



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

## **Standing Committee on National Defence**

---

NDDN • NUMBER 134 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

---

**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, April 4, 2019**

—  
**Chair**

**Mr. Stephen Fuhr**



## Standing Committee on National Defence

Thursday, April 4, 2019

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.)):** Good afternoon to everyone and welcome to the Standing Committee on National Defence. We are continuing our discussion on the study of diversity within the Canadian Armed Forces.

I would like to welcome Brigadier Nicholas Orr, United Kingdom defence and military adviser and head of the British defence liaison staff, to committee today.

Sir, thank you for coming and I'm going to yield the floor to you for your opening remarks.

**Brigadier Nicholas Orr (United Kingdom Defence and Military Adviser and Head of the British Defence Liaison Staff, British High Commission):** Chair, thank you very much and good afternoon to everybody. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this afternoon and discuss the really important issue of diversity in the armed forces. From a U.K. perspective we very much refer to it as diversity and inclusion, but I will talk about that in slightly more detail in a second.

First, I'd just like to say as one of your closest allies with similar views on the world, in particular in defence, I'm really pleased to be here. We have a significant shared history, especially in the armed forces, where many of our structures and policies are very similar. However, I believe that our current relationship is based on far more than this, as we share a similar outlook on the world, its security and our desires to uphold the international rules-based order. As such, I believe that we have a modern, strong and close relationship that is fit for the 21st century and the challenges that we currently face in the world. This is especially so in the defence realm where our armed forces continue to serve alongside each other in many parts of the world, including previously in Afghanistan, and now in Iraq, Ukraine, the Baltics, Romania and Mali. As partners in Five Eyes, NATO, and many other multinational bodies, including the United Nations, we frequently operate very closely together.

I think our defence relationship is demonstrated by the closeness of our leaders. Our ministers meet frequently, particularly in NATO and Five Eyes gatherings, and our officials are in almost constant conversations about the many current topics across the sphere of military capability.

Within the armed forces, the annual partnership and defence dialogue, chaired by our respective CHODs, chiefs of defence, is the overarching construct for bilateral engagements. Significantly, at the

last meeting in November, personnel issues were one of three that were discussed in great detail. In addition, the heads of our respective personnel of the Five Eyes communities meet on a regular basis to discuss personnel issues, as we all face very similar challenges.

Let me now focus on the issue at hand, diversity in the armed forces. This is an issue that has been discussed frequently between our armed forces as we develop our respective policies in this area. Though the U.K. armed forces feel that we are making progress, we know that diversity must continue to be a focus for us as we move forward. I strongly believe that complacency would be seen as a retrograde step. Therefore, more precisely, defence has increasingly challenged itself to become a more diverse and inclusive organization. The need to act is primarily based on the benefits that this will bring, but as well it is based on the moral case and the legal requirements.

We recognize currently that the defence workforce is not representative of the demographic within U.K. society. To address this, we have published a defence diversity and inclusion strategy which takes us out from 2018 to 2030. This is underpinned by activity to increase the diversity of the military and civilian workforce to create a more inclusive working environment in which everyone can reach their full potential. I have a copy of the strategy, which I would be very happy to leave behind afterwards.

Additionally, our defence diversity and inclusion strategy outlines the goals that we wish to achieve, and there are three. First is to be an inclusive employer where all staff can fulfill their potential. Second is to be an organization that, at all levels, appropriately represents U.K. society. Third is to be recognized as a force for inclusion in wider society, in particular by improving our outreach to the wider communities.

Our future ambitions, we believe, will be delivered through four priority areas of activity. I'll quickly gallop through those so you can understand a little more of what lies behind those words.

• (1535)

First, there is what we're describing as mainstreaming diversity and inclusion in the defence operation model. This means that diversity and inclusion will be considered as an integral part of every part of the defence operating model. This includes associated decision-making processes, programs, policies and strategies, including at the most senior levels.

Examples within this sphere are such things as women in ground close combat roles. The exemption of women serving in ground close combat roles has recently been lifted in the U.K. armed forces. The decision to lift the exclusion was based on equality of opportunity and maximizing talent.

Flexible working hours is another example. Service personnel will be able to request fixed periods of part-time working or vary their deployability, if operational requirements allow it, to better fit their service career around their family life. This required a change to the law. The Armed Forces (Flexible Working) Act, which received royal assent in February 2018, went live on April 1 of this year after a written announcement in Parliament.

