



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

## **Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

---

PACP • NUMBER 054 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

---

**EVIDENCE**

**Wednesday, May 3, 2017**

—  
**Chair**

**The Honourable Kevin Sorenson**



## Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Wednesday, May 3, 2017

•(1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC)):** Good afternoon, everyone. This is meeting number 54 of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Wednesday, May 3, 2017.

I'll remind the committee again that we are televised, so if those in the audience and the committee members wouldn't mind muting their BlackBerrys or telephone communication items, that would be greatly appreciated.

Today we are conducting a hearing on report 5, "Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention—National Defence", from the fall 2016 reports of the Auditor General of Canada. Appearing as witnesses today we have Mr. Michael Ferguson, the Auditor General of Canada, and Mr. Gordon Stock, principal. Welcome. Also, from the Department of National Defence, we have Mr. John Forster, the deputy minister. As well, he has brought other personnel to assist him.

I understand that each of our witnesses today has an opening statement. I invite the Auditor General to begin.

Madam Mendès, go ahead.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, if I may, before we proceed...and apologies to the witnesses.

[Translation]

I would like to mention a leak to the media. The CBC/Radio-Canada did a story about the auditor general's spring report.

I would simply ask you, Mr. Chair, if you could look into what happened and get back to us at the next meeting.

Thank you very much.

[English]

**The Chair:** All right. First of all, to the committee, I appreciate the fact that this was brought forward by our committee members to me, and it was checked out. Typically, when the Auditor General reports, he reports on May 16. We know that this is coming. Those reports are tabled in the House of Commons the very same day, but on occasion the Auditor General's office does special reports. The special report is somewhat different in its tabling process. That is, the special report is made public on the website and tabled at a later date. My understanding is that the report that was quoted from was indeed

one of these special reports. The report had already been on the website.

Our Auditor General is more capable than I to answer that question. Mr. Ferguson, go ahead.

**Mr. Michael Ferguson (Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada):** Just to be clear, I assume the reference is to the special examination of Defence Construction Canada.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Michael Ferguson:** Under the Financial Administration Act, we do special examinations of crown corporations, and we have to do a special examination of each crown corporation once every 10 years. The special examinations that we do are reports under the Financial Administration Act, and we are required to report to the board of directors of the crown corporation. Our process with those is not tabling them in the House of Commons. Our process is to provide those to the board of the crown corporation. The board then has a certain period of time to make it public. I've forgotten how long it is—30 days or 60 days, something like that.

The special examination was delivered to Defence Construction Canada in January, so they had a certain amount of time to make it public—actually, it was made public in January, so we would have delivered it to them before that.

We still table the special examinations with the House of Commons to make sure that you are aware of them. Those special examinations are different from our performance audits, because the mandate is under the Financial Administration Act and our requirement is to report them to the board of directors. But we still table them to make sure that you are aware of them and that you can hold hearings on them.

That report was legitimately made public back in January, according to the Financial Administration Act.

•(1535)

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès:** Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

**The Chair:** All right, thank you.

There is just one more point, and then I'll go to your presentation.

Go ahead, Mr. Christopherson, very quickly.

**Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Thanks, Chair.

I think the reason that it came to our attention the way it did is that the process has been in place for some time, but normally there is the media on it. The fact that there was certainly media before we saw it caught us all off guard.

You did mention towards the end, Mr. Ferguson, that it could be subject to a public hearing by us. You're very familiar now with our procedures, our routines, and how we conduct and go about choosing chapters, etc. It's very different, of course, because of the procedure that unfolds when you table your full report.

My question would be—and you don't have to answer it right now—are there any recommended changes that you would make to that process? In other words, do you see a deficiency in that process as opposed to what we normally do with your report? I have to tell you, they don't come to us in that same fashion because they're public first, so they're very different. I wonder if you think there's any need for us to look at trying to align them up a little more so that we don't have this uniqueness, or is that uniqueness justified and this is just fine the way it is, in your opinion?

**Mr. Michael Ferguson:** I guess it's how the process is defined under the legislation. It's really up to Parliament to decide if Parliament would rather have that done in a different way.

The idea of the special examinations is that, in those cases, we are going in, we're looking at the systems and practices of that crown corporation, and we're reporting to the board of that crown corporation whether there are any significant deficiencies in their systems and practices. The special examinations around crown corporations were designed as reporting to the board about their systems and practices, but putting a requirement on the board for them to make the report public.

The other thing that I should mention to you is that on May 16 we will be including three special examinations. For one of them, again the time period is such that the crown corporation will probably make it public just shortly before May 16, so there may be another one that you will hear about before the actual tabling on May 16.

We used to just provide a summary of the special examinations. Recently, we've gone to providing you with the full special examination to make sure that you're aware of all of the issues. I think the fact that recently we've started giving you that special examination as the complete report, and it looks like all of our other performance audits, is probably a little bit what's causing some of the confusion because this practice has been going on ever since special examinations were put into the Financial Administration Act, the practice of us preparing them, reporting them to the board of the crown corporation, and the board making them public.

What we did in the past was, we would just do a small chapter that said, by the way, over the past year we had issued special examinations on the following crown corporations, and give you just the summary of it, whereas over the last probably year or year and a half, we've started providing you with the full special examination, so they look like full chapters.

In terms of your question about should it change or not, I mean again, right now, it's a report that's done for the board and presented to the board. The idea of the board having to make it public within a certain period of time is so that it doesn't take a year to make it

public. I don't have any particular complaints about that. I think it's more whether, as parliamentarians, you're satisfied with that process.

● (1540)

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Very good. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for the clarity on that.

We will now go into our issue of the day, if you want to call it that.

First of all, I will welcome Mr. Ferguson's comments in regard to the question that we look at today on recruitment and retention.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michael Ferguson:** Mr. Chair, thank you for this opportunity to discuss our 2016 fall report on Canadian Armed Forces recruitment and retention. Joining me today is Gordon Stock, the principal responsible for the audit.

[*English*]

In our audit, we examined how National Defence had recruited, trained, and retained the regular force members it needed. Overall, we found that the regular forces had about 4,200 fewer fully trained members than they needed.

Although the regular force had determined the number of recruits it needed, its recruiting plans and targets were reduced to fit National Defence's capacity to process applications and train new members. National Defence met its overall reduced recruiting target in 2016; however, it accomplished this by exceeding enrolment targets for some occupations while leaving other occupations short-handed.

We also found that the Canadian Armed Forces had set 25% as their target for women in their ranks but that their recruiting efforts maintained the representation of women at only 14%. Furthermore, about half of the women in the regular force were concentrated in six occupations.

In a number of instances, we found that the Canadian Armed Forces' recruiting process did not fit the needs of applicants and caused delays. Examples included delays for medical screening and delays for assessing whether applicants' previous education could reduce their training requirements. In some cases, National Defence closed files and lost qualified candidates who were still interested in enrolling.

[*Translation*]

Retaining qualified and effective personnel reduces the demand for, and costs of, recruiting and training new members. In the 2015-16 fiscal year, almost one quarter of occupations had attrition rates higher than 10 per cent. National Defence had developed a retention strategy in 2009, but never fully implemented it. At the time of our audit, the Canadian Armed Forces planned to develop a revised retention strategy by June 2018.

In our 2002 and 2006 audits, we found similar problems. These included setting recruiting targets lower than the needs and having no comprehensive plan to attract more applicants, especially for chronically understaffed occupations. We believe that without significant changes to recruiting, the Canadian Armed Forces will not have the members it needs in the future.

We made seven recommendations in our audit report. National Defence has said that it agrees with each of the recommendations and is in the process of addressing some of them.

● (1545)

[English]

Mr. Chair, this concludes my opening remarks. We'd be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you to our Auditor General.

I'll now move to Mr. Forster, the deputy minister.

Welcome.

**Mr. John Forster (Deputy Minister, Department of National Defence):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, for having me back to speak to you and the members of the committee on the Auditor General's report number 5, pertaining to National Defence.

[Translation]

You will notice some new faces today.

I would like to introduce Lieutenant-General Lamarre, who has just assumed his duties as commander, military personnel command; Brigadier-General Steven Whelan, commander, military personnel generation; Colonel André Demers, commander, Canadian Forces recruiting group; and Susan Truscott, director general, military personnel and research analysis.

Lieutenant-General Lamarre is heading up the team that will be responsible for implementing all the recommendations in the report because we, the defence team, have taken them to heart.

We appreciate the auditor general's work in identifying the weaknesses in the Canadian Armed Forces' approach to recruitment and retention. We are committed to addressing his concerns.

[English]

Last week, we tabled with you our management action plan that addresses each of the recommendations. We are conducting an extensive review of our entire recruitment process to make it more timely and efficient, but we're not waiting for the review to be complete before we move forward. We've already used the Auditor General's recommendations to refocus our efforts and to improve the way we attract, select, and enrol new recruits and retain military personnel.

I can tell you personally that the management and care of our people in the armed forces is among the highest priorities of the minister, the chief of the defence staff, and myself. Key among these goals is increasing the representation of women to 25% of all Canadian Armed Forces members by 2026, at 1% per year.

Canada is a leader among NATO countries with respect to the number of women in our ranks and one of the first to allow women to serve in all occupations, but we need and want to do more. We're at 15.2% female representation now, not quite as low as the 14% quoted in the media in February but not as high as we need. Encouragingly, the number of women who enrolled in the military was up 38% this past fiscal year, and the number of women in the Canadian Armed Forces increased by 0.3%, a small change but the first positive growth in more than a decade.

