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Chair: The Honourable John McKay





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• (1540)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

This is the commencement of our study on retention and recruitment in the Canadian Armed Forces.

To lead off our study, we have with us Paxton Mayer, a doctoral student in international affairs at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University; and Professor Alan Okros from the department of defence studies at RMC.

I'll call on Ms. Mayer for her opening five-minute statement, and then go directly to Professor Okros.

Again, thank you for your patience.

Colleagues, I propose to go 10 minutes late, if that's all right. I hope that's all right with our witnesses as well.

Go ahead, Ms. Mayer.

**Paxton Mayer (Doctoral Student in International Affairs at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University, As an Individual):** Hi everyone. Thank you for inviting me to be a witness for your study of recruitment and retention in the Canadian Armed Forces.

This testimony, in addition to the provided brief and reference materials, provides my perspective on why the Canadian Armed Forces struggle with recruitment and retention, and what public perception and organizational changes the CAF should implement in order to face these challenges.

Over the past two years, the CAF's intolerance, harassment and abuse towards women, visible minorities and the LGBTQ+ community have been consistently reported in the media and have therefore become public knowledge. This has surely negatively affected the CAF's recruitment and retention. However, even prior to this wave of publicity, the CAF was having difficulty with the recruitment and retention of its members. This is not a brand new issue.

I understand that the CAF has tried to change this public perception through online advertisements that show diversity. Although it's true that these advertisements include more women and visible minorities than in the past, they still lack the message of inclusion. Most of the ads focus on a single person at a time and often do not show that person interacting positively with others, nor do they show that person's life outside of their job. These ads have failed in

the past as they do not show that these diverse individuals are respected and included in the CAF, free to be themselves and able to achieve some kind of work-life balance.

Of course, these ads would only work and are only ethical if this is truly the reality of the CAF. It has been heavily suspected for many years—and it has recently been proven without a doubt—that this is untrue.

Instead of depending on these sorts of ads, the CAF and its civilian oversight, which include the Minister of Defence and the Prime Minister, need to publicly admit to their failings and create a full-fledged strategy to ensure that these failings never occur again. The CAF requires an organizational culture change. The implementation of this strategy must consider that there may be resistance within the organization to these changes. Support must be provided to members, both supervisory and non-supervisory, as they move from resistance to exploration to commitment to this change.

Finally, the CAF should implement a clause in its recruitment and performance reviews that allows for the refusal of work to applicants and the removal from the armed forces of current members who are creating an unsafe working environment or who are being exclusionary. Just because the CAF is having issues recruiting and retaining members does not mean it should ever lower its expectations on this. After all, how can Canadians depend on the CAF to keep Canadians and its allies safe when the CAF cannot even keep its own members safe, even in non-conflict zones?

Furthermore, the actual recruitment process of the CAF is hugely inefficient and lacks transparency. This deters potential CAF members, even if they were not deterred by the other shortcomings of the CAF. For instance, the recruitment process can take over a year. Its average length is around 200 days. The CAF's career website and application process expect a university graduate, maybe even a doctor, to submit a job application without knowing the requirements, the salary benefits of the job or the recruitment process and timeline. These issues also partly explain why the CAF has had difficulties retaining its employees.

I would argue that the CAF's retainment challenges are because there are many better opportunities elsewhere for experienced members, such as employers that do not request employees to work in conflict zones, that do not expect their employees to move across country and that have the assets and budgets to provide their employees with competitive salaries and working equipment.

A compounding challenge for the CAF's retention and recruitment goals is that many families now depend on two incomes. However, when one partner is required to move to remote locations for their career, it becomes practically impossible for the other partner to hold a job, let alone have any career independence. Further, it's difficult for CAF members' children to be constantly switching schools and making new friends. The CAF needs to look at the possibility of CAF members being guaranteed the ability to stay in a single location for a long period of time and provide more flexible arrangements for families. These then need to be communicated to current members and potential members.

The CAF, the Government of Canada and, honestly, Canadians as well, need to realize that the CAF is competing with private corporations and even other government organizations for talent but is lacking the resources to win. To mitigate this, the CAF must be given the ability to increase its salary budget, must create a welcoming and supportive work environment and must determine new ways of working that provide more stability for its members and its members' families.

In conclusion, the CAF has multiple challenges to overcome in order to improve its recruitment and retention. At the end of the day, it is my belief that Canadians will choose to work for an organization they trust, that is transparent with career potential and possibilities, that provides a safe, diverse and welcoming environment, and that stands behind and supports its employees. Unfortunately, the CAF is not currently this type of organization, although I believe it could become one if it generally worked towards organizational change.

Thank you for your time. I really appreciate it.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Go ahead, Professor Okros.

**Dr. Alan Okros (Professor, Department of Defence Studies, Royal Military College, As an Individual):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's my pleasure to provide comments to the committee on CAF recruitment and retention. I'm speaking from Toronto. I have provided my land acknowledgement in my written submission. My comments will be in English.

I've been engaged in aspects of research, policy and delivery related to CAF recruiting and retention since serving in recruiting in the late 1970s. I recently conducted research on the future youth cohort to inform CAF decision-making, and I am making contributions to culture change initiatives.

To start, as Paxton has highlighted, two recent factors are of importance for the CAF: [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] throughput, which resulted in shortages of qualified CAF members, and the adverse publicity over sexual harassment, which has resulted in some declines in the number of women applying to join. There are no

magic solutions to correct either of these overnight, although both are top of mind for senior leaders.

More broadly, the CAF is facing long-term trends that are making recruiting more difficult. The battle for talent requires CAF to expand the pool of applicants. Three intersecting factors are of importance. The first is the increasing diversity across Canadian society, with a shrinking proportion of straight white men in the CAF's traditional recruiting pool. The second is that a number of young people are entering the workforce lacking required work knowledge or life skills. There is significant competition across employers for those who have successfully completed post-secondary education, and the percentage of these graduates who are straight white men is shrinking faster than in the overall population. The third factor is increased urbanization and the number of young adults seeking to live in major cities, many of whom come from diverse backgrounds and are well educated. Joining the regular force means leaving these cities, which is why the demographics of the reserves differ from those of the regular force.

We then hit the challenge that CAF is not one job but offers one hundred, and that many Canadians have only superficial knowledge of the military, have different reasons for joining and have a myriad of questions. Recruiting is an intense personal activity with both the CAF and the applicant trying to assess the right fit.

The CAF needs to attract more talented, educated and diverse Canadians. It is facing stiff competition from other employers and from the bright lights of the big cities, and it needs to invest in expanding capacities to attract, inform and select the right people.

On retention, I'll note that the CAF actually has lower attrition rates than the militaries of most allies. Again, while COVID and sexual harassment issues have likely played a role in some leaving, the main factors have remained the same for many years. A key is the challenge of balancing work and personal life. The CAF requires a lot from individuals and puts pressures on their families.

Demands due to operations and deployments, going away for training and moving across the country are significant. The constant juggling of time and attention becomes too much, as do the issues of partners lacking stability to pursue careers, the frictions of moving houses, finding new family health care providers, trying to get the kids signed up for sports teams, etc. The CAF actually provides more geographic stability than our American or Australian counterparts do, but these countries invest more in family support systems, whereas CAF members and their families are forced to fend more for themselves.

The British Army has a slogan: recruit the soldier, retain the family. Fiscal decisions have made this more difficult to achieve, and some policies still reflect the assumption that every member with children has a full-time homemaker to look after them.

Further, attention needs to shift from how many people are leaving the CAF to which people are leaving. There are serious issues when these are more women, diverse folk or those from different cultural backgrounds, and especially when they do so because they can't reach their full potential. Who is getting promoted versus who is being held back in their career is an important factor.

Finally, I'll suggest that the key issue for government is not the number of individuals in uniform but what capabilities the CAF can generate and sustain. As has been demonstrated over the last two years, the CAF has significant flexibility to respond to unique tasks, but there are limits. Answering these demands has come at a cost. Part of what is needed to address recruitment and retention issues is actually the work of government, not of internal defence leaders. They require either more predictability or the funding to enable increased flexibility.

● (1545)

The key questions are these: What do Canadians want their military to be able to do, and what is government prepared to invest to ensure that they can?

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has focused attention on Canada's contributions to NATO, but we're about to enter flood season, followed by forest fire season, followed by potential ice storms or snowmageddons. Also, Canadians would still like us to have more than just a token few UN blue berets.

I look forward to your questions.

● (1550)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Professor Okros.

Madam Kerry-Lynne Findlay, you have six minutes.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Thank you.

Thank you to both witnesses for being here. We really appreciate your testimony.

Professor Okros, what factors make those who leave unsuitable for military service? How are they screened? Do you know?

**Dr. Alan Okros:** There are two parts to this. There certainly are some individuals who are required to leave the military because they are not a good fit for the military. This usually happens in the first year to three years of military service. On occasion it's because

they're unable to meet the training requirements or meet the performance requirements. On some occasions, it's because of their professional conduct. There were certainly instances in the news recently of cases of young people joining who were not displaying professional conduct out on the west coast. The military can engage in remedial action, trying to assist these people to understand the values, the standards and the behaviours, but on occasion, they're not a good fit and they leave.