The final example in this area is wider eligibility for military-provided housing. On April 1 this year, eligibility for living in what we describe as SFA, service families accommodation, provided by the Ministry of Defence was widened to include all those in long-term relationships, as long as the relationship could be proved to have lasted for at least 12 months and that the individual had served for at least four years.

The second area of activity that we're looking at is mainstreaming the diversity and inclusion in our defence culture and behaviours, because we need to change the way that we are as well as what we do.

An example here is the fact that diversity and inclusion is a key priority for our ministers and senior leaders, who regularly support internal and external diversity and inclusion events such as International Women's Day and the Women in Defence UK Awards, to name but two. Senior leaders have personal diversity and inclusion action plans, including actions such as having reverse mentors to better understand the lived experience of personnel in defence.

Also as an example, embedding inclusive behaviours into basic training and leadership training is something we are doing. Also, military personnel have a mandatory diversity and inclusion objective in their annual report. That is something we have incorporated. Also, defence is looking at introducing more regular 360-degree feedback for all senior military leaders to help make the culture more inclusive.

The third area of priority of the four is developing our diversity and inclusion policies, where necessary, to include all staff. For example, our transgender guidance and policy for personnel and, importantly, also for their line managers and significant representation at gay pride marches and Stonewall events are all important.

Additionally, guidance for line managers on how to be inclusive of particular faiths and beliefs, particularly the requirements for prayer, uniform, diet, religious festivals and ceremonies from the main faiths represented in defence are all now encouraged.

Finally, the fourth area of priority is outreach into the community, to improve how we are perceived and widen the communities we recruit from. This includes the armed forces working toward a target of 10% of recruits to come from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds by 2020. This was announced by the previous prime minister. Additionally, the department has agreed to a 15% female recruitment target by 2020.

Work to meet the recruitment targets includes better understanding and greater engagement with the communities the armed forces want to recruit from, reviewing recruitment processes and better targeting marketing and communications.

● (1540)

I know that in a number of areas, we are certainly behind the Canadian Armed Forces in this respect. Your targets are more challenging than ours for minorities and for female representation. Therefore, we have been doing a lot of learning as well from Canada.

This concludes my comments. I have a copy of the strategy and other documents we've issued in the Ministry of Defence. Obviously, I'm very sad not to be accompanied by other members of the Five Eyes community this afternoon. Having said that, I'm very happy to take any questions you might have.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Brigadier.

I will just remind members of the 30-second warning to wind down. We did agree to an hour-long meeting. That gives us about 48 or 49 minutes before the end of this meeting. As well, I will remind members that there is a reception over at 330 Wellington. It's the NATO 70th anniversary reception. I'm sure that many members will want to attend before we head back for votes, so I'll be very disciplined on the time.

Having said that, I will yield the floor to MP Dzerowicz for the first question.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.):** Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

I want to give you a huge thanks, Brigadier Orr. Thank you for your great presentation, thank you for being here today, and thank you for sharing what you do in the U.K. We're here to learn as well.

We've been doing the study for a little while, and one question I've been asking is around how senior leaders are incented to increase diversity. I think in the second of your four priority areas, you talked about diversity in your annual appraisal meetings. At what level is that appraisal done? I'm glad to see they're actually part of the review, but what's the incentive? Is it one out of many targets? Is it one of the top four targets? Perhaps you could give me a sense of the level at which this is part of someone's appraisal and the level of importance within the appraisal system.

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Our annual appraisal system is the mechanism by which the entire career progression for individuals is based. It is a critical part of anybody's career in the armed forces if they wish for any particular career progression, whether that be another appointment or whether that be promotion and onward progression within the armed forces. I think the appraisal process is seen as absolutely critical to career advancement.

Within that, the objectives that are set out and agreed between the reporting officer and the individual at the beginning of the reporting period normally involve about eight objectives, and no more than eight objectives. Where the diversity and inclusion objective sits within those eight...because they're not done in priority order, necessarily. Those objectives are to be smart objectives in the fact that they are to meet all the criteria of smart objectives, that is, be deliverable, be measurable, and then all the other criteria.

I think from my perspective, and certainly it's the way I've addressed it and most of my contemporaries have addressed it, it has made a real difference in the way in which we report on people.