We've convened three working groups that will propose, over the summer, a way to increase these numbers: first, with a strategic intake plan that sets realistic targets; second, with branding, marketing, and targeted advertising strategies; and third, with ways to address barriers to recruitment. In the meantime, to help close the gap between 15% and 25%, we're fast-tracking the applications of qualified women to our military colleges, expediting the intake process for women who meet the entry standards, and reaching out to women who started but did not complete the application process. We want to encourage them to reconsider joining.

Of the 1,046 female applicants we've been able to contact so far, we've reopened files for 457 of them, and 96 are being processed for enrolment. That's about 9%. It's a good start, but we need to encourage more women to apply in the first place.

In February and March, we ran advertising campaigns on Facebook and Linked In tailored to women in the military. The campaign highlighted the wide variety of interesting and exciting jobs in the armed forces and in civilian roles. It spoke to personal fulfillment, to the opportunity to help others, and to the ability to achieve work-life balance, acquire transferable skills, and receive paid education and training for salary.

More campaigns are planned for this fiscal year to attract women and men of all backgrounds.

● (1550)

Our goal continues to be to have indigenous peoples make up 3.5% of the armed forces, and for visible minorities to make up 11.8%. We've doubled the number of visible minorities in the forces over the last 10 years, and we want to double it again. As the minister and the chief of the defence staff have said, diversity is our strength.

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

We're not going to shy away from our task. We know we'll need to dedicate more financial and human resources to recruiting and training the required number of personnel for each occupation. We're putting in place measures to improve our five-year recruitment planning and to ensure that adjustments can be made as needed to recruiting requirements for specific occupations. We're going to continue to launch advertising and marketing campaigns that raise awareness of the more than 100 different jobs and career choices in the armed forces.

Attracting people's attention, sparking their interest, and finalizing their enrolment are three distinct tasks. We continue to improve and better target our advertising and marketing to get better at enrolment too.

The Auditor General's report attributes a notable loss of applicants to lengthy delays in the recruiting, and we agree. In December 2016, we launched a 10-month pilot to streamline the intake and speed up the enrolment of applicants into the reserve force, as well as for the Royal Canadian Navy, the Canadian Army, and the Royal Canadian Air Force. Our goal for the regular force is to enrol most of the new applicants within 60 to 90 days. For those who have complicated security or medical review demands, our goal is within 180 days.

Once in, we need to have these recruits begin their basic training almost immediately. We've hired 26 military instructors to ensure that they reach their operational functional point as soon as possible. We're implementing a new system to decrease wait times for military training by occupation. To retain these new members, we're creating a work environment that enables as much ease of movement as possible within the institution.

For the primary reserves, we aim to process people within a matter of days, not months, so that we can meet our target of 28,500 primary reservists by the end of the 2018-19. We're emphasizing to Canadians that the reserves are a meaningful way to serve their country, even as they go to school or work in another job. There's no commitment to move, no obligation to deploy, and no long-term contract, just a flexible schedule and the chance to train and serve close to home.

A career in the Canadian Armed Forces has its challenges, but as I am sure Lieutenant-General Lamarre will attest, it's also one of the most rewarding work and life experiences available.

In the two years I've had the privilege of being deputy minister of National Defence, I've had the honour of working with many women and men in the armed forces. Whether corporals, generals, members of the regular force or the reserves, the soldiers, sailors, and aviators

I've met are proud of the work they do and the uniform they wear. Following the guidance of the Auditor General, we need to get that message out.

Last year, the armed forces grew for the first time in five years. This year's results look even more promising. I'm proud to help lead a defence team that is committed to being more inclusive, more diverse, and more qualified than ever. I am confident that under leadership of the chief of defence staff, General Vance, and Lieutenant-General Lamarre, we will build the strength and diversity of the forces even further.

•(1555)

Thank you. My colleagues and I will welcome any questions you may have for us.

**The Chair:** Thank you, sir.

We'll now move into the first round of questions, which is a seven-minute round.

We'll begin with Ms. Mendès and Mr. Lefebvre.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès:** Thank you very much.

Thank you all for your presence here and for your statements.

There is the whole question of the documents that new recruits have to provide in the process of enrolment, and from what we read in the Auditor General's report, there is a very complicated process when things move from one office to the other. You're not digitizing documents to make them transferable from one office to another online. Are you addressing this issue right now? I think that's one of the things that discourages new recruits, the time it takes and having to provide original documents anew.

Is this something you are addressing right now?

**Lieutenant-General C.A. Lamarre (Commander, Military Personnel Command, Department of National Defence):** We're fortunate that we have the commander of the recruiting group with us, Colonel Demers, and I'll turn the floor over to him in a second as well.

One thing I can give by means of an introduction in response to that question is the fact that a number of initiatives have already been undertaken to simplify the recruiting overall. Those include making sure that recruiting can be done online and that the recruiting candidates can actually track their file online once it is opened. Sometimes we are held to having to have original documents so we can actually confirm that documents are accurate, but the intent each time is to make sure that we can speed up the process by which the applications are coming forward.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès:** When did this start?

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** This started a while ago. I'll ask the commander of recruitment to walk us through the documentation requirements and tell us how recently the process was put in place.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès:** Thank you.

**Col André Demers (Commander, Canadian Forces Recruiting Group, Department of National Defence):** Thank you for your question.

[*English*]

The recruiting process is a four-part process. First of all is attraction and then the actual processing that you are referring to, selection, and then the enrolment process.

With regard to the processing, five main events need to happen. As part of attraction, first the applicant needs to apply to us. Once we start that dialogue with the applicant, he needs to show us some documents to confirm his age, citizenship, schooling, and so on and so forth. That's usually a very fast process.

Then we need to do what we call a CFAT, the Canadian Forces aptitude test, which tests the cognitive ability of the applicant, which will give us an idea of the applicant's ability to succeed with the basic training. We also need to do a medical process, which, if the individual, the applicant, is good medically, goes rather quickly, and then we can carry on with the process. If there is any issue medically, then there is a back and forth between the medical chain and the applicant to see if we can proceed with the application or we need to close the file.

Once that is done, there is also a process whereby we need to ensure that the individual, the applicant, is reliable and then grant him reliability status to make sure that he has no criminal history and that his credit record is clean, and we check with his references to make sure that he is a worthy individual to serve in the Canadian Armed Forces.

•(1600)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès:** If I may, I was actually asking about the transfer of documents throughout this process. Until I can read the auditor general's report, there is no real digitization process, so the documents have to be submitted again each time. That is what I meant to say.

**Col André Demers:** I'm sorry; I misunderstood your question.

Right now, we have the Canadian Forces Recruitment Information Management System or CFRIMS.

[*English*]

CFRIMS 2 is the Canadian Forces recruiting information management system, and everything done in CFRIMS is done electronically.

[*Translation*]

At the same time, hard copies of the documents are also available to make sure we don't lose anything. Everything is available electronically, however, thanks to the CFRIMS. We continue to develop the program so that candidates will eventually be able to track the process online. They could then check the status of their file themselves.

We are using electronic records more and more. In the next phases of development of the CFRIMS, we hope to completely eliminate

paper copies and use electronic records only. The documents will also be filled out electronically. That is already in place.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès:** That is being developed?

**Col André Demers:** CRFIMS 2 is already in place. The documents are digitized and the data is entered into the system. The files are tracked electronically, but we still have a paper copy. Everything is done electronically.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès:** Thank you, that's all.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** You have about a minute and a half. Go ahead, Mr. Lefebvre.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.):** If you would be so kind, could you add that to the time of my turn? Thank you.

**The Chair:** On the next round?

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** Yes, on the next round.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you, Mr. Lefebvre.

Mr. Jeneroux, you have seven minutes.

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC):** Wonderful. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for being here today, and Mr. Forster, thank you for attending two days in a row.

Just quickly, I want to clarify something on page 5 of your comments, Mr. Forster. You mentioned that you want to meet the target of 28,500 primary reservists. Just for the record, can you clarify what you're at right now?

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** Could I have just one second to consult on the exact numbers we have?

I believe it's around 20,000, but I'll have to undertake to come back to give you an accurate picture of the exact numbers today.

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** Okay, perfect. We'll work with 20,000 for now.

Like any organization that has a high level of stress and public scrutiny, I'm curious about your comments on staff morale. Do you have any specific programs in place to help raise staff morale? What is the situation now, and what types of programs do you have?

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** Are you talking about staff morale in one specific organization, or in the Canadian Armed Forces as a whole?

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** You guys are here in front of me, so let's do the Canadian Armed Forces.

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** Okay.

I would say to you that the morale in the Canadian Armed Forces is actually quite good. I'm not sure if you're referring to a specific incident or...

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** Okay. Fair enough—

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** On programs to maintain, you're looking at how we're looking at quality of life, perhaps, and to assist those pieces...?

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** Yes. Let's say, again, it's a high stress job. I think you'd agree with me that there is a lot of public scrutiny involved as well, so what types of programs do you have available to individuals who would feel that morale is taking a bit of a hit?

I'll take your answer that it's good now, but are there certain programs in place?

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** Let me address that in two parts. First of all, I'll talk about the morale of the uniformed members of the Canadian Armed Forces, and then I'll talk about the morale of the families.