The other reason, of course, is that, as I said, a large number of Canadians have limited knowledge of the military. As much as the recruiting system tries to inform them, once they join and find out what military life is really like, for example what army camping really consists of or that going to sea on the North Atlantic is not like canoeing on Lake Ontario, there are people who realize it's not a good fit for them.

In the long term, for those who get past that initial adjustment, the real reasons for people leaving have to do with work-life balance and all the pressures on families.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** I appreciate your testimony on that because it gives a pretty clear picture. I know it takes a lot from families, even in peacetime. In the navy, for instance, we have troops deploying for many months at a time.

What would you say is the primary draw for people who do join? What is the primary draw for recruits? One thing that's on my mind is that we had great success attracting Canadians during the Afghan war. There must have been something that was motivating them, because we were in a war theatre.

**Dr. Alan Okros:** My comments would be that people join for a number of different reasons. Some are attracted to earn qualifications, advanced education, to improve their work skills and their qualifications. Some people are attracted to adventure and travel. There are people who want to challenge themselves.

I would agree that there was a segment of the Canadian population that joined during the time that Canada was actively involved in combat operations in Afghanistan, but we also need to recognize that there was another portion of the population that was not attracted by the combination of those activities and, quite honestly, the recruiting ads that were being run at the time.

It's a challenge for the military. People have multiple different reasons why they join.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** One of the issues that's come up, Professor, is whether the universality of service rules should be changed, especially to recruit people with specialized skills to fight cyber-threats, for instance. What is your opinion on that?

**Dr. Alan Okros:** I would suggest there is a value in reviewing universality of service and how it's applied. It can, on occasion, be an impediment to people joining, and it can also cause people who were serving in the military and who have developed highly valuable skills and experience to have to leave the military.

The challenge for the military, going back to the navy, is what the navy refers to as sea-shore ratio. The more people you have in uniform who have limitations on the type of work they can do, the smaller the number of people in uniform who are having to spend more time away and do the deployments, the operations, etc. That's the struggle that the military has finding the right balance there.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** With respect to Canadians of diverse backgrounds, I'm curious as to how you feel the CAF has been doing in attracting Canadians of diversity.

**Dr. Alan Okros:** I'll answer, and perhaps the other witness might be able to chime in on this one as well.

I would agree that the military has been trying to do so. I think there have been challenges in terms of the messaging. There are challenges reaching into the communities. To reach diverse communities, I think the military really needs highly tuned, tailored, niche communications to make sure not only the individuals but their families and other community members understand what decisions they're making and support them in making the right decisions. Common broad advertising and, quite honestly, advertising restricted to NHL games or football games is not reaching the full breadth of Canadians. There need to be some strategies there on reaching out to different communities with the right information for them to consider.

• (1555)

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** I don't have a lot of time left. What is the normal attrition for the Canadian Forces, and what is the NATO average? Do you know?

**Dr. Alan Okros:** The Canadian Armed Forces rate is roughly between 6% and 7%. Among NATO allies, the rate is anywhere from 8% to 10%, and some are higher. For example, for the U.S. Marine Corps, it's over 10%, and that's expected. Other militaries are used to more young people joining, doing a couple of tours and then leaving. They have a different personnel production system to bring people in, get them qualified very quickly, get them working quickly and have them leave, which is not the system the CAF has.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

For the sake of those who are both on the panel and maybe also listening, Dr. Okros, could you tell us what the concept of universality of service is?

**Dr. Alan Okros:** Certainly, universality of service requires that all members in uniform be able to meet a series of primarily physical standards that enable them to deploy to a vast range of environments to do a vast range of duties. It's a common set of standards that is applied to everybody in uniform. Particularly, those who develop medical issues have difficulties being able to meet universality of service and commonly end up being released from the military.

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

Madam Lambropoulos, you have six minutes please.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to both of our witnesses today.

I'm going to begin with Dr. Okros, along the same lines as what both of my colleagues just mentioned on the notion of universality of service. You also mentioned climate change during your testimony in the beginning. We're about to face the floods, forest fires and different things that we have not been focusing on because of our shift in focus to Ukraine now and to NATO in general.

Suppose CAF were to work differently and try to retain or at least recruit new members in a completely different category, for natural events or things that happen here, to help protect Canadians at home. Do you see a benefit to changing the way we look at things and changing the way CAF currently works on recruitment so that people who don't necessarily feel attracted to engaging in combat outside of Canada could come and offer services to their country, to help during a flood situation, for example?

**Dr. Alan Okros:** My basic comment is, yes, I think there is value in considering this. There are other countries that have differentiated individuals, so some countries have more domestic response capability, either in the military but with different conditions of service or in a different organization.

As Canadians start to recognize that what we used to consider once-in-a-century weather events are now going to be happening much more often, I think there is a likelihood that the Canadian Armed Forces might be called on more frequently. This is part of why I said we need to decide what we want the CAF to do, because right now, the military is structured to deliver on what it's been tasked with doing, but then it gets hit with these occasional requirements.

Alternate models could have people who are just focused on a domestic context. Potentially restructuring the reserves and so on are all things that could be considered, but it's a complex military system, so they need to be studied properly rather than going to short-term solutions that can cause unintended consequences.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** Thank you very much.

Ms. Mayer, you spoke extensively about the need to recruit diverse Canadians—more women—in order to change the culture of the organization.

I was wondering if you could speak a bit to what types of changes are required and that we can make at the government level to be able to see a difference in the CAF. It's an organization that's pretty much run on its own and by itself. It doesn't necessarily like taking orders from politicians. What are some ways around that?

• (1600)

**Paxton Mayer:** First, I would say that the government and civilian oversight should take more of a stand and provide guidance to the CAF. It's our responsibility.

However, within the CAF, I would suggest that the biggest tool for change could be building allyship and pushing away the idea of the innocent bystander on these issues. If we improve the training to allow people to understand what harassment is and what abuse is, how to notice this harassment and what to do and what to say when it occurs, then everyone in the organization who applies this training could slowly change the organizational culture.

Unfortunately, though, this requires quite a bit of leadership support. Within the CAF—and even outside the CAF, in the civilian oversight—we're seeing that there's not that much accountability, unfortunately. To me, the biggest thing the government can do outside of the CAF is to show that accountability, to take accountability for the mistakes and really push the CAF to make those changes.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** I have another question, because you mentioned that there's a lot of competition between the CAF and the rest of the Canadian economy and all businesses.

What exactly does the CAF need to do to make it more attractive to educated and more well-rounded individuals?

**Paxton Mayer:** The first point that I would bring up is the recruitment process itself. Right now, when you apply to the CAF as a university graduate for an officer position, they don't ask any information about your resume or your CV. You provide simple, personal details and they ask you to choose your top three positions. They say that someone else will reach out to you and administer a test to see if you are actually qualified for these positions.

When competing with private corporations, you submit a full application and they go through many initial questions. Even applying to the government, they do the same thing. As an applicant, they feel like they're getting through the process. With the CAF, they're not getting through a process. The CAF is wasting a lot of resources putting people in charge of this process, which could be somewhat automated. This increases the whole length of the process.

Private corporations hire within months so that the person is working in the position, whereas in the CAF it's a year or more. Sometimes the training takes over a year as well. To compete with private corporations, the CAF needs to quicken this recruitment timeline and make it clearer to applicants what the job requirements are, what the salary is and what the process is.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** You also mentioned a bit about the—

**The Chair:** Madame Lambropoulos, I'm sorry to say your time is up.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Madame Normandin, you have six minutes please.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Thank you very much to the two witnesses for being with us today.

My questions are general and are for Ms. Mayer and Dr. Okros.

There's been a lot of talk about people leaving the Canadian Forces, but I feel like there's not necessarily a lot of talk about those who stay.

Many may choose to stay in the Canadian Forces because they love what they do, but is it possible that some stay because they have no other choice?

Can the fact that military personnel are unhappy in their jobs contribute, in some cases, to the toxic climate in the Canadian Forces?

[English]

**Dr. Alan Okros:** I'm not sure which of the two of us that was directed to, so I'll start on this one, if I can.

All employers have some issues with regard to employees who choose to stay. However, I would suggest that the majority of CAF members acquire valuable work skills that can allow them to move to other jobs if they choose to leave the military, so I don't think the idea that they can't get another job is the reason why they may not leave. People stay in jobs when they're in positions that earn them pensions, so people may stick around for a little longer to be able to get their pensions to where they would like them to be.

In general, I think the vast majority of those who are in uniform are there because they want to be there. That would be the main comment that I would make on that.

• (1605)

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Before I move on to another question, I'll give you the floor, Ms. Mayer.

[English]

**Paxton Mayer:** I was just going to say that I agree. I was looking at the departmental planning, and only 65% of the CAF currently would describe it as a positive workplace. Maybe we are seeing the effects of people staying in the CAF who are not seeing positivity or who do not want to continue working there.