• (1545)

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** There's a second point that I've been wondering a little bit about.

I come from a background of male-dominated professions. I've worked in the business world and the political world. One thing we've seized upon within the business community is unconscious bias. To what extent are there those types of courses within the senior leadership or middle-range leadership within the U.K. defence ministry in terms of unconscious bias? Sometimes you don't really know you're biased until you have someone telling you you're biased or showing you how you can figure out if you are biased. Is any of that prevalent? Is that part of the discussion or of what you're trying to be alert to?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** It is very much forming part of the training that goes on as part of our diversity and inclusion training. Therefore, all our advisers will certainly have unconscious bias training. Our senior leaders will have all undergone some unconscious bias training as well. I think we will all accept as well that unconscious bias is one of those issues on which you have to keep being trained; otherwise, your unconscious bias will just come back again.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Just to be clear, is that annual training, or does it happen just once throughout your career?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** It is not mandated annual training, at the moment.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Okay.

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** I think it might be one of those areas we continue to investigate in terms of the frequency of that unconscious bias training and at what levels it needs to be done. It would be great if everybody could do it, I think we'll all acknowledge, but as always, there is a resource cost there that we would need to balance with the requirement.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Does the U.K. Ministry of Defence do exit interviews of women or minorities, anybody who leaves the military, for any period of time? Are there any exit interviews that are done?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Yes, there are some exit interviews, unquestionably because retention is a battle, I think, for all our armed forces, so understanding why people are leaving the service is really important.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Is it mandatory for all of it? Is it always done or sometimes?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** I don't think it's mandatory to answer. I think it's mandatory for the Ministry of Defence to ask the people. I do not think it's mandatory, necessarily, to fill in the questionnaire.

I would need to check the actual detail of that, but that's my understanding at the moment.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** You pointed out three objectives and then went further and talked about four priority areas. What would be the one thing that you would pull out of all of what you've presented today that you are particularly proud of, that you think is really

working well and is very effective and is really helping us in terms of increasing our D and I, diversity and inclusion?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** I think mainstreaming D and I within our operating model is the most significant step and the one that's had the greatest impact. That encompasses such issues as taking away the exemption on women serving in ground combat, opening up service accommodation to non-married personnel and having flexible working hours.

Those are the things through which we will really have the greatest impact on addressing diversity and inclusion issues.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Are you measuring the impacts?

In this particular area, I was curious about the flexibility for—I'm assuming it's not just women—everyone who's trying to be more active within their families, people who want to raise their families, or those who need that flexibility for anything.

How do you measure the effectiveness of that flexibility and whether or not it's actually working?

• (1550)

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Again, I don't know the answer directly. The take-up rates will obviously be the greatest indication as to whether or not that is a good policy. Again, I can ask further questions and get back to you.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Do you have an idea of the take-up rates at the moment?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** It's only just been introduced as of the first of April, so the take-up rate at the moment is probably rather small. We'll have to leave it for at least 12 months before we do an assessment.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Of course.

I think that's it.

Thank you so much.

**The Chair:** MP Gallant.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Would you please tell me what your recruiting activities have been over the last 10 years and how they're going to differ now that you are going to try to provide added outreach for diversity purposes?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** I will start off by saying that this is not my area of specialty. I don't have notes on that in particular. My last appointment within the army was as the brigadier for media and communications in the army headquarters, so I'm familiar with some of it.

I don't know if it made it into the media here, but there was a period about a year ago in which we worked with our recruit advertising company. There was a major emphasis on attracting personnel from minority groupings. It took head-on the issue of faith within the armed services and the idea that people could carry out their faith, whatever their faith, and that would be absolutely acceptable within the armed forces. It caused quite a lot of controversy in the U.K. amongst the wider population with regard to why we were targeting minorities in particular. It was something that we in the Ministry of Defence, and particularly within the army, because it was army advertising, were very comfortable with.