First, what really drives morale in the Canadian Armed Forces and keeps it high is having good missions, good training, and good leadership. I believe in all those areas we have that clearly identified for members of the Canadian Armed Forces. We now have members of the Canadian Armed Forces deployed on 19 missions around the world, including places such as Iraq and Kuwait. We are also participating on the African continent, in the Middle East, and in Europe. In each one of these missions, our people have worthwhile goals that keep them well employed and well occupied so that they can make a difference.

This has to do with the quality of the training we provide our men and women. It doesn't matter whether you're flying something or part of a crew that's flying something, whether you're on a ship or in land formations, or whether you're in any of the support occupations, we put a high premium on high-quality training so that our men and women feel prepared for the jobs they do. Where we see this being received, and received well, is in how they're appreciated by the coalitions to which we belong. All of the coalition members, whether they are NATO organizations or members of some other organization, are grateful to have Canadian men and women in uniform. That drives the morale wherever we go.

On top of that, there's the leadership. We put a high emphasis on development of our leaders, and that includes not only leaders in the officer corp but also our non-commissioned members, our men. At the corporal, master corporal, and sergeant-on-up levels, we spend a tremendous amount of time developing leadership skills. You take that combination, along with some good support programs, and the next thing you have is a very high level of morale for our men and women in uniform.

If I can switch over to the families for a second, they are also something of great importance. You can say it's something we've been putting a lot of emphasis on. We've put in programs to support the families, whether it's recreational programs on bases or the military family resource centres, there's a tremendous amount of energy spent on making sure we support families.

I can't say we're exactly where we want to be. As a matter of fact, the CDS, with the support of the DM, is looking to make sure that our morale and welfare systems are well in place to support the families. When we're moving families across Canada from posting to posting, we ensure that they're well supported in those moves. We

want to facilitate how those families are supported as they depart a location and how they get themselves into their new locations.

When you consider how we look after our members and how we look after our families, you see that we're putting forth a fair amount, actually a large amount, of effort towards making sure morale is good in the Canadian Forces.

• (1605)

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** That's great. Perfect.

I was going to go down another line of questioning, but since we're talking about families and mobility, I'll stay with that for a moment. I understand that it's often a big part of the work you do, that mobility piece, having to move across the country, uprooting families, causing families to restart their lives, often in different locations. I'm wondering if you know off the top of your head how many members choose to leave each year in order to avoid mobility obligations. Do you keep those statistics?

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** Susan, do we know if we have the specific statistics?

**Ms. Susan Truscott (Director General, Military Personnel Research and Analysis, Department of National Defence):** We don't have the specific reasons related to our exit release codes. Those would normally fall under voluntary releases. However, we do surveys. We do a "Your-Say" survey every six months to assess morale and well-being, and we do a family survey every two years to understand the complexities and challenges they're facing. We also have retention surveys, which are administered every two years, in addition to an exit survey. It is in the retention surveys, the exit surveys, and the family surveys that you see some of the indications of why individuals leave the Canadian Forces.

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** Do you do your best to limit some of these mobility obligations? Is that part of policy with the CAF?

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** We have tried to make sure we only order moves when they are required. We found out a long time ago that if you have geographic stability it helps the family overall. That includes making sure that salaries aren't interrupted and those types of things. There is an effort afoot to make sure that when you're moving people it's for good reasons such as career development and filling key positions to make sure we can achieve our operations.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Lamarre.

Now to Mr. Christopherson, please, for seven minutes.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you all.

Mr. Forster, thank you for returning, and thanks to our guests, also.



We are doing two defence chapters in just one week. Normally, I don't feel the need to do this, but it might just be a good time to insert the fact that the starting point for us is respect and appreciation for what the armed forces do. It's a difficult job, probably one of the most difficult in the entire nation, and there's a lot of respect for the work that you do. Our job is to work with you to make it even better for Canadians. We want to start by saying thank you for the service.

Having said that, after two years, Mr. Forster, I think you know that nothing launches me, anyway, and I think most of my colleagues, more than finding out that we're getting consistent audits over and over again that find exactly the same problems, and in many cases, many of the same promises to fix them, only to find out when there's another audit that the problems are still there.

I refer you to page one under Introduction, paragraph 5.5, where the Auditor General says, "The Office of the Auditor General of Canada conducted audits on the Canadian Armed Forces recruitment and retention in 2002 and 2006". Over the page, paragraph 5.6 says, "Previous findings indicated ongoing, systemic recruiting challenges for the Regular Force in its efforts to counter higher rates of attrition and fill certain chronically understaffed occupations."

In fact, on page 3, the Auditor General flat out says, "In our opinion, it is unlikely that it will be able to recruit, train, or retain sufficient personnel to meet its target of 68,000 members by the 2018-19 fiscal year".

Either the Auditor General is wrong, in which case I give you the floor to make that case, or you have work to do that you don't quite yet know how you're going to do, or you have an ace answer that's going to satisfy all these concerns. But I have to tell you, the answer better be pretty good because this is the third go-around on the same issue and, sir, you know that when things are brought to you and they are still not fixed after three times, you would be getting a little upset. I eagerly await your answer.

•(1610)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Forster.

**Mr. John Forster:** I think the audit reports do show some systemic problems in recruitment. It's a challenge. It has been a challenge and it continues to be a challenge. There are some events that took place between this audit and the last one. In particular, we went through two major deficit reduction exercises in the armed forces with an annual cut of about \$2 billion. A major part of that reduction response was cuts to recruitment in the armed forces. We closed, I think, 13 different recruitment offices, cut 12 recruitment offices, cut back on staff, and we paid a price for that. There's no question about that.

As our response to the Auditor General's findings show, we know we have to reinvest in those offices. We need about 40 new staff to process recruitment, and we're trying to find—not we're trying to—we will find the resources to do that. The chief has made.... There's no point in us having a target of 68,000 and continuing to be 4,000 people short.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Exactly.

**Mr. John Forster:** There are some reasons for that. One is our capacity to recruit. Some of it, too, is that, in some of the most

difficult occupations, you are competing for a very scarce resource, and I think in my remarks I talked about that—doctors, psychiatrists, and so on—and I think they can provide you some more detail on that.

Once we have them, too, then we need to retain them as much as possible by promising great careers, good training, and good support, which was the earlier question. We've laid out.... I think our action plan defined it. There's been some progress, but we know recruitment is an important part of what we need to do. Closing and cutting recruitment resources just makes the problem worse, not better.

I don't know, General, if you want to add anything.

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** Thank you, sir.

I can give you an example of concrete numbers. The 12 recruiting centres that were cut, which the deputy minister referred to, resulted in a loss of 180 positions. Of course, those 180 positions are for the types of people who would be involved in processing a specific file for the individuals who are recruiting, so you have a net loss in your capacity of throughput to make this happen.

However, as was alluded to in the opening comments, there's a recognition of that. There are already some steps that are being taken care of. There are some ways forward, if you will. By the middle of the month of June, we'll have 20 new file managers who are going to be working for Colonel Demers down in Borden. They're being hired specifically to look after the processing of files. To also increase the throughput, he will be receiving another 20 of those by the end of the fiscal year.

Within the military personnel command, we also have the responsibility for basic training. Down at our leadership recruit school in Saint-Jean, we are right now increasing their throughput capacity by the provision of 26 contracted instructors. They will be there specifically to take on the qualifications that we must give our incoming recruits, such as first aid and other types of skills like that, so that we can actually get moving forward on these pieces.

If I can add one other point...?

•(1615)

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Very quickly, please.

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** It's about the idea to also say where we're putting in incentives to bring in those hard-to-reach trades, including doctors, where we're looking to provide significant cash incentives when they're coming to join the Canadian Armed Forces.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you. Listen, I—

**The Chair:** You have 15 seconds.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Really? Every time I talk fast, though, the interpreters say they can't follow me. I'm stuck.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thanks very much.

Thank you, Chair. I'll catch it in the next round.

**The Chair:** All right.

We'll come back to Mr. Lefebvre, please.

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you again for being here, Mr. Forster.

As my colleague noted, it is very worrisome to see history repeating itself. Each time you appear before this committee, you say that things are going to change, that you will set things straight and that the situation will change.

The auditor general said it in his report and repeated it today in his presentation. In paragraph 7, he notes that the 2016 audit identified similar problems as those found in 2002 and 2006. He added: “These included setting recruiting targets lower than the needs and having no comprehensive plan to attract more applicants, especially for chronically understaffed occupations.” The next sentence is important: “We believe that without significant changes to recruiting, the Canadian Armed Forces will not have the members it needs in the future.”

What major changes will you be making or have you made? From what I can see, this is an ongoing process. You make changes, but not major changes, unless I am mistaken. Can you explain what the changes are please?

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** Okay.

I will talk about two aspects: recruitment and retention.

[English]

On recruiting initiatives that are significant, I'll start with the reserve force, first and foremost.

We used to have a fairly long process. That discouraged young Canadians who were trying to be part of the reserves. The chief of the defence staff was adamant that we would change that, that we would change it down so that you could do the recruitment and, instead of taking multiple months, you could break it down to a period of 30 days at the most. That's what is being done right now in a trial on the east coast and with some air reserve organizations. It's been trialed with some success. It means that on that aspect we're taking some risks, and there are aspects of looking at enhanced security clearance, but we're thinking that if we have a good, solid police check and a credit check, then we can continue to start training these young men and women so that we can actually get them in uniform and excited about what it is that they're going to do. That's one of the initiatives we're doing that is significantly changing things.