I agree. I do believe that once you've gotten enough experience in the CAF, there's a multitude of options in the workforce if you would like to leave.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Ms. Mayer, at the beginning of your opening remarks, you said that members who contribute to the hostile work environment in the armed forces should be removed.

In your opinion, are these withdrawal processes effective, on the one hand, and on the other, known to members of the forces?

[English]

**Paxton Mayer:** Yes. That would be after a lot of training, a lot of awareness brought to the issue and a lot of one-on-one discussion to instigate and maintain effective organizational change over a long period of time. Eventually, the members who do not wish to change would have to be removed. Currently, it is difficult to remove members. This would be primarily for new membership, including in their contracts or including in a performance management review that this is something that actually is valuable—having a positive work environment, having an inclusive work environment—and measuring them against indicators that show they are participating in this diverse and inclusive environment.

I think that would be the primary way in which we could remove members over time who do not wish to change and who do not create a safe and inclusive work environment.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Thank you very much.

Ms. Mayer, you mentioned that people don't always know what they're getting into when they join the armed forces, partly because the ads can be a little misleading.

Shouldn't there be more emphasis on coaching when they join up to identify the recruits' strengths and offer a specialized pathway that really matches their potential?

[English]

**Paxton Mayer:** Yes. I would agree that there needs to be more information about certain positions. The CAF does have recruitment specialists who talk with candidates. I think there is an opportunity for candidates to ask questions. I think the issue, though, is that candidates may not know what kinds of questions to ask. Because the CAF website is so general in a lot of senses, I do think it lacks quite a bit of information. I think it would be helpful for the CAF to provide more information on each individual job.

As Professor Okros said, there are so many different positions and so many different job requirements within the CAF that to have just general pages on salaries, for example, doesn't really answer questions on a particular job. Including that, and maybe providing an FAQ section during the recruitment process, would be helpful.

This would require, though, the CAF garnering more data on its recruits, more data on its employees, disaggregated data. [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] surprises were there when CAF members joined. They didn't realize that this position included certain tasks and things like that. Therefore, I think there needs to be more communication. I think the recruitment officer could be a good starting point for that, for sure.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Do the armed forces know who they are recruiting? Is their offer specific enough?

Are the ads targeted enough?

• (1610)

[English]

**Paxton Mayer:** I would argue no, especially seeing the current situation with the training that happened on the west coast a couple

of weeks ago. I don't think the recruitment process, especially at the beginning, does enough to even weed out the candidates who aren't qualified for the position. You're allowed to click on boxes like “doctor” and “medical professional” without any proof that you have any kind of qualification. Including—

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, we have to leave it there.

Ms. Mathysen, you have six minutes, please.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to both witnesses for appearing today.

In the last Parliament, I sat on the status of women committee, and we studied sexual misconduct in the military. We heard from Major Kellie Brennan, who said that General Vance was “untouchable”. Sadly last week we saw him walk away from criminal charges. It was quite a disappointing response from the judge involved, in my view at least.

There's seemingly all over an idea or certainly the impression, whether it's a prime minister, a former minister, a judge, internally within the CAF or externally in the civilian courts, that there isn't that accountability or that culture change happening. There's certainly a willingness, and I believe there have been a lot of conversations from the new minister and from General Eyre about wanting to change. In terms of this recruitment and retention, how do they get past the impressions that we're still seeing repeatedly in the media?

This is to both witnesses, please.

**Dr. Alan Okros:** Paxton, would you like to go first?

**Paxton Mayer:** This is going to take a lot of time now. There have been two years' worth of media publicity showing all the issues with harassment and non-inclusiveness within the CAF. There needs to be a top-bottom approach, where the top leaders, including civilian leaders, need to take accountability and need to force change. I think there's also a bottom-top approach with hiring practices, what kind of training is required and performance reviews.

On that, I would recommend a 360-degree performance review process, where any kind of supervisor gains information from subordinates, fellow supervisors and on up the hierarchy. Hopefully in the future someone who is that problematic will not get hired for leadership and will not become this untouchable person.

**Dr. Alan Okros:** My brief comment, if I may, is that Canadians, parliamentarians and CAF members need to recognize that there are going to be legacy issues that are going to work their way through. We've seen that with allegations raised against individuals that go back decades. That is something that's going to have to be worked through, because standards were not clear and those that were clear were not effectively enforced at all times.

It's important to recognize and take into account when things happened, what the policies were and what the approach was. I think that would be valuable for some technical briefings on the initiatives that are being put in place.



I think several things that Paxton has spoken to are issues that senior leadership have now recognized and are certainly talking about and working on. Whether that is going to get the degree of culture change in the time period that people are looking for is something that is going to be watched fairly closely.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Thank you.

Mr. Okros, you spoke about more family support systems presented by other countries, but you just touched on it.

Can you go into more detail and provide specific examples to the committee of these family support systems?

**Dr. Alan Okros:** It depends on the country, but there is more that is offered in terms of things like assisting family members with some of the examples that I gave, such as securing a family doctor.

For example, in the American system, families can draw on their military medical system for some of their services. The Australians provide some referral services so that, when they change states in Australia, the family on their own doesn't have to go out and get on a long waiting list for family doctors. There are referral services and networks for spousal employment and even with the recreation facilities that are available at bases. Again, a lot of parents struggle with getting the kids signed up for swimming lessons.

Other countries provide more of those kinds of services. They used to be available at Canadian bases and wings. Over a period of time with budget cuts, those are areas that have been cut out. As I said, in terms of family housing, there are a number of areas where other countries provide support for families that the Canadian military has had to cut back on because there are no funds for it. There's more of a focus in the CAF on the fact that you're living on the economy and, to some extent, you're living on your own.

• (1615)

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** I believe at the status of women committee we heard from women who specifically referenced a lack of supports for housing, absolutely, and for child care. Could you comment on that as well?

**Dr. Alan Okros:** Certainly. In the majority of cases, child care, and particularly after-hours child care and on weekends, are the kinds of child care services that need to be provided. Again, when people get deployed, it's not like signing your kids up for the typical workday child care system.

There have been some efforts to try to provide some of that, but, again, some of Canada's allies provide a lot more funding to support that because the recognition is that, by supporting the family, you're actually allowing the person in uniform to do their job. You're enabling them to deploy or go away for training without causing significant tensions or pressures on the home front, or causing them to have to eventually quit because they can't juggle it all.

There are areas where there could be increased support for families that would have a direct consequence on retention.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Professor Okros.

Colleagues, we have 20 minutes and 25 minutes' worth of questions.

Mr. Motz, why don't you start us off with four minutes?

**Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, panellists, for being here today.

Dr. Okros, how many people seek out the Canadian Forces every year to apply as a recruit approximately?

**Dr. Alan Okros:** I'm sorry. I don't have current numbers on that. I think that would have to be a technical brief from those responsible for the recruiting system.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Okay.

We're talking about recruiting and retention. About how many of the recruits actually make it through the recruiting process? Is there a percentage that either one of you can give us of those who apply and those who actually make it through?

**Dr. Alan Okros:** The quick comment I would make with that one is that the recruiting process is a layered process. Paxton has referred to some of what is available when you initially go online and look at things.

There's a reason for that, because the CAF needs to be able to get to a certain stage to be able to start doing things like security clearances, or medicals, etc. It's a lengthy process with multiple stages and there are differential rates for how many men are successful versus how many women. For example, a smaller percentage of women traditionally have made it through the system to actually get on the waiting lists and be enrolled. It's an area the military has been looking at.

The other part with this is that it really depends on the occupation. There are some occupations.... Pilot is an obvious example. There are all sorts of people who would love to be pilots and have the organization pay for them to learn how to be a pilot. Therefore, you can be very competitive for the pilots but far less competitive for other occupations that aren't high-demand occupations. It really varies across the CAF.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** I'm sorry, Dr. Okros. For the sake of time I'm going to keep moving on.

My colleague, Ms. Lambropoulos, brought this up. Do you think Canadians join the Canadian Forces to be peacekeepers, national security defenders or civil domestic emergency responders? Could that be one of the reasons why we have a recruitment and retention problem, because people aren't signing up to be respond to civil issues, domestic issues in our country?

You touched on what the Americans have, the National Guard. Is this something that we as a country should seriously consider so that those who want to be in our armed forces are not taken away from the armed forces' responsibilities to deal with domestic issues, like a national guard or like civil emergency responders, and actually have two separate responsibilities?

I think that has merit, which I think I heard both of you or one of you say earlier.

• (1620)

**Dr. Alan Okros:** My quick comment would be that those kinds of options have a lot more consequence in terms of the internal structural decisions that are made by the military, such as where resources are invested, what training goes on, etc.

I would suggest it would not have a huge consequence on recruiting. I go back to the comment I made, which is that a large number of people who are applying to join the military really have a limited understanding of what the military really is or does. As I said before, people join for a whole host of reasons. Typically people have served for about 12 months to 18 months, and then they start to realize what it is that they have joined and what the options and the implications are. I'm not sure they have that fine differentiation when they are still a civilian applicant.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Fair enough. I was going to ask you what the educational level is of the average recruit. The fact that they may not have properly researched it out may limit that.