I think there are certain areas where we are trying to force the pace within the Ministry of Defence on issues that, as a nation, we might not be as comfortable with.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** How did you so-called “target” minorities? Did you have photographs or recruiting commercials that highlighted certain people? In what way did you depict people?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** There were images of people, of Sikhs in turbans. There were images of people with prayer mats—obviously these were Islamic people—and the language was very much about minority groups within the U.K. There was no hiding from what the issue was that they were addressing.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** The British army, though, had troops in India. I believe they were Sikhs and they wore their full regalia. If somebody were to transfer from one of those types of units from India to the U.K., would a person who was either transferring or embedding have been allowed to use the uniform they wore in India?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Our regulations for wearing turbans have been in existence for many years. There is no prohibition of people wearing turbans in the armed forces. The fact remains, however, that the numbers of Sikhs within our armed forces are very small.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** With respect to the types of activities, do you go into schools? Do you go into home shows or trade shows and have a booth where people can pick up information? What really do you do in terms of outreach?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** We do all of the above. Again, my information might be a little dated. We had a controversy in the United Kingdom a few years ago whereby some educational districts, educational authorities, did not like the armed forces coming into schools to recruit. They felt it was inappropriate that the armed forces should be given precedence in terms of career guidance to people. In particular, they stated that some of that recruitment was being done in more disadvantaged areas of the country where career opportunities for some of the students might not be as great as in other areas, and therefore, they might be more susceptible to the armed forces.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** You don't have career days where you have an exhibition of all different types of trades and the school kids are bused there to see what's available. Do you have cadets?

•(1555)

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** We do have cadets. Yes, we have ACF and CCF, which are two different types of cadet forces. They are very much there to encourage people to understand the reasons behind having an armed force and to give the cadets some of the benefits of

discipline, bearing and dress, but they're categorically not there as recruiting tools.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** I'm going to go more towards women now.

What is the process for someone who has had a sexual assault? What would be the reporting process and how would that be taken care of? Would it be through your military police, your chain of command and/or the civil courts?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** If it is a disciplinary case, then the military police will be involved automatically, unless it involves somebody in the military police. Then we would look at a mechanism for involving another police force to investigate that case.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** The military police investigate and if there are charges laid, does it go through a court martial process or a trial? What are the limits? What are the criteria to go through one versus another?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Whether it has the jurisdiction in a case will depend on who is involved at the time. If there is a civilian involved in the case, then it is up to the civilian system to decide whether it's going to be a civil disciplinary and follow-up or whether it is a military police lead.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** What is the retention rate for military personnel who have reported sexual assaults versus those who have never reported one?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** I would have to find that out. I'm afraid I don't have that information.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** All right.

Going back to recruiting, you had mentioned what happened in the past with targeting minorities. In encouraging more women to join the military, other than what has been done in terms of allowing them to be in combat roles and special forces—something Canada has done for ages—what sort of techniques are being used to highlight opportunities for women in your armed forces?

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Brigadier, I'm going to have to hold it there and yield the floor to our next questioner, MP Blaney.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Hello, and thank you so much for being here today. I appreciate your presentation.

Please correct me if I'm wrong, but I think you mentioned mentorship.

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Yes.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Okay, good. We heard from other witnesses that they believe mentorship is really important, but something that isn't actually done. It's talked about, but it's not actually practised within our military.

I'm wondering if you could tell us a little about what that program looks like. How are you engaging it to work with more diverse populations?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** I'm afraid that is a level of detail I don't have with me. I will have to find out.

I have been mentored in the past, but that has been more to do with how to act in boards and committees, and make progress on issues, as opposed to being specifically about diversity. I suspect it would be done by external consultants who are specialists in the area, who bring industry-type best practice and try to inculcate it within the armed forces.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Okay.

You also mentioned the importance of inclusion as well as diversity—not just diversity. Can you explain how you see those two things working together? If we focus only on diversity, what are we missing out on with the process of inclusion?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Certainly. I think it's best to emphasize within the strategy, where it says that diversity means the ways in which we differ, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, religion, the different groupings, life experiences and skills and the ways we do things. Diversity is everything that makes us slightly different. Inclusion consists of the actions of embracing these differences. Inclusion is about valuing and harnessing people's unique backgrounds, talents, perspectives and insights for the benefit of the individuals in the organization.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Okay, thank you.

It was mentioned earlier that we did have a witness who talked about the importance of exit interviews, and that they weren't being done well enough. You've talked about that as a part of the practice. Whether or not people choose to take that is up to them. I'm just wondering if the process includes, or will include, collecting data specifically around inclusion and diversity, and the challenges that might be heard in those exit interviews, and using that to review internal processes to ensure that embracing diversity and creating an inclusive environment is happening within the U.K. military.