As well, the other one that we're looking to do is to significantly change how we're recruiting the regular force members, by going with an electronic format but also by changing how it is that we attract them, with a much higher reliance, if you will, on social media. With the millennials we have, it's no longer one of these large ad campaigns that you're going to see in newspapers, because most of them don't read them. However, the reach-out that is occurring on a multitude of platforms for social media is significantly different. On this particular one, we also need to move ahead faster, so that we can actually reduce the lag time for them to get interested in the Canadian Armed Forces. That's what we're doing in recruitment.

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

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

• (1620)

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** Thank you.

What you are describing will happen, I believe. We hope to see tangible results.

In addition, you said that your numbers are lower because 12 recruitment centres have been closed. I am happy to hear about the major changes you will be making.

Having a plan and ideas is all well and good, but do you have the necessary tools to meet those objectives?

[English]

**Mr. John Forster:** I think as I indicated before, to meet our deficit targets, we closed recruitment centres. That was a bad idea, because you cut off a lot of the capacity you need to bring people in.

We're rebuilding that capacity, hiring more staff, as the general has mentioned. I think that's going to be critical. As he mentioned, our ad campaigns are getting much more targeted and focused on trades, on women, on visible minorities. It's not a generic one-size-fits-all, but getting much more focused on who we're trying to reach and who we're trying to excite about a career.

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** I asked whether you have the necessary resources to meet your objectives.

[English]

**Mr. John Forster:** Yes, we have the resources necessary, and we now have new leadership to this file. We have a good game plan to do that, with a lot of work ahead of us.

However, I don't believe it's a question of resources. We have technology. We have resources. We have tools. We have to get on with it.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** It's a question of what, then?

[*Translation*]

You have to move forward with your plan. As I said, the 2002, 2006 and 2016 reports were fairly similar. I don't think you will be offended then if we are a bit sceptical about you meeting your objectives. We want to see you succeed, of course, but this is not the first time we have seen this problem. We certainly hope it will be the last time.

You made an interesting point about reservists. We conducted a study in that regard recently. I am very pleased to see that there is greater cooperation between recruitment for the reserves and recruitment for the Canadian Armed Forces.

Can you tell us more about the importance of reservists to the Canadian Armed Forces?

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** It is very clear. Let me give you an example of a situation in the fairly recent past.

During the war in Afghanistan, each tactical group that we sent there had about 1,000 members, 20% to 35% of whom were reservists. They were part of the tactical groups and helped increase strength.

[*English*]

With this large group of reservists who were trained up and came to join the battle group, you cannot tell the difference between the two of them, but those numbers were essential for us to be able to maintain the mission we have.

There is no doubt that our reservists are essential for the kind of work we do. Of course, there's always the intent to make sure they have really good hands-on roles that are effective and essential for when we're doing deployed operations, or even domestic operations in Canada.

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

Very quickly, Mr. Forster... We've already given him his extra time.

**Mr. John Forster:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to add one point.

In some of the occupations where we're struggling to recruit, there's a lot of that in Canada. If you live in rural ridings, you know how hard it is to get doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, dental technicians. Our forces face the same challenge. We're competing with the private sector for pilots, competing with hospitals for great doctors, so we face some of the same recruitment challenges that people in Canada face. We have a very different kind of unique—many find it fantastically exciting and interesting—career opportunity, but it is not for everyone.

Those are some of the other challenges we face as well when we try to recruit people.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Forster.

We'll now move to Mr. McColeman, please, for five minutes.

We're in the second round.

**Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Forster, can I refer you to the Auditor General's report, page 1?

There has been talk here today, and your response has been, "We cut 20 offices", or whatever the number was. The 2002 report and the 2006 report of the Auditor General identify that there were systemic problems long before deficit reduction and closing new offices.

Can you explain why those systemic problems existed in those two previous reports? You seem to be hanging your hat on one statistic, which was cutting offices, when the problem existed in those earlier audits.

• (1625)

**Mr. John Forster:** I don't mean to imply that the problems we have in recruiting are solely due to the cuts that were made. As the Auditor General's report shows, it has always been a challenging area. The selection of recruiting offices that we offered up to cut during deficit reduction, I think, just exacerbated the problem. I did not intend to imply that it was the sole causal factor for that.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** It's been bandied around the table here as though it was, so I point that out for the record.

**Mr. John Forster:** That would be my error. If I conveyed that, that was not my intent.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** Secondly, how do deployment in the field—in theatres such as Afghanistan—and then withdrawal from deployment affect recruitment and retention, in terms of the numbers? We're using a pretty generic number, from what I read, that we need this many. Do you take into account any of the differing conditions, especially when we deploy people to theatre?

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** Without having the exact numbers in front of me, I can tell you this. Being involved in an operation tends to draw recruiting and helps it along. Young men and women are interested by what is going on. For a lot of them, it strikes at that sense of not only adventure but a desire to serve Canada. We have to remember what led us into the war in Afghanistan. Our neighbours had been attacked, and 24 Canadians were killed in those towers. There was a surge of patriotism that was felt throughout the nation, I believe. That helped us at the recruiting centres clear across Canada.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** So—

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** Sorry, if I can add a bit to that, we reached a point where we had to increase the recruiting that we did, to be able to sustain the number of deployments that we had. During the period from 2006 to 2008, or thereabouts, we increased our yearly intake to make sure we had sufficient soldiers, airmen, airwomen, and sailors who could go on these missions. We were successful in doing that.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** That's wonderful news in the sense that it isn't just a static number. It can depend on the situation. In the discussion here, we're using pretty static numbers, when you're saying they really aren't that static.

If I could ask for your confirmation, the highest percentage of people joining the forces would be when we deployed to Afghanistan. Is that what you're saying?

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** No, what I'm saying to you is that any time there's a major conflict, you tend to have recruiting centres that are popular.

We just recently celebrated the 100th anniversary of Vimy. I can tell you that sounded the clarion call and people responded. The same thing occurred in the Second World War, and the same thing occurred during the Afghanistan war, to a lesser level because it was not as large a conflict. Nonetheless, we saw the benefits of that in terms of sheer recruitment.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** Basic logic would then say that if we're no longer in Afghanistan, because we've withdrawn, the needs become somewhat less.

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** No. We need to be clear about that. The need for the number of recruits we have is not based on the conflicts in which we are involved.

Right now we're involved in 19 different missions around the world. We are filling those mandates and those tasks given to us based on what the government has directed us to do. The numbers that we have in our establishment—trained, resourced, and everything like that—are based on what the government asks us to do.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** When we take on more responsibility, we have to bump those numbers.

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** It depends on how much responsibility. It's the definition that—

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** Let's say going to Afghanistan.

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** If I may, I'll just talk about the responsibility for the tasks we have. They're very clear in the existing defence strategy about what it is that we are expected to do. Those numbers are given to us, and those are the number of people that we have to recruit, train, prepare, and have ready to go overseas. That's really what drives it.

• (1630)

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

We'll go to Ms. Shanahan now, for five minutes.

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair, and thank you very much, again, to the witnesses for being here today.

I want to explore those numbers a little more because I'm interested in comparing.... I guess I would talk about a funnel. For the recruitment process, how many people come in, how are they onboarded, who drops out? I'm thinking of other forces. It could be allies or it could be the RCMP.

I'd like to get back to that, but before I do, I just want to say that I had the honour and the privilege of being a civilian instructor at Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu during 2006-07. As you can imagine, I was not out in the field helping our soldiers. I was a financial instructor. I was thoroughly impressed by the program that was in place at that time to help recruits and officers with the financial pressures of being a soldier. I'm sure we could go into more detail about what those are. It was, to my mind, a state-of-the-art financial education, although I

did find that there was a problem and I tried to address it with my superiors at the time. This would have been in the SISIP program. I have no idea what they're doing now. I must have taught over 4,000 recruits in a six-month period. They were coming in one door and.... I have to say, the saddest thing was when those who didn't make it had to go out the back door with their kit bags and take a taxi back to Montreal. That was sad.

I did not get a chance, as a financial instructor—and I was working with some of the support personnel and so on—to do financial counselling, which was a big pressure. It's under-reported, and I'm sure it's still a major issue today. Someone mentioned earlier the clean credit record. I don't have to tell you there's been a generational change between when we were 18 and couldn't even get a credit card, and an 18-year-old today who has 14 of them. I'm just pointing that out. It was something I tried to address. I did actually—even after I left to go and teach at McGill University in financial education—take it up with one of your ombudsman offices and so on, so I think some work was done there.

However, that was definitely a pressure that the individuals were reporting to me and we did not have a way.... There's a way you can get financial counselling once you're fully onboarded, but as a recruit, certainly the problem of delays would exacerbate that.

I want to get back to that original question about the numbers coming in. What does that funnel look like? What's the drop-off rate? Certainly the shorter time frame would go a long way in solving some of the financial problems that I witnessed.

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** First of all, thanks for your observations about the financial counselling and the financial education. It is something we recognize. As part of our support program, there was an earlier question about how we supported the SISIP program, and the benefits that come from that include financial counselling. One of the things that we do is that we offer it up to have men and women provide that kind of advice to young people so that they can look after their financial well-being as well.