I have one last question. I don't know how much time I have left.

What's the average recruiting time? According to a 2016 report that the Auditor General did, it was 200 days. Two hundred days was the average recruiting time. What are we looking at now, Ms. Mayer or Dr. Okros?

**The Chair:** We'll have to leave that. I apologize, but we have to run a tight—

**Mr. Glen Motz:** I'm sure you'll—

**The Chair:** Joining the military is a little like joining politics. You don't really know what you're getting into until you're there.

**A voice:** True.

**The Chair:** Yes. There's an “amen” around the corner here.

Mr. Gaheer, welcome back to the committee. You have four minutes.

**Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer (Mississauga—Malton, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to both witnesses for making time for the committee. My first question is for Professor Okros.

You've spoken a bit about the retention rate for CAF and said that it's actually better than the rates of our NATO allies. However, I'm sure there is something they are doing better than us. What are other jurisdictions doing better than us and what can we learn from them?

**Dr. Alan Okros:** Specifically on retention, the main one I have focused on is family support, because quite honestly that is one of the primary reasons people leave earlier than they would like to leave.

Different countries have different strategies and approaches to addressing issues. Some countries try to provide greater geographic stability, or at least try to keep people close to where their homes are for the first few years while they make the adjustment. It varies significantly. There are real challenges with Canada trying to follow some of those models, though, just given the geographic dispersion of the CAF across the size of Canada, so mostly I think we could look at family support for retention.

**Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer:** That's great. Thank you.

This question is for both witnesses. Professor, you spoke a bit about the advertising campaign and said that videos are shown primarily during hockey matches or football games. How is the CAF's advertising campaign? How does it fare in appealing to a broader demographic of Canada's population?

**Dr. Alan Okros:** Paxton, do you want to start?

**Paxton Mayer:** Sure.

The issue is that it doesn't do a great job of appealing to a wider demographic. As Professor Okros has said, it does not do a very good job of communicating directly to niche, diverse groups within Canada. On the sponsorship of certain sports, for example, for baseball, the demographic is older, white and male. Compare that with perhaps the NBA, where at least the demographic is younger. That would be more effective, for example. Moreover, the advertisements that are often shown show a very exciting job position and that could affect retainment, especially in that one- to three-year range when people realize that it is not all helicopters all day long. There's a lot more that goes into being a CAF member.

**Dr. Alan Okros:** If I could quickly follow up on that, the CAF has recognized these issues and has been moving particularly into social media. It is active on TikTok, so it has been recognizing where the appropriate channels are to reach younger people in particular. The challenge moving into social media to compete in that space is the intensive work. Again we're back into the challenge that they don't have the personnel to put in the really intensive work that is needed to get niche messages out using these niche channels. The CAF, I would suggest, is aware of this and is looking to try to find new approaches, but it needs some assistance in terms of the resources to be able to do so.

**Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer:** That's great. That actually goes to my next question regarding social media and digital recruitment technologies. Professor, you have spoken about this, but Ms. Mayer, do you want to comment on it?

• (1625)

**Paxton Mayer:** Do you mean on the use of social media?

**Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer:** Yes.

**Paxton Mayer:** They are on TikTok, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram, and they are showing more dedicated advertisements towards the younger demographic especially and more diverse demographics. However, I would echo that it's a resourcing issue at this point. It's very difficult to compete in digital markets like this with maybe only one or two social media personnel.

**The Chair:** We're going to have to leave it there, unfortunately.

Madame Normandin, you have a minute and a half, please.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Thank you very much.

In order to be able to address recruitment and retention problems in the military, the existing problems need to be clearly defined. However, there is a lot of talk about a kind of code of silence in the military, which makes it rather difficult to get accurate information from the military about the problems that exist.

Is the fact that the code of silence prevents the right information consistent with reality?

Can this hinder future changes to the hostile work environment?

[*English*]

**Paxton Mayer:** The code of silence is acting negatively for the CAF at this point, not perhaps positively as it was intended. I would recommend doing exit interviews or exit surveys with CAF members who are exiting out of basic training all the way to CAF members who are exiting after 20 years in the service. Within that survey, I would try to break down that code of silence by asking specific questions: Did you feel supported from a medical standpoint? Where you matched with a medical professional? Did you have child care?

Make these surveys and interviews easy to complete and also try to make them as mandatory as possible.

**Dr. Alan Okros:** I'd like to make a quick observation. I would suggest the committee may benefit from a technical brief on the research that is done on the surveys that are currently being administered and the data collected. Some of this is available. Senior leaders are collecting this information and being briefed on it.

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, we're going to have to leave that question there. I'm sure you'll work it back in, Professor Okros.

Madam Mathysen, you have a minute and a half, please.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** There used to be bigger recruitment budgets within the armed forces. You were speaking about going to where people are, younger people in terms of social media, but it used to be that the armed forces would actually send recruiters into rural, remote communities, northern communities, indigenous communities. That doesn't seem to happen as much. A return to that kind of recruitment in terms of first nations communities, would that be something that the armed forces should look at?

**Dr. Alan Okros:** My quick comment would be yes. As you've identified, the issue again is back to resource decisions that had to be taken at certain stages. There are significant challenges with the distribution of the force structure. How many people do you want to have that are actually deploying and doing operations versus now many people do you want to have in the recruiting and training system, etc.?

Those are constant decisions that the senior leadership needs to make, which is why I made my comment that either we need increased predictability so they can allocate the resources in the right spaces, or we need to fund flexibility because they have not had flexibility. That's been a detriment to recruiting processes.

**The Chair:** We're going to have to leave it there.

Mr. Dowdall, you have four minutes, please. Welcome to the committee.

**Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC):** Thank you very much.

I just want to take this opportunity to thank our speakers for taking time out of their schedules. I was fortunate enough, in my prior life before being an MP, to be the mayor of Essa Township, which has the largest training base on it, which is Base Borden. A lot of the military go through there all the time.

I can tell you, one of the comments that I heard earlier, which was important, was about the lifestyle. Especially now, it's changed over the years. They used to live on the base and now they live in the community. It's not so much the same as it was years ago, so they actually increased the wages at one point in time so they could buy houses in our town. Now the problem is that the average home is \$800,000. I'm just wondering if people are looking into that when they're deciding to join the military.

It's certainly like you said with the spouse, the importance of getting involved in sports or teaching our kids hockey, all of the events. They are part of our community now. It's really changed. I'm just wondering if that is part of the reason we're maybe not getting more applications.

• (1630)

**Paxton Mayer:** I was just going to make a quick comment on the salary issue and the housing issue that would lead to it. Currently there is just one page on the CAF website for salaries, stating that your starting salary would be anywhere from around at least \$33,000 to \$64,000, and that's all the information that's provided. Yes, I definitely think that more information on salary needs to be provided so that applicants feel comfortable that they could afford a house in the future.

**Mr. Terry Dowdall:** Thank you for that.

I have one more comment. I was fortunate enough as well, in the prior sitting, to actually be on this committee. I was part of the study that we did into sexual misconduct in the military. I don't know if you had an opportunity to witness or to see any of that. I can tell you, as an MP in a riding with a base, the amount of filibustering by the government during that period of time, when we had people there that had testimony, and to not come to a conclusion was certainly disappointing. I just want to simply.... Do you think that committee helped in any way to increase the numbers who might want to join today?

**Paxton Mayer:** I believe that committee showed that members of Parliament do take this issue seriously, even if some of the members who were witnessing were not taking it as seriously or didn't provide as much accountability as hoped. Personally, watching it, it did not increase my comfort with the sexual harassment that was occurring in the CAF. No accountability was really taken at all, actually, over multiple meetings.

Perhaps this could be a recommendation for government: to write policies for when this happens on civilian oversight and what parliamentarians should do. Maybe that would remove some of the political influence from that and make it more of a standard formal policy.

**Dr. Alan Okros:** My quick comment would be that those who watch committee hearings on a regular basis are quite capable of watching political theatre and would recognize all of the different parties and how they contributed to it.

**The Chair:** Mr. Dowdall, you have 30 seconds.

**Mr. Terry Dowdall:** Quickly, do you think the lack of infrastructure that we have would perhaps be another thought process for why people don't want to get involved? I used to get people picketing my offices, for instance, because they were against the purchase of some equipment for the military. That's changed, certainly, since the invasion. It seems to be going a different way.

Do you think that might hinder people who learn something and then go somewhere else after?

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, we'll have to leave the response to that question, which is an important question, to another time.

Our final four minutes go to Ms. O'Connell.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, both, for being here.

Dr. Okros, you talked about an example out of the U.K. that was doing it well, in terms of the family unit and supports.

Is there another jurisdiction, or maybe it is the U.K., that you think is doing it well and that Canada should look to, overall, on recruitment and retention issues? The kind of ultra masculine approach to the armed forces is not unique to Canada and sexual misconduct [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]. You worked in the U.S. a bit on the “don't ask, don't tell” policy. This is not unique. It is certainly a highly macho kind of industry, so how do you break down not only the stereotypes but also the reality of what's actually happening and the systemic issues?