• (1600)

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** I know the questions are asked, but again, it's the difficulty of getting people to answer those questions truthfully and honestly, at a time in their lives and their careers when there are probably quite a few other pressures on them, such as where they're going to live in the future and what job they're going to do. How much attention they give that exit questionnaire, I think, is questionable. Without making it compulsory.... Getting honesty in those responses is something we're trying to achieve.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Now that you've implemented this new strategy as of February, is that something you're looking at more, or are you just continuing the way it's always been done?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Trying to improve our evidence base is something we will be striving to do.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Okay.

We've also heard from witnesses that one of the concerns is the perspective of training. Often, when people go in to do diversity training, it's treated like a bit of an annoyance that you have to go through. The encouragement that we heard is that more leadership has to step in and say, "This is an important opportunity for us to learn and to become a more inclusive environment." You said that you're not mandated even annually to do the training. Is there any leadership coming forward from higher levels to really encourage and engage with people, and show the value in receiving that training?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Diversity and inclusion training is included within our moral values and standards training, which is mandated. It's the unconscious bias training that is not mandated at the moment.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Okay. Thank you for the clarification.

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** We do some diversity and inclusion training each year. I think that, again, under our culture and behaviours, getting the leadership involved in this is something that we've started at the top and is filtering down. I think we very much accept that this is not an area that we want advisers to be speaking to us about. If the leaders stand up there and speak about it, it carries that much more weight and power.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** I'm glad to hear that.

You spoke a little bit about housing and how you've stretched the definition of who can receive that. You've talked about the flexibility of work hours and deployment when possible. That's definitely come up recently.

I was in a small community called Port McNeill in my riding. A couple of navy ships came up and they did a great job of letting people come in and do tours. They took some of us out for a ride and talked about the importance of getting out to those small communities. There's a large indigenous population in that area, so they're looking at how they can engage them. I heard multiple people talking about it, especially the flexibility of work and hours. Are you going to measure the outcome of that, and are you going to be looking at how that especially opens the door to women?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Yes, we will be, unquestionably. It is being introduced. It is something that has been talked about for many years. It's been talked about in both of our armed forces, but I think we have now accepted that we just need to introduce it and then see how best to develop it as the take-up increases. Giving that opportunity is something that we've been trying to achieve for a number of years.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** One of the things that we've heard repeatedly is that, when complaints come forward about inappropriate behaviour, the process for completing that and leading to accountability is simply taking too long, which really creates an environment where people are not feeling safe to come forward with their accusations. I'm just wondering if you guys are doing any work on that process and making sure that information is dealt with more quickly.

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** I think we're in a very similar place to your armed forces. Like you, we now have a service complaints ombudsman. I hate it as the final recourse for complaints, but they tend to be complaints that have gone wrong. Something has definitely gone wrong by that stage, and obviously, it's a question of trying to address things before they get to that level. I think we are in a similar position as the Canadian Armed Forces. It remains a big challenge.

• (1605)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I'm not sure how good your French is, Brigadier, but I'm pretty certain your next question is coming in French, so if you'd like to put your earpiece on, I'll give you a second to do that.

I'm going to yield the floor to Mr. Robillard.

**Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.):** Have you got it?

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My thanks to Brigadier Orr for being here today.

One of the challenges with diversity in the British armed forces is ensuring that the different nations that make up the United Kingdom are represented. It is also a challenge for Canada, given the cultural diversity that exists in the provinces.

How is this issue being addressed by the British armed forces?

[English]

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** It is not something that is addressed directly. I've never heard it addressed directly since I've been in the armed forces, because the armed forces represent the United Kingdom, and we are content that the mix-up of the United Kingdom and the representation across the country does not need to be proportional. It needs to be reflective of the United Kingdom, not proportional to the countries within it.

Obviously, within that, we do have, particularly within the army, Scottish regiments, Welsh regiments and English regiments, because we recruit by region. Within that, some of our more challenging recruiting areas, surprisingly, are some of our historically successful recruiting areas. For example, the Scottish infantry battalions are well known, but for the last 10 or 15 years, they have really struggled to recruit into their ranks. We are desperately trying to understand why this is, but I think it's a reflection of where we are at the moment. In terms of getting proportionality of recruits between the countries that make up our union, it is not something that we concentrate on per se.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** Last year, General Vance acknowledged that it would be absurd to think that extremism and racism do not exist in the ranks of our armed forces. Hostile ideas towards minorities make it difficult to develop a culture of diversity and inclusion.