I don't know the answer as to how soon that starts. I know that all of our recruits are pretty busy, and the recruit training courses are not that long in duration. Therefore, we're hoping they're not showing up with that much of a financial problem for the first 10 weeks of their career. I know that they have access to these things.

Second, for the actual numbers of the recruits who we bring in on a yearly basis and who we manage to train through, we're looking at 4,500 every single year. We have a plan to grow that because, of course, we're short on what it is. In the course of the next two years, we want to raise that towards 5,000 and then continue to meet the targets that we have. Of course, that means that includes a full cycle of attraction of how you bring them in, how you do the basic training, if you will, and then how you coordinate with the environmental chiefs and their organizations. If you're going to be an infantryman, you leave the organization that these gentlemen represent and you go off to be trained at battle schools, if you will, that belong to the army. It's the same thing on the air and naval sides.

We want to make sure that we have good coordination with that so we can simplify that throughput.

I'll stop right now and ask if André has any other points he wants to add about the recruiting numbers.

• (1635)

**The Chair:** Please respond fairly quickly because our time is up. I'll give more time.

**Col André Demers:** Roughly, we get 44,000 people who apply to become members of the armed forces. Last year, we recruited 4,542. We neck down from those 44,000 to that number of qualified, talented, motivated applicants to get in the Canadian Armed Forces. Why do they drop off? There are various reasons. It's very hard to collect data, because a lot of the time the applicant loses interest or stops his application file and we don't know why. The medical process is between the applicant and the medical chain. Hard data on how the funnel necks down is very hard to get.

**The Chair:** All right, Mr. Jeneroux, we're back to you. You have five minutes.

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll go back to some of the earlier questions about recruitment and retention. You mentioned in your opening comments that you compete with employers across the country, largely for doctors, engineers, and social workers. You also mentioned that now you're moving away from recruitment techniques such as advertising in newspapers and more toward social media. However, you're also reopening the recruitment centres.

Can you help me connect some of the dots here in my mind? Are you looking at different demographics in opening the recruitment centres and in social media? Then, when it comes to the doctors, engineers, and social workers.... Some connection among all of these would be helpful.

**The Chair:** Mr. Lamarre, go ahead.

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** I just want to make a clarification. We are not reopening the 12 recruiting centres that were shut. What we're looking at with the injection of personnel is to make sure that the capacity that was lost, along with the personnel who were manning it, is there to help facilitate the processing of files for recruiting. That's the first thing.

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** There is a recruitment centre in Edmonton, my hometown, inside Canada Place. Is that no longer open, then?

**Col André Demers:** It's still open.

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** Some are open and some are not.

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** That's right. Twelve were reduced in 2012-13. That resulted in some loss of personnel who had been manning them. What we're doing right now is re-equipping the recruiting group with those personnel to be able to process files. There has also been a shift in how files are processed. Earlier, a question was asked about a guy or a gal presenting themselves to do the recruiting. Now we encourage online applications, and most of our recruiting hits come from there. That is how they are coming in to be seen. I think that's important.

If I could also quickly talk about.... You mentioned going and getting people specifically. We have moved away from large newspaper advertising campaigns because the research shows that where you get the most bang for your buck is through social media. But it's not unique. At the same time, we are doing other campaign efforts to make sure that we attract very specific groups.

We have groups that are working towards their initiatives, working to attract indigenous candidates to come work with us. Some of these programs, like Bold Eagle and Raven, are experiential. You bring them in for a period of time, expose them to what the military does, and pay them while they're doing training like any other recruit, and they are given the opportunity to participate in that. It's experiential.

We'll do the same thing with the women in force programs that are going to take place both in Borden and in Saint-Jean—two pilot projects, one in an August time frame and the other one in the fall—where we're going to bring in women to have a chance to see what it's like so they experience this as well.

Finally, there is a tremendous amount of outreach that goes on within specialized environments. For example, our surgeon general has a four-man recruiting team that looks specifically to recruit medical personnel, reaching out to medical faculties across Canada to let people know what they have the opportunity to do by joining the Canadian Forces as medical people.

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** That's the students' end of that. My wife is a doctor, so I'm a little curious about this. Do you also do it through existing programs, say a residency program, for doctors with 10 to 15 years of service?

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** There is that opportunity. If somebody wants to join us right now, there is a bonus for them to join us a general duty medical officer. After that, what we tend to do with these individuals is to give them a specialty in family medicine, which is a good base to prepare them to serve. At the same time, if you have bone surgeons or anybody like that who would like to join us, we're happy to take them.

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** My wife is a general surgeon, so I'll pass that along to her.

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** Okay.

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** I want to talk specifically about pilots. We talked about pilots a bit last time you were here, Mr. Forster, and about the types of fighter jets that were being procured—or not procured, depending on your opinion around the table. Does a long-term commitment to a specific type of plane impact the recruitment process, positively or negatively? For example, a fighter pilot would know how to fly one type of plane but may not be specialized in another type of plane. Does that factor into recruitment? Have we seen some uncertainty in that over the last few months perhaps?

• (1640)

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** We have not seen uncertainty, but you're right that different planes require different qualifications. We see that some of our pilots who travel through their careers will fly different types of platforms. At that time we have to provide training for that specifically.

As far as recruiting pilots is concerned, because that's the area of specialty that we're in, we attract and we recruit them. The level of training that we provide is basic training. The training that must be provided to them for specific platforms is provided by the air force, so that's an area that's more within the wheelhouse of the commander of the air force.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lamarre.

We'll now move to Mr. Arya, please, for five minutes.

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Ferguson, the Employment Equity Act says that “designated groups” include women, indigenous peoples, visible minorities, etc. In the previous audit's findings, you mentioned that “there was no comprehensive plan to attract more applicants, particularly women, Aboriginal peoples, and visible minorities”.

In this current audit, did you examine the representation of designated groups other than women?

**Mr. Gordon Stock (Principal, Office of the Auditor General of Canada):** We did look at it from the perspective of updating our evidence from the 2002 and 2006 audits. We found that after those audits, there were programs put in place to increase the representation of aboriginal peoples to try to increase their representation. Those programs were quite successful, so at this point we have not continued to discuss those. I think it is possible to actually increase the representation of these groups if the programs are targeted specifically to those groups.

**Mr. Chandra Arya:** In your view, there is adequate representation of aboriginal peoples and visible minorities in the Canadian Armed Forces.

**Mr. Gordon Stock:** I think that is an area that continues to be a bit of a struggle, trying to attract those people to the armed forces. I don't think it's an insurmountable problem as long as the programs are designed specifically for those groups.

**Mr. Chandra Arya:** My point is that you looked specifically into the representation of women, which is important. We all want that equity, and we need more women in the Canadian Armed Forces. There's no question about that. At the same time, the Employment Equity Act also states that we have to look at the other designated groups. Was it looked at? What's the current state of representation there?

**Mr. Michael Ferguson:** Fundamentally, we ended up focusing on the recruitment of women because between 2002, 2006, and 2016 we didn't see any improvement. We saw that there were some programs in place for the other groups, and there seemed to be some progress. Again, it's one of those scoping decisions when we are involved in an audit.

**Mr. Chandra Arya:** Did you look at how many of the women were indigenous or visible minority?

**Mr. Gordon Stock:** No, we did not.

**Mr. Chandra Arya:** Okay.

Mr. Forster, I'm glad you noted the statement by the minister and the chief of staff that diversity is strength. We in the government are now asking that major private corporations state their diversity policy. The bill is currently going through the process. According to the bill, all major corporations have to state what their diversity policy is. The government did not define diversity there, but at the committee stage, at my insistence and the insistence of my colleagues, we have included it that the diversity policy cover the designated groups under the Employment Equity Act.

I'm happy to note that your goal is to have indigenous people at 3.5% and visible minorities at 11.8%. That's good, but what is the current status now?

• (1645)

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** I can give you the actual numbers of what we have right now. For women it's 15%, for the indigenous population it's 2.5%, and for visible minorities it's 6.3%. Those are the numbers of what we're tracking.

**Mr. Chandra Arya:** It would be almost double, then, to go from 6.3% to 11.8%. There's a big gap there.

I see that you've launched a campaign on Facebook and Linked In. Have you targeted the ethnic media too? If you want to attract ethnic minorities, it's required that they be reached out to.

**Mr. John Forster:** Yes, we are doing that. The minister has driven us very hard to do that. He's been one of the strong advocates for our need to get very focused and targeted in our recruitment if we're going to be successful. In those communities we have to find leaders and spokespersons and champions.

**Mr. Chandra Arya:** My last question is on the bilingual requirement. In many ethnic communities English and French are the third and fourth languages.

**Mr. John Forster:** Yes.

**Mr. Chandra Arya:** There's the perception and an assumption that when joining any government service, including the Canadian Armed Forces, bilingualism is a must. Is that a requirement?

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** No, sir, you don't need to be bilingual. We want you to be able to operate in one of the two official languages and of course we provide training in the other official language as well.

We do that based on where you are in your career path, but also, for example, a young francophone soldier getting posted to Edmonton will have access to language training there so that he or she can operate properly in that environment.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Arya and Mr. Lamarre.

We'll now move to Mr. Christopherson, please.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you very much, Chair.