Are there jurisdictions that kind of acknowledge the damage that this has done and have made significant progress, or have done really strategic things that either of you could point to? This is going to take a while to really flow through the system, but is there a jurisdiction that we could look to that you think has done a lot of positives in this regard?

• (1635)

**Dr. Alan Okros:** I have two quick comments, if I could. First, on retention, we mentioned the issue of housing. I would look to the Australians and their policies on housing. That's one place I'd look at.

Second, on the sexual harassment issue, certainly, the Five Eyes are all looking at the same issues at the same time. The general consensus from the other countries is that Canada is leading. Canada has been more willing to be open about it, to challenge it and to question it.

With the strategies that have been put forward over the last year—some that Paxton has spoken about—such as new policy announcements on the importance of inclusion and the importance of character, and the areas that senior leaders are talking about in terms of where the CAF is going to go, the Canadian Armed Forces

are leading the Five Eyes. They're all watching to see how these things work.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** Ms. Mayer, do you have anything to add to that?

**Paxton Mayer:** No, I think that's it.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** Fair enough.

I wanted to touch on something in terms of recruitment as well, in terms of cultural experiences. I've said this before at this committee, so my colleagues may have already heard this. I was in municipal politics before. We had a very similar [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] firefighters, new police officers that matched the diversity of our community, because many new Canadians, certainly their parents, at least, saw some of these institutions as not good places to be and not institutions they thought their children should not be in. I could imagine in some cultures, and some countries, Canadians that are now [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] comes with significant challenges.

Is there anything being done in jurisdictions to kind of break down that misperception about the value of joining CAF in this example?

**Dr. Alan Okros:** Just briefly, it's recognized and acknowledged, and there are efforts, but that's why I made my comment about it really requiring niche communications into specific communities. There are different reasons why members of some communities are reluctant to join the military.

Again, we're back to how this requires time, effort, money and, most importantly, people. That's why not as much of it has been done as should have been.

**The Chair:** Ms. Paxton, would you like to just finish us off with a brief statement?

**Paxton Mayer:** Do you mean brief statement towards that question?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Paxton Mayer:** We need resources to really discuss and communicate with these communities.

Again, I think the organizational change that needs to happen will impact this as well. Even if you are looking forward to working for the CAF some day, if you're hearing about all the harassment towards visible minorities, indigenous, LGBTQ+ and women, that's definitely going to deter you as well.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Before I suspend, I just want to thank both Ms. Mayer and Professor Okros on behalf of the committee. You've certainly launched our study in a very positive direction. It was very useful. Thank you for your thoughtful comments.

With that, colleagues, we'll suspend while we re-empanel.

• (1635)

(Pause)

• (1640)

**The Chair:** With that, we are re-empanelled.

For our second hour, we welcome Andrea Lane, defence scientist at the Defence Research and Development Canada's Centre for Operational Research and Analysis; and Madeleine Nicole Maillette.

I would now invite both of you to give your five-minute statements, starting with you, Ms. Lane.

**Ms. Andrea Lane (Defence Scientist, Centre for Operational Research and Analysis, Defence Research and Development Canada, As an Individual):** Thank you for the invitation to speak with you today.

I am a defence scientist, but I'm appearing as an individual. As such, I'm not really able to comment directly on current policy, except as it intersects with my research. I'm also a proud navy wife.

If I could begin with what I feel is the key factor in making recruitment and retention in the CAF so challenging, it is that there is no CAF culture. There is instead a thousand different microcultures within the CAF. Every service, every occupation, has a particular set of traditions, requirements, habits and vocabularies that are specific to it, and they are often at odds with those of other occupations.

A recruiting campaign that attracts someone to a very physical, aggressive and identity-based occupation like infanteer might actively discourage someone who is interested in becoming a search and rescue technician. Figuring out what universal patterns of behaviour are harmful—such as heavy drinking or sexual harassment—is the easy part. Understanding how things such as traditional but untested requirements for upper body strength to access certain occupations, and how those requirements potentially discriminate against women, is more complex and requires sensitive research and unit-level solutions.

This brings me to the second challenge, which is the tension between individuality and universality. In seeking to make the CAF more welcoming for people who don't fit the traditional mould of a rural, old-stock Canadian man with a stay-at-home wife, the CAF has instituted policies around dress and grooming, parental leave, posting, service couples and so on that are designed to support CAF members with different personal and family needs.

Unfortunately, the policies that benefit some members are perceived by others as disadvantaging them or as weakening a foundational aspect of military culture, such as the universality of service, which is sometimes voiced as “a soldier is a soldier is a soldier”. Even when leaders recognize that universality has always been code for white, anglophone and male, there is a very real concern that, beyond a certain point, individual accommodations destroy the esprit de corps that, for some members, is at the core of their military service.

This is seen as a cultural shift, but it is more accurately an economic transition. In previous decades, Canadians joining the CAF accepted a loss of autonomy for the protection of a career that could support a family on one income. This is a career where you move frequently but housing was available and subsidized, and where your kids moved from school to school but would meet old friends on base schools around the world. Now, the situation is dramatically different. Most families are dual income by choice or necessity, and many CAF bases are located in places where it is difficult for

spouses to find meaningful and gainful employment. Housing costs have skyrocketed, and CAF members who move frequently are at the mercy of the market, while others who stay in one place are making large profits.

The perks of CAF service no longer outweigh the loss of autonomy and the severe family strain it can create. Policies to support individuality can only go so far when the CAF is facing the structural and economic problems that are rooted in Canadian society writ large.

Finally, the third challenge is evidence. We know from prior research that women and other minorities face a wide range of barriers in mostly white, mostly male institutions such as the CAF. What we don't know is how to fix that in the specific context of the military. For example, if women are perceived as bossy, shrill or unlikely when they are assertive, this can make them a less effective leader. How do you tease the effects of sexism out from the reality that most women in the CAF will lead men for the bulk of their career? How do you distinguish a woman who is a poor leader from a woman who's experiencing the corrosive effects of sexism from her subordinates?

Every CAF advancement decision is noticed, discussed and dissected on social media and will be the subject of rumour and grievance, so being transparent about what is happening when people are promoted or not is key. When it comes to culture change, we don't know what best practices look like because war is a very difficult experimental condition to replicate. Every researcher and policy-maker who wants to change the bad aspects of CAF culture—sexism, sexual misconduct, racism, homophobia, groupthink, anti-intellectualism and cronyism—runs into the same argument: “Hey, this is what has worked in the past. How do I know your suggestions aren't going to get people killed?” The truthful answer is, I don't know.

What I do know is that the CAF is desperately short of people. The sexual misconduct scandals have broken Canadians' trust in their military, as well as CAF members' trust in their leadership. As Canadian society becomes more polarized, and as trust in institutions declines even further, the CAF must adapt to survive. One way it can adapt is by careful, evidence-based and transparent changes in culture, training and advancement.

Thank you. I welcome your questions on anything I've presented or on another aspect of recruitment, retention and culture change.

• (1645)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Lane.

We will now have Ms. Maillette for five minutes, please.

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette (As an Individual):** I would like to thank this panel for allowing me to be the voice for 200-plus active soldiers.

While talking with other veterans, I became aware of an increasing number of conversations in regard to the radicalization towards violent extremism within our Canadian military. I therefore met with privates, corporals and master corporals in the regular forces and asked two questions: If you are working in a known hostile environment, what keeps you there? What behaviours do you consider hostile?

Since August 2021, I have received close to 200 reported instances of hostile behaviours, which are added to my own experience at CFB Borden. I have witnessed the belittling of lower-rank soldiers outside of military places. This situation not only affects the retention of our military personnel, but it can also push members into violent outbursts or the acceptance that abuse is part of the training.

These are some of my findings.

First, the lack of immediate response by a higher-ranking officer witnessing any inappropriate comments made by middle-ranking officers toward lower-ranking soldiers is simply sending a message to both parties that this unprofessional behaviour is considered acceptable.

For example, in regard to the institution housing problem, there are comments like, "Have you thought about letting go of your sole-custody arrangement? This would make it easier for you to find a place to live." In regard to jokes, there is "Are you turning native on me?" or "Well, I hope we will not discover unmarked graves on our base." In regard to promotion, one could hear, "This is racism because you were only promoted because you are a woman, gay or a minority." In regard to attending family funerals, it could be, "Well, this person is not important enough for me to give you the bereavement time you need."

The data indicates that not one commissioned officer who heard those comments even acknowledged how inappropriate they were. This lack of immediate response ends up sending a message that the military has full control over a soldier's family, the right to grieve a family member and a person's racial identity.

Second, within the past two years, a few master corporals have identified moral issues within their own squadrons or divisions. Out of their own goodwill, they contacted commissioned officers in order to present solutions to these problems. In response to their inputs, these master corporals were threatened with a charge of sedition and treason, in particular if they persisted in bringing forth those problems. Fear of repercussion is found in all of the correspondence that I received. It takes an incredible amount of courage to talk to anyone in or outside of the military. A code of silence is imposed on all soldiers within our National Defence. Control through fear was found in 100% of my collected data.