Can you tell us whether this is also a problem in the British armed forces? If so, how is it handled?

[English]

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** I would be lying if I told you it was not a problem. It is a problem. Our recruitment reflects our society, and there are parts of our society in the United Kingdom who are from the extremes of the political spectrum, whether that be far left or far right.

What we aim to do when we recruit people into the armed forces is inculcate as swiftly as possible the values and standards that we epitomize as an armed force. It is something that is spoken about from day one when they start training, but it is something that we continue to concentrate on throughout their career. It is mandated

annually at one of our mandated annual training events that we have a commanding officer-led values and training session for everybody in the armed forces.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** To what extent does your country use outside expertise to promote diversity within its armed forces?

• (1610)

[English]

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** I'm not altogether sure, but certainly in terms of recruitment, we have a lot of specialists who help both in how we target our recruiting and in the production of the recruiting material that goes out to help us achieve our recruiting targets. It's mainly done in the recruiting realm, but is increasingly done throughout the spectrum of the career in order to see how other diversity can be included throughout those career streams.

**The Chair:** You have a couple more minutes, if you'd like, or you could pass your time.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** How does your country monitor and evaluate how policies on diversity are implemented?

[English]

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** We obviously collect statistics as we go through. Depending on which diversification we're talking about will depend on the statistics, but the key ones that we've been collecting for a number of years include looking at our stats for female representation and for black, Asian and minority ethnics. As of October 2018, we had 10.5% females and 7.6% black, Asian and minority ethnics within the U.K. regular forces. Those numbers went up a little more for females, but went down a bit for minorities in the reserves. That was the representation within the armed forces.

For our recruitment, our figures for BAME, again from October last year...6.5% of the total intake were for minority ethnics, against a 10% target by 2020. So we're still, one could probably say, woefully short at the moment. Recruitment of female personnel was 12.4%, against a target of 15% by 2020. We still have quite a long way to go.

In terms of representation in the rank structure, we have just promoted our first female three star officer. I know you've had a three star officer for quite a while. That filters down as you go further down the rank structure, because I think one of the other demonstrable things you can do is to have senior female or ethnic minority people in high positions.

**The Chair:** We're going to five-minute periods now.

The first one will go to MP Spengemann.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you very much, Brigadier, for being with us.



I'll start with a philosophical question. It's been raised with other witnesses. There are two ways to look at the challenge in front of us. One is to look at it as the right to serve in the British or Canadian or whichever armed forces we're talking about. The other way to look at it is instrumentally in the sense that we're getting better outcomes if women and minorities and diverse recruits enter the armed forces.

Is there primacy between the two in the British discourse? Are they parallel conversations? Is that a distinction that should not be made? Should it be looked at as one issue? What's your view and what's the view of the organization on that distinction?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** The main challenge is to become more diverse and inclusive. That is based on the business benefits that doing that will bring. We also consider, within that, the moral case and the legal requirements. But really, the driver is the business benefits of having a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** If you were to poll the British public—I don't know if that's been done—the person on the street, how would she or he or they react to that same question? Does the public look at it differently?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** I suspect they would look at you quizzically. I don't know the answer to that question.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Okay, but needless to say, the right to serve would be an important element of the discourse going forward.

I want to focus on the business benefits as you describe them and look at international deployments. Within British international deployments, are the numbers different? In other words, do you select more carefully among the pool of diverse participants, or are they potentially even worse than the net numbers are?

• (1615)

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Sorry. Do you mean if there should be sensitivities in the areas we're deploying to, as to whether we should be deploying certain people?

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** There should be a deliberate choice to deploy folks who are diversely composed, let's say, because we're going into areas where culture and ethnicity and religion and language and all those things matter.

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Certainly culture and an understanding of the region in which you're deploying are among the key considerations for deploying anywhere. Therefore, we are strong advocates of the women in peace and security initiative that is going forward. Indeed, our secretary of state made a big announcement today about a new centre of excellence for human security, which will be really important, and on which we hope in the future that Canada might be willing to join with us in some way.

