important parts of this campaign plan that we're discussing is getting to analytics. We now have common operating platforms for all the different groups that collect this information for their usage, so we can start talking—electronically talking—across this data.

That is something that would be worth monitoring, so that you know where and how these incidents are happening.

• (1715)

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Thank you.

Ms. Preston on your end—again, it sounds great on paper—is there any way that you think we can make it have more bite, make it so that the CAF members have to follow what is being put in policy so that it's actually being practised?

Ms. Denise Preston: First of all, I want to thank you for acknowledging that you're hearing positive things from us. We certainly feel that there has been a lot of work done in the last three years. We have a lot of things on the table that are under development that I think are going to significantly change the response to sexual misconduct, both in terms of the comprehensive support that we provide to people who are affected and also looking at a number of things related to reporting, to try to address some of these unintended consequences that were identified by the Auditor General's report. We're looking at policy development. Essentially, a lot of what Madame Deschamps had recommended in 2015 is what we're now working hard at.

My hope would be that a year from now the CAF would look different from it does now. I'm not sure that we're going to see a decline in the numbers, but what we're going to see is a more robust framework around it in terms of a policy framework or recourse mechanism framework, a support framework and evaluation framework, so that we're able to do better going forward.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Rachel, did you want to ask anything?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: My question is to the commodore. Thank you again for appearing here. Just to echo some of the positive comments of my colleagues, I would like to thank you on behalf of us all for your service and also for being a woman leader in the military. I'm sure many young cadets look up to you.

I'm sure you can appreciate, after some of the questions, that there are many witnesses who came to us with very tragic stories of their experiences. Many of those who experienced harassment or sexual misconduct in the military were very saddened to learn that at the end of the processes they went through, the sanctions on their perpetrators—even if they were found guilty—were small fines or a slap on the wrist, as they put it.

I'm not sure if you would have these statistics with you today, but I wonder if you could undertake to provide the committee with some statistics relating to the sanctions on those perpetrators who are found guilty after the CAF dispute resolution process, so that we could better understand the results over the last few years.

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: Most certainly we'll take that question on notice.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you very much.

Now we'll start our second round of five minutes each. We'll start with Rachael Harder and then back to Eva Nassif.

Rachael, you have five minutes.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Thank you.

Ms. Patterson, just when you got cut off, you were going to say something with regard to education, I believe. Do you recall what you were going to say?

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: I think I was talking about the “Respect in the CAF” workshop, which was noted in the OAG report as definitely a very valuable approach to attitude and belief-changing. Respect in the CAF is facilitated by expert facilitators who are all civilians. It's a day-long process where they look at everything from unconscious bias as it affects decision-making to how to consider the position of those affected by sexual misconduct and incidents. It also covers things such as bystander intervention training, which is an industry standard in this area. It helps everybody with the decision tool on how you can actually apply this because very often people are shocked when they witness incidents of sexual misconduct throughout the whole spectrum. That was the kind of training I wanted to bring to your attention.

The key is that it isn't just churning people through. It's looking at what the outcomes of this are, starting with how they feel and what they feel they got out of it right after the session. Also, as we move forward and develop the performance management framework, what are the impacts of these interventions?

Lastly, there is the continuous cycle of improvement. As we migrate these processes over to the SMRC, this program includes subject-matter experts to make sure that the training remains on track and accurate, and also that it doesn't cause “death by PowerPoint”. It's going beyond that. It allows for open discussion, which I think is an incredibly valuable learning tool. Members of the Canadian Armed Forces are responding very well to it so far.

I think that may have been my comment.

• (1720)

Ms. Rachael Harder: That's good.

Based on your observations from the inside, what would you say are the factors that might prevent women from entering the Canadian Armed Forces?

We know that we're not able to attract or retain the number of women that has been set out as the ultimate goal, which is 21% or 25%, I believe. Why is that?

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: Research has been done on the barriers to recruiting and retention. It doesn't sit within the Operation Honour domain—we can provide you with information also on that afterwards—but it looks at the reasons people leave. What has been interesting is that some of the reasons people leave could be that they're ending their contracts and they have other things they wish to do.

What is really important is that in order to retain women, which is a lot of what we're looking at, it definitely involves addressing sexual misconduct, so that not only women on the inside feel safe in the environment they're working in but so that they perceive themselves to be in a safe environment. Most members of the Canadian Armed Forces are not committing sexual misconduct, but it doesn't matter. It's how you feel.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Right.

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: The other thing we know, because I'm also the defence champion for women—I've just shared that with you now—is that one of the other key issues that came out in retention research was a need for a mentorship program that is gender-specific. One thing we have put in, through our employment equity group—I work with the defence women's advisory organization for military and civilian defence women—is a trial of a gender-based mentorship program wherein we have members, military and civilian, from....They are women. They are members of the LGBTQ2+ community.

We have that system in place not to replace what normally happens within their chain of command, but to give them somewhere to ask those very specific questions. How did you manage being a mother and deploying for 13 months? That was my experience. How did you, as a married service couple, face this? How do I, as a member of a same-sex relationship, get the benefits and entitlements I'm eligible for?