Third, the obvious change in the military hierarchy can be identified by its previous pyramidal form to a ballooning distribution of ranks. The change in ratio of upper ranks to lower ranks is causing

fierce competition between peers, in particular when promotion is at play. Micromanagement becomes far more obvious because it includes microaggressive comments, lack of proper job distribution, belittling and ostracizing behaviours and wilful ignorance of unbecoming behaviours. Micromanagement is also conducive to the development of toxic environments.

Fourth, the DND grievance process is inadequate. Having had a conversation with individuals working in that department, I realized that the majority of complaints are seen as useless or unfounded, or are simply categorized as "human right issues", which means that a soldier's grievance is simply ignored. Therefore, this same soldier is now obligated to finance his or her own grievance.

Fifth, the medical department is fully aware of the location of these known toxic environments. They have acknowledged to many of my contacts that they are aware of departments causing mental health issues. However, since they do not have any power over other military sections, their solution is to medicate individuals who have no other choice but to return to these same toxic work environments.

• (1650)

This is an internal threat to the safety of our public, because some individuals have told me that they have advised their supervisor that they have not adapted to the new medication and would need some time to adjust. They were refused the right to go on sick leave. The feeling of anxiety associated to their inability to fully concentrate on their job increased the level of fear associated to causing the death of a co-worker.

**The Chair:** Ms. Maillette, I'm sorry to interrupt you. Could you wind it up as soon as possible, please?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** Okay.

In conclusion, retention is successful only when toxic behaviours are under control. It is also important to understand that toxicity induces a radicalization towards violent extremism.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Motz, please start your six-minute round.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Thank you very much, Chair.

Thank you to both witnesses for being here. You both have very unique perspectives, if you will, on the Canadian Armed Forces, both from serving in it and from having a family member in the forces. I want to ask you a couple of questions.

I'll start with you first, Ms. Lane. Your husband, you've said, is a navy officer right now. He's in the navy. Would he do it again? Would you want him to do it again if he had a choice to start over, given the current environment of the military?

**Ms. Andrea Lane:** I hesitate to speak for him, but I think he would. He has had a very fulfilling career in spite of the ups and downs.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Would you want him to?

**Ms. Andrea Lane:** I think I would as well, although I would acknowledge that it has been difficult. It has had an impact not only on my career but on our kids' lives. There's something to be said for seeing your spouse satisfied and happy in their work. For him, that's been in the navy. I don't think it's the only place he'd be happy, but if he said to me, "I wish to do it all over again", I would support him.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Thank you.

Ms. Maillette, you have served. Thank you for your service.

If you were to start 1980 over again in 2022, would you do that?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** In 2022...? No, I would not.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Why is that?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** Because of my contact with soldiers right now, I see how the environment is more toxic now compared with when I was serving.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** As a country, we've certainly been aware of some of the challenges that exist within the military.

In this committee, we were remarking in the break about how this committee is great, in that we have a common goal and interest, which is Canada's national security: the ability for our military to defend our country, to have the tools necessary to do so, to retain and recruit people and to fix the challenges that exist within it. Together as a group, we have recommendations that have been made in the past, over the years, whether it be in the last six years for some of them or even in the last 10 or 15 years.

There are areas in the military that have to be fixed. What do we need to do?

To answer both your questions, one coming from your perspective, Ms. Maillette, and one coming from yours, Ms. Lane... I could ask you the same question, Ms. Lane. You were a reservist. Would you want to now join the military as a regular member in 2022?

• (1655)

**Ms. Andrea Lane:** Yes, I was briefly in the reserves in the U.K. I personally wouldn't wish to join currently, but I welcome your questions that relate more to my professional research as well.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** That's my point. My point is that our role here is to try to better our military, to find out why people aren't staying in the military and why we can't recruit people appropriately. We're at least 7,500 short across the board—I've heard it's up to 10,000—with respect to CAF, to the navy and the air force, etc. We have challenges with the misconduct that has been going on. How do we fix it?

You're both academics and have done research. How do we fix what's broken in a way that continues to serve those who serve our country honourably and deals with those who may not have?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** Can I answer this one?

**Mr. Glen Motz:** You can both answer.

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** I am a quantitative researcher. I always look for data that shows me something I'm not expecting.

What I would do right now is get the clearance to enter any medical documentation and figure out where the toxic environments are. By knowing the number of soldiers who are medicated and auditing their medication, it would give an idea of where the toxic environments are—in which squadron or division—and then you have a better idea of where to start.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Go ahead, Ms. Lane.

**Ms. Andrea Lane:** My answer would be slightly different. Mine would be to start with a conversation with Canadians as a whole about what we see as the role of the Canadian Armed Forces going forward, and how we adapt that to what we foresee Canadians deciding going forward.

Many of the challenges that the CAF faces currently—and, as you say, has faced for 15 to 20 years—are related to challenges that Canada as a whole faces in terms of who we are as a country, who we see as our allies, what we see as our history and what we see as our future. For many Canadians, that has been in flux quite a bit. We saw the disruptive influences of the Trump presidency in the United States of how Canadians viewed that traditionally, very allied relationship with the U.S. With the invasion of Ukraine now, we see it in Germany's foreign policy posture changing.

Many in Canada are re-evaluating that safety and peacefulness that we have largely felt since the end of the Cold War, and the CAF is an important part of that—

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, Mr. Motz hasn't left you enough time to really expand your thoughts on that important question.

Mr. May, you have six minutes.

**Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to both of you for being here to kick off this study.

My questions will be to Andrea Lane. I will keep my questions to your specific research. You've written about the gendering of the armed forces—particularly, the combat-focused roles—and the popularly accepted link between masculinity and soldiering. You've also noted the link between the need to reinforce the masculinity of soldiering with the reinforcement of the most negative aspects of masculinity, which we would now refer to, perhaps, as toxic masculinity.

How does this influence the issues we are seeing in the forces, including sexual misconduct and various forms of discrimination?

• (1700)

**Ms. Andrea Lane:** Thank you for that question. I will do my best to answer it, but with the caveat that it's extremely complex.

I should note that there's a distinction between what you correctly identified as toxic masculinity and masculinity more generally, and also between toxic masculinity and men. Some effects of the gender culture of the CAF are simply because there are a lot of men in the CAF, and it's an institution that has traditionally been built around men. Some of those effects are neutral or even beneficial. As a woman who works in the defence communities, I sometimes joke that, aside from having to hear about sports all the time, the negative masculine characteristics in my workday are not that extreme. However, there's that particular linkage between a very physical idea of what it is to become a man, that sort of toughness, and the aggression that is sometimes cultured even in Canadian society, but particularly in military training. There is an aspect of dominance, and sometimes even sexual dominance, that can be built into those narratives even unwittingly.

We see it in popular culture as well. The hero of a movie about war is often a hit with the ladies, for example. If you don't think about that critically, you don't realize what the plot line of the romance in the movie is. Can we recognize the fact that it's extremely heteronormative that we associate masculinity with heterosexual sexual prowess and that kind of thing?

It's very difficult to untangle this, the positive or neutral aspects of masculinity and men, from toxic masculinity and how it affects sexual harassment in the military, because what we're essentially getting at is the core identity of the people who serve. There's a proud tradition of being extremely fit and extremely resilient physically, especially within the army combat arms. It's very hard to say that some of that swagger or braggadocio is harmful to your female colleagues because they feel excluded from it, or they feel threatened by it, without also threatening the core of what it can mean for those men to be men and to be soldiers.

I think societally we do a very bad job of explaining what positive masculinity looks like or even discussing positive masculinity. Sometimes I will hear from my CAF colleagues, "I don't grope women. I don't make sexist jokes, but am I toxic? Am I a toxic masculine person simply by virtue of being a man in the military?" Of course the answer is no, but it's very difficult to discuss something as severe as sexual harassment and sexual misconduct without making it about individuals, almost unintentionally.

I don't know if I've answered your question. I'm sorry.

**Mr. Bryan May:** No, that's great. That's fantastic. I was going to jump in, and then I thought that hearing from you on this makes a lot more sense than hearing from me, to be quite honest.

You talked in your opening remarks about culture and that, I think rightfully, it's not as simple as one culture. There are multiple cultures. I preface this next question with that. I'm wondering how culture change efforts could improve the ability of women and diverse groups to succeed in combat—for instance, by creating an environment where people are assessed solely on their ability to do the tasks of a soldier and not on their ability to conform to a traditional masculine gender.

**Ms. Andrea Lane:** As a researcher, of course I'm going to say that we need more research, but the answer is to figure out which parts of the traditional aspects of physical tests to differentiate between the combat roles are necessary, and which are kind of left

over from a more traditional military evaluation of what it means to be a soldier. There are definitely baseline fitness aspects to jobs like being in the infantry or being in the army combat arms. There's no way of getting around that. You have to be able to lift things over your head and all sorts of other things that could be challenging for some women to achieve. The difference is that not every requirement has been fully evaluated as being necessary.