Again, it is a factor in deployment, but it must be balanced against the overall requirements of that operation as well.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Do you have evidence at this point, under the trajectory, of the business benefits being there, either anecdotally or statistically? In other words, can you tell stories about better outcomes when you deploy more diverse contingents or regiments?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Yes. I think our experience will be quite similar to that of the Canadian Armed Forces, but there were many instances in Afghanistan where the female engagement teams that

we deployed in a similar manner to those of the Canadian Armed Forces had real tactical success in the areas in which they were deployed in terms of engaging with the female population who previously we had really struggled to engage with in any way. That was an immediate military impact on operations.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Was that especially in the more complex, non-kinetic tasks of community relations and engagement?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Yes, definitely.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Is there a discrepancy across the branches of the British Armed Forces in terms of who does gender equality or diversity better? Is there a systematic advantage of some branches over others, or are they all more or less on par at the moment?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** I think within the army it's a bit difficult to judge at the moment, because the close ground combat roles have only just opened up to females, so I think making an assessment is difficult at the moment. We have to allow the passage of time to go on before an assessment is made.

I think if I were to compare the three services at the moment—and this is my intuition you're going to hear, I don't have statistics for this—probably the Royal Air Force is seen as the most advanced in terms of the diversity, in terms of the female-male mix.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Do I still have time, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** You have 20 seconds for a question and response, if you can.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** I will raise with you the prospect of maybe the Commonwealth being helpful in the question of gender diversity and equality, diversity and inclusion. Maybe there will be a round to circle back. I don't know.

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** We spent a long time trying to recruit Commonwealth—or we do recruit Commonwealth. The big question is whether they should be included in our statistics or not, because they can skew our statistics quite significantly, and really, what we want to do is to reflect U.K. social demographics as opposed to having them skewed by having lots of Commonwealth, many of whom are ethnic minorities but who don't necessarily help us to reflect U.K. society.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Thanks very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Next is MP O'Toole.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Brigadier. It's good to see you here.

To start off, in Canada we call military trades military occupations, MOCs. Are all military trades in the U.K. open to all genders? Are there any restrictions? Canada was last to remove gender restrictions on submarines, for example, in the 1990s. Are there any remaining?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** There are none remaining anymore.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** When was the last one removed?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** We're in the state of lifting it within the infantry at the moment, but the policies are in place to lift it all, so it is literally groundbreaking at the moment.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** Perhaps you were just a tad behind where we were when we—

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** I think unquestionably, yes.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** Okay, certainly.

You used the term “appropriately represent” for gender balance or increasing female representation in uniform in comparison to the wider society. Obviously, your numbers right now are low; ours are still low. What do you think is appropriate? Is it fifty-fifty? Is it just seeing an increase each year? How are you going to judge yourself against that measure?

• (1620)

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Our targets at the moment, as laid out by the previous prime minister, are not reflective of society but are a stepping stone on the way there. Getting 10% of recruits to come from the BAME backgrounds and 15% female by 2020 is still a struggle at the moment. We're taking it on a step-by-step basis, but eventually we want to represent society.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** You noted some particular challenges in Scotland in your remarks. Do you find that geographically within the United Kingdom there are some areas doing better than others and that you're facing geographic challenges?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** I know there have been long discussions between our recruiters and recruiters in the Canadian Armed Forces in our personnel areas to understand the dynamics of recruiting. I don't think either of us necessarily knows what the answer is at this stage. All we know is that we are really struggling to recruit within our armed forces.

From a U.K. perspective of our traditional white Anglo-Saxon young male, there aren't as many of them as there were, and we are a more diverse country; therefore, we have to open up more broadly and be inclusive if we are to achieve our recruiting numbers.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** Before I was elected, I sat on the board of governors of the Royal Military College. One of the challenges we identified was that there are higher recruitment numbers from military families. There's a tradition that I'm sure is the same in the U.K. where, if the father, mother or grandfather served, there are higher recruitment rates from those families, which tend to reinforce traditional recruitment groups.

Have you done any outreach within the veteran community trying to engage them to reach out and engage with new under-represented groups?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** I don't know the answer to that question, but yes, we have a very similar dynamic. My son is en route into

Sandhurst, I think, fairly soon, but no, I don't know if we have statistics or if we're trying to follow that up in any way.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** You also mentioned under-representation, and this is something we worked on when I was in a recruiting capacity, under-representation from Chinese Canadians and Sikh Canadians, for example, trying to get community leaders to become familiar with the college or with the Canadian Armed Forces.