We have actually put this in place and we will measure it. Again, we have it as a trial now, because we don't want to create a runaway train that overwhelms us, but it's in place.

The other thing is, as you mentioned earlier, looking at family policies, having a voice and being able to express it when those little irritants in your everyday service, whether involving your uniform or alternate work arrangements, affect you.

We know that the defence women's advisory organization is a very effective voice for women to come together to express and identify.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you very much.

For our final questions we have Eva Nassif.

Eva, you have the floor for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Madam Chair, I am going to share my time with my colleague Ms. Rudd.

My thanks to all the witnesses for their presentations.

My question goes to Commodore Patterson and to Ms. Preston.

You talked about Operation Honour and its 10 objectives. You said that two or three of those objectives have been achieved. So seven are left. Why have those other objectives not been achieved? Certainly, the process and the recommendations have not been in place for very long, but what do you need to make those seven recommendations a reality?

• (1725)

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: If possible, I would like to reply in English. It will be easier for me.

[*English*]

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Yes, I don't mind.

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: Concerning the seven remaining recommendations, we are well under way and almost at a point of achieving them. I think the question, though, is, when do we achieve them. What is very important to us is that these are complex recommendations. It isn't as though we put a paper in place and the answer is there.

I could certainly go through the seven remaining recommendations, if you would like.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: The culture, I think, is the most difficult thing to change.

Cmdre Rebecca Patterson: Absolutely. We are working on the cultural change strategy, but rather than just do it in a silo as it relates to sexual misconduct, we are trying to link in to all the other initiatives going on within the department so that when we come up with a cultural change strategy—because it's about respect and dignity for all people—it is harmonized.

Your point about that being challenging is correct, but we are across the start line and are progressing forward.

A number of the recommendations directly relate to the centre for accountability. I will pass the floor to Dr. Preston to comment on them. I'm here to support her as she sees fit in this, but she can certainly speak to these.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Yes, of course.

Ms. Denise Preston: It is true that Madame Deschamps' report had 10 recommendations, but many of them revolved around the responsibilities assigned to this independent centre. When the department set up the response to her report, it established the strategic response team on the CAF side of the house, which Commodore Patterson leads, and it set up the response centre that I lead.

However, the assignment of responsibilities to those two organizations was not consistent with what Madame Deschamps had envisioned, and we've come to realize now.... We sort of always knew it, on the ground, as we were enacting our roles, but when the Auditor General came in and did the audit last year, he made a number of very similar observations and recommendations to those Madame Deschamps had made, which had to do with this assignment of responsibilities.

That's the process that we're in right now, essentially, rewriting both of our respective mandates to essentially shift to the SMRC quite a number of responsibilities that CAF has been holding on to. That is significant from the point of view that now those responsibilities will be had by people who have subject matter expertise.

We will be informing policy. We will be informing training. We will be monitoring training. We'll be doing much more of what Madame Deschamps had envisioned. In doing that, we're meeting, I

think, probably three or four of the recommendations, and that work is under way right now.

Ms. Kim Rudd (Northumberland—Peterborough South, Lib.): I have one minute. This will be fast.

I have a grandson who's going into his third year as a reservist, and I tell you this is something that concerns me greatly. I'm hoping it's a generational change—certainly from his perspective, I believe it is—but then I worry when I hear that, when you're immersed in the culture, it kind of takes over.

I'm very happy to hear that there's a lot of advice from the outside, but I think we have to recognize that we do have a cultural shift to make and, as you mentioned, it's not easy.

I have a couple of quick questions. You talked about the 24-7 call centre. How many people are employed at that call centre?

Ms. Denise Preston: Do you mean all together, or on the counselling team?

Ms. Kim Rudd: I mean all together.

Ms. Denise Preston: All together there are 26 public servants.

Ms. Kim Rudd: Okay, and did you say that 48 civilian counsellors are being trained right now?

Ms. Denise Preston: No, the 48 are the people who work in Mr. Gauthier's program.

Ms. Kim Rudd: They're being trained in this aspect of their work. Is that correct?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: They've already deployed across the country.

Ms. Kim Rudd: How many resource centres are there?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: There are 16.

Ms. Kim Rudd: You mentioned a provision for "face to face". What does a provision for face to face mean?

Ms. Denise Preston: It means that we will ensure.... As we're decentralizing this service, we will be establishing centres. We haven't made the decision yet as to whether they'll be located at bases or wings, whether they'll be in regional centres or whether they'll be even perhaps co-located with the integrated complaint and conflict management system, but they'll be located in centres where people can come and receive face-to-face service.

The Chair: Excellent. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank Dr. Preston, Alain Gauthier and Commodore Patterson. Thank you very much for coming and providing your testimony.

We will be meeting once again at 8:45 a.m. on Thursday, location to be announced. We'll see you then.

The meeting is adjourned.

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