To know which parts of traditional soldiering are necessary and which parts of traditional soldiering are just kind of traditional requires pretty honest research. I say "honest" because sometimes the answers to those questions disappoint people like me, who are strong advocates for women in the combat arms, for example. If the research tells me that, actually, being able to lift 65 pounds over my head is a requirement for the job, I'm not necessarily going to like that answer, but I think for the research to be genuine, and for it to treat people in the military with fairness, we have to be ready to find out things that we don't necessarily want to find out as advocates and researchers.

• (1705)

**The Chair:** We're going to have to, unfortunately, leave the answer there.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Normandin, you have six minutes.

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Thank you, Mr. chair.

I'd like to thank the two witnesses for their opening remarks.

**Dr. Maillette,** culture change in the military can take time. However, have the people you met with proposed short-term solutions to improve recruitment and retention in the armed forces?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** Solutions to improve recruitment were indeed proposed. In terms of retention, it would be important to reinstate the cost of living differential, which was cancelled and has not been reviewed since 2009. This would help the military, whether they are privates or master corporals, financially.

Of course, the provision of private married quarters, or PMQs, on bases is very important. For example, small trailers or small modular homes could be installed.

There is a lot of discussion around the transfer of military personnel, but it never includes their family members. Today, in many places, a family has to have two salaries to be financially comfortable, so the family should be considered, as other witnesses have already said.

Soldiers starting at the bottom also experience difficulties. These soldiers, when they take courses in military establishments, have to pay for their accommodation and food, in addition to having to pay for an apartment that they have to leave for their training. A sum of \$700 a month is not much to pay for an apartment.

If changes could be made now to address these four areas, it could be a game changer.



**Ms. Christine Normandin:** You talked about the impact on the family.

Since you used to be in the military, can you tell us whether the armed forces have changed their approach to the family, or is the situation the same as it was several years ago?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** Dr. Okros talked about it. When I was in the military, there were resources for families. When a member was transferred, their family was taken care of, which is less and less the case these days. Today, it's the soldier who is transferred, not the family. The way things are done has certainly changed since 1980.

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Thank you very much.

I'm now going to talk about culture change. Our two witnesses for this second hour are researchers. They know that in order to properly identify problems and provide the right solutions, the right diagnosis must be made. However, researchers face difficulties when they conduct studies to understand the problems in the armed forces.

Dr. Maillette, you had already started talking about it. Could you keep going?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** The first issue is security clearance in the military. The academic researcher's normal security clearance gives them access to classified confidential information. However, a secret or top secret clearance gives them access to much more information. If people want to access documents that say "Protected A", they will not have access to all the information, because those documents will be blacked out. These documents are only accessible to individuals with a confidential security clearance.

There is a second problem. In basic training, soldiers, or non-commissioned officers, are taught that they must never, ever contradict someone of a higher rank. This is instilled in recruits on the first day of training.

If asked by an academic researcher, the soldier will immediately consider that person an officer. The response will not contradict what the researcher is asking for, so the researcher does not really get adequate answers.

• (1710)

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Studies have been done on the toxic environment in the armed forces. Do you know who the researchers were and who the respondents were?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** To my knowledge, there have been several studies on the circumstances leading to a toxic environment, but in several cases they were conducted by researchers who were officers. Of course, when the research is done by an officer, the soldier will make sure not to contradict the officer. He will give the answer that is expected.

Some research contained valid data, but it was generally superficial. To have more in-depth data, you first have to find people to interview and then have access to data to analyze their testimony.

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** What can we do to find these respondents and get a better picture of what's happening on the ground?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** For the answers to be more reliable, it would have to be master corporals asking soldiers, corporals and master corporals. So it should be limited to that group, which would be much more able to give reliable answers.

As far as sergeants and warrant officers are concerned, the researcher should have the same rank as the interviewees. It should be the same for officers.

[English]

**The Chair:** Madam Mathysen, you have six minutes, please.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Thank you.

In the previous panel, one of the witnesses talked about exit interviews and performing those.

Madame Maillette, you were talking about that data. Without the influence of armed forces members being active, ones who were already out of the system, would that provide you with better data, because they wouldn't be held to that "don't contradict the higher-ranked officer". Is that what I could get from that?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** Can I tell you personally?

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Absolutely.

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** Whether I want it or not, that contradiction is ingrained in me. I am terrified of contradicting somebody I would perceive to have a higher rank than mine, and I've been away—

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Even after service...?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** Yes, after service.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Understood.

Can you explain, both witnesses I suppose, about housing? We have also heard a lot about that infrastructure and the supports that are required in terms of the cost of housing and the provision that used to exist with housing.

We also heard about child care. I've heard about that, particularly from officers, parents, who are serving. A lot of people believe that housing is provided on base and that there was a provision of barracks. What used to exist, how has that changed and when did it change?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** I can answer that one for CFB Borden. CFB Borden has destroyed a tremendous number of old PMQs within the last 10 to 15 years. That is causing a housing problem for the soldiers. The infrastructure like the water and the sanitary systems are still in place, but the houses are not there anymore. It would take nothing to put trailers or mini-homes there.

**Ms. Andrea Lane:** One of the fundamental issues is that there has been a change in the way that the housing provided by the military—when it is provided—is regarded as a taxable benefit under Treasury Board rules. Previously, the CAF was able to provide subsidized housing with a subsidy, but that was deemed a taxable benefit, which meant that CAF housing had to be offered at market rates. You can imagine, as with any institutional landlord, that it's very hard to maintain your housing stock at market rates such that families want to live in them.

The other change has been in people's expectations around what family living looks like. I live in a house that was built in the early 1970s, as some CAF PMQs were. It's considered quaintly small by most of my friends who live further out of town in larger, more modern houses. Part of what's happening is an economic thing around taxation, and part of it is around people's expectations around what housing looks like.

• (1715)

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** I certainly know what that's about. We have a lot of those sorts of barracks, smaller individual homes in London, where we used to have Wolseley Barracks. I can picture that exactly.

I sat on status of women, and we published a report on sexual misconduct in the military. A lot of witnesses spoke about women leaving and, of course, not joining in the first place in terms of the CAF. One of the recommendations from the report was that the Government of Canada publish a strategy with clear performance metrics to attract, promote and retain women and other minorities in the Canadian Armed Forces. That included comparative metrics around the numbers of women and minorities by trade, classification and rank; length of time of service and rank; those command positions and length of all that service.

Do you support the recommendation of that consistent reporting and then that reporting being reported to Parliament?

**Ms. Andrea Lane:** This is veering into current policy.

I can say, as a researcher on this kind of issue, that more data is always better and disaggregated data is the gold standard. Knowing why it is women pilots above the rank of brigadier-general, for example, are leaving the forces, versus knowing why male privates with a Pakistani background are leaving, those are important data points. Whether or not we understand what we're seeing in a one-year to five-year timeline, when you start to be able to see trends from the disaggregated data, then it allows you to really know what is going on.

Your colleague, Madame Normandin, asked a question about the challenges of collecting this research, and one of the challenges is that, particularly around sexual misconduct, if you ask 15 women how to make their time in the CAF better, you will get 15 different answers and all of them are valid and all of them have policy recommendations attached to them, but often, those recommendations are at complete odds and ends with each other. It's very difficult to take really personal information about people's experiences, fears and hopes and make policy recommendations for that, because you'll have just as many people say that is the last thing they want.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Madame Maillette was nodding, so I assume she agreed with that.

**The Chair:** That's good; then we don't have to ask her again.

Colleagues, the chair is in the same dilemma, which is we have 25 minutes' worth of questions to be done in 20 minutes, so if our five-minute round becomes four minutes—four, four, one, one, four and four—maybe we'll get through it.

Mr. Dowdall, go ahead for four minutes, please.

**Mr. Terry Dowdall:** I want to take an opportunity to thank our presenters today and get back to my colleague's question. I don't know if you were on the first part, but Base Borden is within my riding and I was the mayor there, so we worked often together with the base commander on social issues that would involve the spouse. Like I said, we implemented a bus system that ran to the city, because a lot of them could only afford one car perhaps. For getting jobs, I heard earlier that it can be difficult to get employment in the area. When you get back to the housing, and I said this in the last one on the cost of the housing, I think we're way behind already and we have these concerns. I said this on the last one.

What concrete things should we do now that are actually going to make change that is attainable without great debate, whether it's politically or whatever it might be, to hopefully change some of these things that are going on there and help the people who are frustrated and who are part of the organization now, and even veterans before, a lot of whom are facing some tough times out there. What can we do right now that could be the low-hanging fruit so that we can get ahead of the game?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** Can I speak for the soldiers and what they've asked for?

**The Chair:** By all means.

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** What the soldiers who spoke to me asked for is a review and reinstating of the post living differential, that would help right now, and 200-plus soldiers were saying that.

• (1720)

**Mr. Terry Dowdall:** Did you have anything to add, Ms. Lane?

**Ms. Andrea Lane:** The difficulty with the post living differential is that the base rate is Ottawa. I think any of us who are experienced with the Ottawa real estate market know that it has experienced a tremendous growth in the past couple of years, so everything being tied to living in Ottawa doesn't actually address the cost of living in Ottawa. I have heard that people are reluctant to take postings to the HQs and other establishments in Ottawa, because if you're moving from Wainwright, Petawawa or Oromocto, for example, the money you're getting from selling your house there does not come close to getting you a house in Ottawa.