We were mentioning pilots. Apropos to that, and I say so up front just to get it off my chest, I find it so crazy that pilots these days are being paid so little. Sully, "The Miracle on the Hudson", had to have a part-time job in order to pay the bills. This is crazy. Anyway, I just wanted to say that.

The other thing I wanted to mention, since we're talking about wages and stuff, when we talk about pilots, again, the number of veterans and even active members who find it necessary to go to food banks continues to be an issue that jars a lot of Canadians. But that's not our focus today and so I want to continue.

Here's where I want to pick up. I would ask colleagues to chime in if you wish, because I'm going into an area that is not clear—and you'll get it in a second.

The auditor's report, on page 11, in paragraph 5.55 says, "Since 2008, the recruiting group has been reduced by about 180 positions, and has closed 13 recruiting locations," as has been said, "as a result of budget cuts." Even the Auditor General is acknowledging that there were budget cuts that impacted that. Then, under the response of National Defence on page 9, where the recommendation is given about training and training capacity and recruiting, it says, "Agreed. Several years of reductions to recruiting and training capacity as well as shrinking advertising and marketing budgets contributed to the current levels of institutional capacity." In a direct answer to a direct question, deputy, you said it was a "bad idea".

Here's where that takes us. I even welcome your feedback on this because this is our trying to perfect what we do.

Normally we don't get into the politics of whether it was a good idea or a bad idea. We go by what decision was made by the government or the minister. That was the direction. You were given the money. The Auditor General comes in after the fact to see whether you followed the mandate you were given and spent the money you were authorized to spend. Did you do it effectively? That's the accounting process. We try to stay away from the politics. In fact, we work assiduously to stay away from that in this Parliament. In fact, there have been a few since we've felt the need to bring in a minister or a former.

My friend Mr. McColeman has said when you answered with "bad idea", he immediately...and that gets us into the partisan stuff a bit because he was part of that government, so "Wait a minute, what are these other problems that were showing up in the 2002 and 2006 audits that Christopherson was bouncing off the walls about? How could it be just because of the cuts?"

Here's the thing. If the cuts did directly affect your ability to carry out your mandate, we need to know that and factor that in because that's not your fault. You're left with the business of being loyal to the minister and government of the day and to not throw them under

the bus. If we did allow you to do that willy-nilly, every audit report would say, especially if there had been a change of government, that it was the government that cut the funding or didn't let you do this, didn't let you do that, and it was the political side. You were great. They just didn't live up to their part of the thing.

This is where we are right now. It's difficult for us to discern how much of this was your managing as best you could with limited resources or money you thought you had and then it was taken away, versus the two earlier audits and Mr. McColeman's pointing out that there were systemic problems all along.

I think when we're in camera we need to maybe talk about how we pursue this sort of thing. I don't have a question per se in this. I'm pointing out that we don't normally get to where it's just black and white, but here we are. Even the report is saying that the cuts had hurt.

I'm going to move on to another question. I'll afford you a chance, deputy, if you wish to comment on this, or you can just take a pass and I'll move on. Being wise, you'll take the time.

Yes, go ahead.

• (1650)

**Mr. John Forster:** I have a short response, just to clarify my remarks.

I don't have a problem with government saying that we need to balance a budget and that all government departments need to tighten their belts.

I wasn't in defence at the time we made the choices of what to cut. I am just commenting on the fact that, at the time, they—probably with the best of intentions—felt they could cut this area and still manage to recruit. What the evidence has shown is that we've cut the capacity to process people. Processing times got longer, and our ability to build the force took longer. In hindsight, that probably wasn't one of our better choices of which area to cut.

I have no problems with government telling us that we all need to cut back to manage a budget, and so on.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Somebody had to be accountable. The totality of it is that the system isn't working the way it should be and Canadians don't have the defence they should have.

**Mr. John Forster:** My challenge right now is to go.... I need to restore some of the capacity in the recruiting group to meet the recruiting levels we need to get in order to rebuild the force to hit the 68,000 on the regulars and the 28,500 on the reserves.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Forster.

**Mr. John Forster:** My job, being in charge of the resources, is to find the resources to allow them to do that.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** That's why they pay you the big bucks.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Forster.

We'll now go back to Mr. McColeman, please.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** Thank you, Mr. Christopherson, for a little bit of context. You're absolutely right; this is where we are.

Since we're doing some introspection here, I had my own company for 26 years, a small business. There were times when there were great efficiencies that I could achieve in my operations by reducing my costs, so I appreciate, Mr. Forster, your saying that and putting it in a better context.

I think this goes right to the nub of what this committee is all about. What we want are the appropriate resources in place at the most efficient cost possible to represent the people who elected us to this position to sit here and scrutinize, just as the Auditor General's role is to do that as the lead-in for us to be able to interpret the data he's giving us.

I don't know exactly where I'm heading here on a question, but the reality is that this is what the objective should be here. Take the politics out of it, if we can. It's not always possible to do that, unfortunately, but when it starts to get tainted with, "This year we didn't have a problem" and "That year we did because of these things", and we start to get that mixed into what the discussion has turned out to be today.... It is, I think, concerning to all committee members that the comment was made that it was a bad decision.

It may not have been that bad of a decision, sir, at the time. It may have been the logical thing to do. You haven't reopened those offices, right? The resources needed to be replenished in a different way in order to be more cost effective. I will just say that.

I'm really not leading to a question, just giving context or adding a bit more from my perspective on where I was headed. There are appropriate times, as you have said, to make cuts for more efficiency, and there are times to replenish and to build back up. Any comments you might have in order to add a little more to it, Mr. Forster, I would appreciate.

• (1655)

**Mr. John Forster:** I totally agree with you.

We made a decision to close some offices. That's going to save us some money on bricks and mortar. As you've rightly pointed out, we're not about to reopen those offices. If we thought that was a wrong decision, we would be reopening those offices. What we're seeing now is that there are better technologies and ways to recruit people—online, more targeted—where we would be better off spending our money. What I was more referring to was the capacity of the people we lost to process applications and so on when we did those reductions.

I would agree with you. I think there were elements of it. Instead of putting money into bricks and mortar, rent, heat, lights, yada yada, we can focus it on the people we need to process it and shorten our processing times. As I said earlier, clearly there are systemic issues that have been there for a while that are part of it. This was one part of it in terms of reducing people in the recruiting group who can deal with people, process applications, and get them in the door.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** For the record, how many recruiting centres do we have in the country, bricks and mortar recruiting centres?

**Col André Demers:** We have six recruiting centres, which are the headquarters of 24 detachments, plus two detachments that are open on a part-time basis with staff from those 24 detachments.

Overall, we have 24 plus two detachments and six headquarters, which are recruiting centres sitting above them. My headquarters in Borden does national issues dealing with recruiting. That's the footprint of the recruiting group.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. McColeman.

We'll now move to Mr. Chen.

**Mr. Shaun Chen (Scarborough North, Lib.):** Thank you very much.

Let me start by saying that I'm very proud of the incredible work that our brave men and women do in the Canadian Armed Forces. I'm so pleased that we're all here today to talk about how we can build a force that is more inclusive, that is the best qualified to carry out the work.

I want to start off with a little pet peeve. I did hear one of the witnesses earlier, in referring to new applicants, talk about "his" application. I think it's very important for you, as leaders of the department, especially in the context of talking about achieving gender equality, to avoid pronouns that create the atmosphere of it being a male-dominated force. As much as it currently is, we want to move away from that.

With that said, Mr. Forster, you mentioned that the Canadian Armed Forces grew last year. Can you be specific? Were you speaking of the 2016-17 financial year? If you were, what are the total numbers for that year?

**Mr. John Forster:** For last fiscal year, I'll ask my colleagues what the growth was.

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** I apologize, I was just reaching across to find out if we had the exact numbers of where we are right now. I don't have that exact number, unfortunately. That was a failing on my part. I should have had it handy. I will undertake to come back specifically with an accurate number of where we are.

I can tell you right now that the actual numbers we have are 56,232 of what we call "trained effective strength". That's the number I have in the hopper who can go on a mission today, at a moment's notice.

In there as well, we have a basic training list. Those are the people who have yet to reach their occupational ready point, if you will. There are approximately 6,400 of them. On top of that, we have another 1,500 of our members who are on the supplementary patient holding list. These are men and women who at this point are suffering from an injury. They might have a broken leg and they're recovering, so they can't yet deploy.

Those are the numbers. I'm giving you those numbers in terms of context of where we are in terms of the shortfall that we're aware of. What I don't have is the difference between last year and the year to date. That's what I'll undertake to get to you.

• (1700)

**Mr. Shaun Chen:** Fair enough.



To me, one of the most important numbers is the number of trained and effective members, which is the 56,232.

There's a bit of a discrepancy that I've been trying to reconcile. The Auditor General, in his report, specifically in exhibit 5.1, points out that over the past four years, we have seen a decrease of the number of members who are trained and effective. That decrease has been year after year since 2012. For example, from 2014-15, the numbers were 56,800 versus the year following, 2015-16, where there were 56,300, and now you're saying there are 56,200.

I think it's important to contextualize the statements we make. It does sound good that the forces are growing, but we in fact have a lot of ground that we need to make up because of the four years of decrease. As well, we're a bit far off from the 60,500 minimum that we would like to have in terms of fully trained members.