We also had some institutional challenges, like you represented, left over almost from the regimental traditions. We had a Copper Sunday parade, where the cadets would split into the Catholic group and the Protestant group for church services.

Are you accommodating all faiths into traditions within the regimental structure? That obviously creates some friction because people like traditions staying the same way for the purpose of continuity, but it doesn't engage important groups of the country to feel welcome and included in these traditions. Have you done anything that we could learn from?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** I think this is an area where, again, we are very closely aligned. My answer to you is, yes, it is acceptable to be any faith within the armed forces now, and that's exactly what our policy states. The enacting of that in certain circumstances is trickier, particularly when you're dealing with small numbers of a minority faith. It's incumbent on both the individual and the organization he's with to find the solution that the individual is comfortable with and allows him to carry out his faith, but it's not always an easy route.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** Building on what—

**The Chair:** I'm going to have to leave it there and yield the floor to MP Gerretsen.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, sir, for being here today.

I'm going to follow up on the conversation you were having with Mr. O'Toole, in particular about how we're able to further diversify and normalize, or “familiarize” would be a better term, the operations of our military within our communities.

I apologize that I don't know the answer to this, but I'm curious to know for my own purpose. Could you tell me what the relationship is like in the U.K. between civilian and military personnel and what you think might contribute to that relationship of understanding, or if there are complexities around it, there not being a full understanding?

•(1625)

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** That's a very big question. Obviously, we reflect civil society. We recruit from the civil society. The diverse nature of our recruitment means that everybody has a slightly different story. Interestingly, we have a slight debate at the moment about where we should base our regionally recruited regiments.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Right.

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Should they be in the regions they're recruited from, so that they can easily integrate with the families they've come from?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** That's what I'm getting at. I'll let you finish that thought.

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Or actually, there are some people who are joining the military to get away from that community. Some people come from a background where they're exposed to extreme violence or from a drug environment and they feel that they want to extract themselves from that. They're saying, "Please, military, don't put me back into that region where I'll almost be obliged to get back into it."

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** At least in Canada, as we see migration towards urban areas, there are fewer and fewer people living in rural areas.

Where in the U.K. are the bases where you would interact with military personnel located? Are they closer to urban centres, or are they further out into rural areas that are separated from the urban centres?

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** They're mainly away from the key urban centres.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** I'm from the riding of Kingston. We're about an hour and 45 minutes from here. Mr. O'Toole referenced RMC, which is located in Kingston.

One of the things I've seen over the 40-plus years I've been living in the community is that as the community has grown, it really has grown around the base. As a result of that, we've been able to see our military personnel no longer living outside the city. They're right in the city now.

As a result of that, what we've seen is more personnel from within the military community become active in the civilian community.

We're seeing military personnel who are coaches of soccer teams that their kids are on, and they're getting involved in other activities in the community. That has really created an environment that allows for a greater understanding of the military and it's familiarizing people with what military personnel actually do, rather than what they might only be exposed to on TV and in dramas they see there.

I would assume that it's going to be anecdotal at best, but I wonder if you could comment as to whether you've seen similar experiences in the U.K. in terms of where the military personnel are geographically located.

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Unquestionably we've seen a very similar dynamic. We now have very few overseas bases. Our largest overseas base is about to be Cyprus, and that's only a few thousand service personnel. For the first time in a long time, the majority of the U.K. armed forces are U.K. based.

One of the dynamics we're looking at is the fluidity of postings, how frequently or not we need to move people around. Therefore, the integration of people within their communities and actually leaving them static in those areas and those locations for the majority of their careers is something that we're looking for.

Again, the provision of service housing doesn't need to be so much onus on the military, on the Ministry of Defence—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** I'm really glad you said that.

Just to confirm, you were saying that you're looking at how you can reduce the amount of moving around of the military community.

Okay.

**The Chair:** Brigadier, thank you very much for coming today and for contributing to this very important conversation.

**Brig Nicholas Orr:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** I want to remind members again of the NATO reception that's basically going to start right away, over at 330 Wellington, and then, of course, there's a vote. The bells will be at 5:15 p.m., and the vote at 5:45 p.m.

The meeting is adjourned.

---





Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

---

### SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

---

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

---

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <http://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

---

### PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

---

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

---

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.noscommunes.ca>