Having said that, I want to continue on in terms of what Mr. Arya mentioned with respect to visible minorities. It's wonderful that you have increased the number of women in the forces, 15.2%, compared to 14% earlier this year, in February. However, Mr. Forster, you talked about your work in fast-tracking female candidates to military colleges, expediting their intake. At the same time, we are trying to increase the number of aboriginal and indigenous members, as well as visible minority members. To me, these two initiatives can't happen in silos. In order to increase the numbers in both of these areas, you need to take an intersectional approach.

Mr. Forster, have you considered very targeted programs that specifically look at recruiting women who are also aboriginal and indigenous, or from racialized communities?

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** You're absolutely right on many of your assertions, and I want to talk about that in terms of the overall numbers. We are realizing that we're far behind and that 4,000 short is a big target for us to make up. I need to be open about it.

As far as doing the intersection, making sure that we're hitting the women, indigenous people, and visible minorities, they tend to work together in the approach that we have. Specifically, we also have engagements that are looking to encourage...from all those segments.

Let me explain that for you all. The Canadian Armed Forces women in force program is open broadly to women who sign up to come and have the experience with us. With Bold Eagle and Raven, we encourage women from those communities as well, by engaging with the elders there and saying, "This is a program that is open to both men and women, and we want to see applicants from those groups." We do see a good turnout of women who come out for these indigenous experiential programs, if you will, like Raven and Bold Eagle, so I'm satisfied that we have that one.

As far as the visible minorities, I don't know if we have the exact approach to say that we're looking specifically for women from visible minorities, because from our point of view, we're not trying to grow that set group together. It's not as though the targeting we're trying to do means visible minorities and women are the specific targets. It's in each of those broad targets that we want to include the growth, so you're going to get a bit of a mix of both.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, the time is up.

Next is Mr. Christopherson and then Mr. Massé.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you, Chair. I appreciate the opportunity for a couple more follow-ups.

I want to pick up a bit on the conversation we're having. I just would add my comments to Mr. McColeman's that we are a committee about accountability and transparency. At some point, if a government makes the political decision, which they're entitled to do, to go down an austerity road or a road of cuts, there's a price to pay for that, and somewhere in our system that price has to be shown.

When the Auditor General can make a direct connection between the objectives of a department and the funding, by saying that the funding wasn't there, we need to take that into account. It also works both ways. Those of us who have concerns about what austerity can do could also overplay that hand. Again, facts, facts, facts—at a time when parts of the world want to go away from that—are still the key thing.

We need to have that discussion at some point and to recognize that if damage is being done then it has to be accounted for somewhere. No government gets to just hide it underneath the carpet. It all has to come out. You get the credit for cutting because you balanced your budget, but somewhere down the road there's going to be an Auditor General's report that shows what happened when you made those cuts. That's part of accountability too. I will just leave that there.

I wanted to go to page 9, items 5.50 and 5.45. I'm going to do 5.50 and then 5.45. Overall, compared with the occupations from the other report, the Auditor General's department found that the recruiting group was able to meet its overall recruiting target, which, by the way, was smaller than the needs identified by the regular force. There was a study done to determine what the need was, and then they moved that target. I think the general has said that the reason they did that was that they didn't want to have targets they knew they couldn't meet, but that still leaves us with a problem and a gap between what's identified as what we need and what we're even targeting for.

Having said that, they did meet their overall reduced recruiting target. However, as the Auditor General points out—and he uses the word "however"—the recruiting group achieved this by enrolling more than the adjusted target in certain occupations. They met the big number, and one of the ways that was done was by oversubscribing in certain areas.

I would like some feedback as to what the deal is. I have to tell you, what I wrote down when I read that the first time was, "On purpose?" I would hope not, but it does beg the question. I'll put it this way. Why would you over-hire in one area if you don't need them, other than to make your target numbers, macro numbers, look good?

I see a huddle, and I'm waiting for an answer.

● (1705)

**The Chair:** Mr. Lamarre.

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** If you can just give me one second, I want to continue that huddle.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Yes, take your time. We have 25 minutes.

**A voice:** No, we don't.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** They don't know that.

**The Chair:** Mr. Forster, maybe while the huddle is going on, you have—

We're back.

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** My apologies, I didn't mean to take away too much of the time.

Part of it comes down to what it is that you are actually able to attract from the population as well. Sometimes when you're looking at that, you want to bring in people because you are resourced to bring in numbers.

When we're looking at the targets for occupations, it's usually over a five-year cycle, so even though we might over-recruit in one year, that might actually help us in “out” years when we're going to need a greater intake of those people. Five-year targets are established for the annual military occupation review system, so that's one thing right there. Also, since you are resourced to have those things, you might as well recruit where you can and take in those folks, because you know you're going to need them.

Some occupations are not as attractive. Sometimes it's difficult to actually get folks in a given year to come and say, “I want to be a hull tech,” because when you say hull tech, that doesn't sound nearly as attractive as firefighter or fighter pilot, for example.

That is the reality of what we are dealing with in a system that is not bang on the number every single year, but it is based on five-year windows of targeting, based on mathematical probabilities and mathematical modelling to see what we're going to have, and knowing what historically has been the number of people who have gotten out every year and anticipating “get-outs”. It really comes down to making sure we can, over the years, continue to fill all of our occupations to the ability we can, and some years you get more than others.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I'll let you summarize very quickly, because we do have extra time at the end with no other questions.

Go ahead, quickly.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you.

You know what I would appreciate?

I would like to hear the deputy or you, General, just flat out say that you did not over-hire in one area to inflate the macro numbers. I'd just like that flat out said and stated, please.

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** No, we did not over-hire to inflate and to make the numbers look good.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Good.

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** We have the capacity to hire certain numbers. We have the recruiting and training system to put them through to process them, and we know, based on five-year cycles of forecasting, that we're going to need those people.

●(1710)

**Mr. David Christopherson:** That's good.

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** That's why we do this, to make sure we can actually keep the machine going forward.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** I have one more question.

**The Chair:** We're at six and a half minutes.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** What time do we adjourn normally?

**The Chair:** We adjourn at 5:30, but I want to make sure Mr. Massé..., and then I can come back to you.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Sure. I can come back. I just don't want to lose the chance.

**The Chair:** Mr. Massé.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rémi Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, I would like to thank the auditor general for the excellent work he and his team do. I would also like to thank all the witnesses here today. I am aware of all the preparation that is needed when you appear before the committee. Thanks to them once again.

Mr. Forster, in your remarks you noted that women currently account for 15.2% of your strength and that your objective is 25%.

In a 2015 report, Madam Justice (retired) Deschamps condemned the armed forces' culture for being hostile to women and fertile ground for sexual harassment. In response to this report, the chief of defence staff at the time, Mr. Vance, established Operation Honour to stamp out this culture. He clearly stated that his objective was zero tolerance.

Recent progress reports have been positive in this regard. It has been noted, however, that not as much progress has been made as was hoped. Women still say that they are victims, and it is difficult for them to get justice.

My question is twofold.

Has the situation that was criticized had a significant impact on the recruitment of women into the armed forces? What strategy have the armed forces adopted to continue the work begun under Operation Honour?

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** Let me begin with the report itself.

As you know, General Vance provided an update on the progress made.

My apologies for switching into English, but I know the terms in English better.

[*English*]

He indicated that indeed there were a number of actions being taken specifically to ensure that the culture of Op Honour, where you don't have any tolerance for harmful or inappropriate sexual behaviour, is being inculcated throughout the Canadian Armed Forces. I think that's an important aspect where we're starting to see some of the results, and it's important to mention it.

Every single course we offer—leadership or basic courses—in the Canadian Armed Forces has a segment specifically related to making sure people understand that this is not on. That includes every single one of the 4,500 Canadians hired in the Canadian Armed Forces who must go through training to ensure that this is understood. This is a thing that occurs every year, because every year we bring 4,500 or more people into the Canadian Armed Forces. That's why we undertake this.

We have also put in place systems for all the members already within their lines. Every single year there is training undertaken to ensure that this goes forward to eliminate harmful and inappropriate sexual behaviour. I'm confident that we're going the right way.

The other indication of what's going on is that 77 individuals are going to be released because they have done some things that were not appropriate. The justice system of the Canadian Armed Forces and the administrative disciplinary system is taking care of that. That said, when you have these things being reported in the media, it does have an effect on the population as a whole.

One of the key messages we want to have out there is that we are dealing with the situation in a very aggressive manner. We have a program that is being institutionalized to clear up and to change the culture. That's an important aspect, and I think it will come to a point where folks are going to say that if there is a problem it's going to be dealt with.

As Ms. Truscott was just alluding to, we conduct studies where we go in and have “Your-Say” and ask people questions for unit life surveys. We ask, “What is going on in your unit, and what's your level of confidence that this is being dealt with?” This is something we will have to publish because it talks to a high level of confidence within our unit that, if there is an issue that is arising, the chain of command will deal with it.

All this is on top of the other initiatives taking place related to Op Honour, including training our police force to deal appropriately with investigations. We make sure they keep on digging and don't dismiss things, and we make sure they go through a very detailed process of proper investigation of these events.

• (1715)

[Translation]

**Mr. Rémi Massé:** How would you assess the success of the strategy you have implemented? Has it had a positive effect on the recruitment of women?

Do you have the sense that what you described—which is highly commendable—has been understood and heard by the general public, which in turn could make it easier to recruit women into the armed forces?

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** I don't know. I asked Ms. Truscott whether any studies had been conducted to assess the impact on recruitment specifically. I will hand it over to her in a moment to see if she has that information.

I have to admit, however, that it is becoming challenging. Once again, when we implement a program to eliminate that kind of behaviour, all kinds of things come to light initially—we are still in the fairly early stages of this operation. We are pushing more and

more. We will move forward. Even if it dates back a number of years, we will review and investigate it. Our victims sometimes find the courage later in life to face up to what happened.

[English]

**The Chair:** Do you have one other answer?

**Ms. Susan Truscott:** I would just note that our most significant issue in attracting women, visible minorities, and aboriginals is the lack of awareness about the Canadian Forces and the lack of knowledge. The advertising and marketing campaigns as well as the social media activities the deputy minister spoke about are most significant.

We know from our studies that when they understand the organization and see the almost 100 occupations available, about 30% more women express an interest in joining. The most important factor for us right now is getting out and enhancing awareness and knowledge of the Canadian Forces.

[Translation]

**Mr. Rémi Massé:** Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Massé.

We'll go to Mr. Lefebvre and Mr. Christopherson.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[Translation]

Mr. Demers, you said earlier that you receive 44,000 applications to join the armed forces every year. Is that correct?

**Col André Demers:** Yes, that is about right.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** Mr. Lamarre, you said that the regular force is about 4,000 members short, is that right?

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** I said that the regular force is 4,000 members short right now.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** How many soldiers leave the army every year?

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** It depends.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** How many, as a rule?

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** As a rule, about 4,500 people leave every year, but it varies. That is roughly 7% to 8%. It also depends on the labour market and the economy.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** You said that you receive 44,000 applications and accept about 10%, is that correct, Mr. Demers?

**Col André Demers:** Yes.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** It was noted that your numbers are low. These 4,000 people replace the 4,000 members who leave the forces. That is what you are doing now.

You said there are some challenges, since some candidates change their minds and others lose interest. Nonetheless, by improving the way you communicate with the 44,000 candidates and by improving services, don't you think that would improve your results? It seems that Canadians are interested.

**Col André Demers:** Definitely, we are working on that now. We are looking for ways to improve our services, how to better approach potential candidates through social media in particular.

Among those 44,000 candidates, there are also some who simply consulted the website and created a profile on it. That does not necessarily mean that those individuals are good candidates for the Canadian Armed Forces.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** Thank you, that's all.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lefebvre.

Mr. Christopherson, please.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thanks, Chair.

I want to return just briefly to the issue of 68,000 being how many you determined you need, and that we're short of that. Again, I quote the Auditor General's report, paragraph 5.11:

Overall, we found that the total number of Regular Force members had decreased, and that there had been a growing gap between the number of members needed and those who were fully trained.

Although I think you have up-to-date information that says you think you're turning that, the information we had at the time of the audit was that that gap is growing.

Further, I quote from 5.17, "In our opinion", meaning the Auditor General, and I raised this earlier, "it is unlikely that it will be able to recruit, train, or retain sufficient personnel to meet its target of 68,000 members by the 2018-19 fiscal year." Anyone who wants to can see a very effective chart at the top of page 5, Exhibit 5.1, which shows the trend line down and the gap growing.

Here's my question. Why aren't you freaking out more?

Here's why I ask. When you were explaining that you lowered the target to make sure that it's reasonable, okay, I accepted that for that round. Here's the more macro question. Either 68,000 is 4,000 more than you need, or you're leaving us vulnerable. I don't expect and I'm not going to ask you to get into the vulnerabilities in a public setting, but I think it's fair to say, if you determined that 68,000 is the number we need and we're not meeting it, just artificially lowering the numbers so you can be more realistic about how you're going to fail to achieve 68,000 still leaves us vulnerable.

I'd like you to comment on that vulnerability, please.

• (1720)

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** Thanks very much for the chance to comment on that.

I'm not freaking out because I know that we have a job to do and we are going to do it. I'm comfortable about that.

The other thing is that, when we're saying very openly right now and agreeing with the Auditor General's comment that we're short 4,000, it's because the problem is there. At this point, what we need to be able to do is to address that and come up with a plan that's going to get us those 4,000 to bring us up. We also need to put the resources into it, as the deputy minister was just mentioning, to make sure that we can have success and bring those numbers up to the 68,000.

It's not a short and easy task either, because of course you're still dealing with all the issues that are there. It means that we need to do things significantly differently, as Mr. Lefebvre was telling us and counselling us to do. That's exactly what we want to do.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** I have a statement and I'll take less than a minute, Mr. Chair.

I just wanted to make a reference to page 7 at the top where the department says, "The following initiatives have been or will be initiated before the end of 2016". I just assumed this was probably written last year because these things lag. I won't read what comes after it.

Then the next paragraph talks about other initiatives that "will be under way in 2017". Referring now to the last, just before the conclusion, it says, "They were to be implemented gradually". In 2009 you had a new strategy for retention and, "They were to be implemented gradually from 2009 to 2011."

Now I'm quoting the Auditor General, "We were informed that action had been taken for some individual projects, but that the strategy had not been fully implemented. In 2014, the Canadian Armed Forces Retention Working Group planned to develop a revised retention strategy, to be completed by June 2018, using the 2009 strategy as its base."

I'm assuming, if you're using 2009, that the strategy was good but you didn't have the funding to make it real, and that by June 2018, you should have everything caught up. I just want to leave with you that this would probably and potentially be a prime reason for us to ask you to come back in the fall and tell us exactly how well you're doing. I do not want to wait another few years for another audit report that might point out a problem. If we have one, we need to see it early. Conversely, if you're finally hitting targets in this area, then it's an opportunity for us to give you the kudos that you will deserve.

Thank you for your indulgence, Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Christopherson.

There are no other real questions coming, committee, but I do have just a couple of comments and a couple of questions.

I'm very fortunate to have CFB Wainwright in my constituency. First of all, I'll say that we were very saddened last week by an accident there, and Sergeant Robert Dyerowicz was killed. He was an armoured crewman with the Canadian Dragoons based out of Petawawa. I know that the whole base supports his family, and certainly we pass our sympathies along.

Now, having Camp Wainwright in my constituency, I've also attended many of the graduations there. I'll tell you there is nothing that really brings as much pride to everyone involved, not just to a member of Parliament but to their families, when you see these individuals graduating. One of the programs they have that you have referenced today is the Bold Eagle program. It became so obvious, with the number of first nation graduates that we saw going through that program, how much pride their families took in the fact that their children, their cousins, brothers, and sisters successfully went through this program.

When we're talking about recruiting, given that there is such a great deal of pride amongst our first nations when their children are serving in the Canadian military, are we doing enough to target that? Social media, yes, I get it, but are there other ways more specifically that we can connect with our indigenous people? Because when you watch them at graduation, if you had a recruitment office sitting right there that day, you would have brothers and sisters of those graduates signing up.

Maybe there are just a couple of comments on other innovative ways to see some of our very important indigenous people serve with the Canadian Forces.

• (1725)

**LGen C.A. Lamarre:** First of all, as for Wainwright, I've spent enough time there that I feel like I'm one of your constituents. It's a great opportunity.

As for engagement, you are absolutely right. I was just recently at Vimy Ridge. I was fortunate enough to be there for the 100th, and Chief Perry Bellegarde was there as well. He and I had a chance to have a bit of a pull-aside, and I asked for a chance to come and meet him because part of the key things we need to do in here—and it's referred to—is to have an advisory body that can help us specifically when we're looking for either visible minorities, indigenous people, or women.

Part of the mandate that I have as chief of military personnel is to be engaged with those groups and those advisers who can help us specifically reach into those targeted areas to find out how we can be most effective.

I'm only four weeks into my job here as the chief of military personnel command, but certainly, one of our keys things is to establish an advisory body so that we can reach in and not just trust ourselves as to how we're doing it on an attracting, marketing, advertising system, but get that advice from the senior leaders. When you refer to people who are so proud to see their kids register and be

part of a program like Bold Eagle.... I know in fact, if we had a recruiting office there, not only would we get the sisters, the brothers, the kids sometimes, but we probably would get the parents too.

We want to do those things because we hire folks of a large range, if you will, of ages, including into their forties and everything else because they can come and do service for us. So if any of you leaving this place are interested, certainly, I would be as well.

**The Chair:** I appreciate those comments. Maybe there are better ways that members of Parliament, when we go to schools.... We talk about the importance of an education and getting into some of these other careers, but maybe there's a better way that members of Parliament as they meet with their high schools, whether it be, not at trade shows, but certainly with counsellors at the high schools, to encourage and say that it's not a second choice. It could be a first choice among so many young Canadians. Maybe there are resources that you have or you could give to members of Parliament so that they can put that forward as they go into their schools. Anyway, it's just a suggestion.

I also want to say that there have been good questions today and I appreciate all those who have asked those questions. We are going to wait on some of the answers to come back. You've already stated that you look forward to coming back. There's no need to come back, except, as Mr. Christopherson said, perhaps in the fall. When you leave here and go back and get those numbers or those answers, please just email them to our clerk and he will see that our analysts get them. Anything that goes into a report could include those answers as well.

Thank you very much for being here today and for the good work that you do. All the best, as you implement some of these programs to help us meet the targets for our Canadian Armed Forces.

Thank you all. We are now 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>