As to what the solution is, it's complicated. One thing I think is important to note is that, as many people who are losing on the real estate market, they all know colleagues and friends who are winning. That disparity between whether your family's move resulted in a financial loss and hearing about somebody whose family's move resulted in their earning \$300,000 that you didn't, that actually sets up people for a tremendous amount of grievance within the service, so it's a retention issue and a morale issue as well. I'm afraid I don't have a solution for that.

**Mr. Terry Dowdall:** I'll ask one other question.

When we talk about recruiting people, do you think we're doing enough, perhaps educationally, with parents and communities to understand what it means to be part of the CAF? Are we starting early enough, like in the schools, and really showcasing the different aspects and the different careers that can come out of it?

**The Chair:** Be very brief in your answer.

**Ms. Andrea Lane:** In the U.K. they do have more interaction with the schools, but I should note that across the country you will get very many visceral reactions, either positive or negative, to the idea that the military will be involved in your schools. You should probably recognize that there's no national answer. The uptake for that and the desire to have that sort of reach by the military varies quite dramatically region to region and is potentially a national unity issue.

Yes, there are other countries that do it. I'm not sure I would recommend it as a Canadian solution particularly.

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

Mr. Fisher, go ahead for four minutes, please.

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to both of our witnesses for being here today.

Ms. Lane, you said numerous times that this is complex and complicated. I certainly appreciate that. Your comment about asking 15 people 15 different exit questions and getting 15 different answers speaks volumes to the complexity in all of this.

Ms. Lane, I'd like to talk about universality of service or, more specifically, maybe the modernization of universality of service. Do our allies in NATO have a more stringent, more rigid universality of service? Is that something that has positively impacted retention and recruitment in other countries?

**Ms. Andrea Lane:** I'm not familiar enough with NATO countries more broadly. I can speak to a couple of countries that have invested in this differently in the context of their military service.

For example, Israel has a program in which they have required military service. Because they are responsible for accepting basically all citizens, they have established military service for people who are neurodivergent, for example, people on the autistic spectrum, and have found a way to have meaningful involvement by neurodivergent people within their military.

In the United States there is more concern with injured veterans, particularly from the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. In the same way that Canada has a few ways that people who have been injured

can continue to serve, I think that's really the best way of thinking about how we can expand those exemptions, particularly when we start looking at recruiting people in non-traditional occupations like cyber-operator. Is there a way of thinking about how we connect promotion to supervising, and could we perhaps look at disentangling those so people could maintain their one job without having to necessarily advance in a way that is traditionally viewed as "military", by, for example, taking on supervisory work, and instead could kind of stay with their preferred cyber job at their computer or whatever?

I'm sorry that I'm simplifying that a little bit, but there certainly are other countries that have expanded the definition of what it means to be able to "serve". Oftentimes, that is rooted in more of a national service or semi-conscripted version of what military service is.

• (1725)

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** Certainly, with a hundred-some types of jobs and a willingness or a need for us to have more diverse Canadians and perhaps members of the disability community participating in our military, I think it's something that.... Would you suggest that this is possibly a way forward?

**Ms. Andrea Lane:** I think so, and again I think my colleague Dr. Okros noted that, if you have people who can't, for example, deploy, then you are sort of taking billets from people who can deploy who might need, for family reasons, to have a rotation at home so that they're not at sea, for example.

All of these things are good ideas in principle. I hate to sound like a broken record, but the sort of second and third order effects what it means to have a population within the CAF who can live only in Toronto, for example, and can't be posted to Wainwright or Oromocto. I hate to pick on Wainwright, but it's top of mind. There are all sorts of other kind of follow-on effects that need to be examined before any of these is taken in. For example, I think beta-testing having people with various cognitive or physical disabilities joining the CAF as a test program could be a way forward potentially.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry to say that Mr. Fisher's time is up. He is down to one second. Those were great questions too.

Madame Normandin will demonstrate to all of you how you can ask a question in one minute and elicit amazing information.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

As we know, many military personnel who leave the forces end up in the public service or in the paramilitary sector.

Does this have an impact on these environments, given the culture in the forces, where the working environment can be toxic?

Does this culture transfer to other settings afterwards?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** Is your question for me?

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Yes.

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** I'm not allowed to talk about my work or say where I work and what I do.

However, I can say that this culture developed in the forces does transfer to other settings. Positions that put people in a certain position of authority attract retired officers. So the military culture is starting to spread in the public service, and we're starting to see aspects of that, including the code of silence.

We see other things, but I can't discuss them because I'm not allowed to.

[English]

**The Chair:** Madame Normandin, you demonstrated my point.

Madam Mathysen, you have one minute. It's a challenge.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** I don't know if I'm going to meet it.

Ms. Lane, you were talking about those countries that have required service. I think about the idea that the military is one long career and only one. I often heard that a lot of companies were trying to reach out in terms of the military to show the progression of what service could mean. They show what is being trained and how that leads into a different career and different stages.

In terms of that private sector grouping, is that something the Canadian government should focus more on?

**Ms. Andrea Lane:** In terms of doing more to support veterans transitions, I think there are quite a few initiatives already. Particularly in the public service where I work now, there is a veterans hiring priority. I think perhaps more could be done to make people within the private service more aware of the skills that people in the CAF can bring.

Honestly, I think that former service people are the best spokespeople themselves. Often you'll have those individual networks that have been created by people who have retired from the CAF, where so-and-so got hired and you join them. It's not as if people who have retired from the CAF need help themselves in developing those skills so much as civilians perhaps need to be more familiar with what those skills are.

More broadly, it's that Canadians don't know that much about their military in general.

• (1730)

**The Chair:** Thank you. Unfortunately, that is very true.

Madam Findlay, you have four minutes, please.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** I'm not sure which one of you can answer this: What is the educational level of the average recruit? Do you know?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** According to the 200 individuals who answered, most of them have finished high school, which is different from what we had before. A lot of them have a first year of college or a first year of university.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Do you know what portion of the recruits are male or female?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** It's equal male and female.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Do you know what portion of recruits are indigenous?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** No, I'm sorry. I cannot answer that.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** In your opinion, do you think Canadians join the Canadian Forces to be peacekeepers and to fight if necessary, or to fight climate change?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** The people I talked to are looking to be peacekeepers. When it comes to climate change, if it can help someone, yes they will. If it doesn't, then no, they won't. They would rather be peacekeepers.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** They don't have specialized training on climate change. Is that correct?

When they are deployed for those services, I'm told that often they end up just kind of keeping things in order because they don't actually have training in firefighting or flood control specifically. Is that correct?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** I'm sorry. I cannot answer this one. I don't know.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** What kinds of inducements are available and do you think should be available to get people to join the Canadian Forces? Better support for families sounds as though it would be one of them.

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** That is one of them. Another is changing the way that instruction given to the soldier is recognized in certain academic functions. In certain areas, it's not recognized at all, and that is causing a problem for some soldiers to advance in academia.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Some people in service actually... I've seen many who have obtained a high level of education through the support of the armed forces. Is that not correct?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** Yes, that is correct. However, some of the instruction they get in the military training is, sometimes, simply not recognized in the public service.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** I was a little disturbed by your testimony. You said there was a lack of bereavement time given. What do you mean by that?

Were people who lost a family member not allowed leave to deal with that? Is that what you're talking about?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** That's exactly what I'm saying.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** What kind of reason was given?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** Military policy is very specific as to the kind of bereavement you are allowed to have or not allowed to have.

Let's say that you lose an aunt, who was your mother for 20 years. Because she's an "aunt", you will not get the bereavement leave, even though you considered her to be your mother.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** I take it that what you're saying is that these are not looked at as individual cases. It's like a grid, and you either fit the grid or you don't fit the grid, which is extremely impersonal and not conducive to a happy workplace.

Is that what you're telling us?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** That's exactly what I'm saying.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Findlay.

As a point of clarification, you said that the percentage of male and female recruitment was equal, yet the composition of the forces is clearly not equal between males and females. Could you clarify that point, please?

**Dr. Madeleine Nicole Maillette:** No, it's obviously.... Recruitment by the individual—male versus female—is absolutely not equal. I think I was answering that the education level—male and female—is equal.

• (1735)

**The Chair:** Thank you for that clarification.

Madam Lambropoulos, you have the final four minutes.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't think I'll be taking up the entire four minutes.

Something that stuck out to me in Ms. Lane's testimony was the fact that.... We spoke about family benefits and the fact that the CAF doesn't necessarily take into account when someone has a family that many Canadian families now have two incomes and not just one, either by choice or by necessity. What changes would you make to the benefits that are there for families?

You also mentioned something that struck me a little, which was that people who don't have families and are in the CAF may not see changes to the way the benefits benefit families in a great way. What do you think would make it fair for those who don't have families? What kinds of benefits do you think are necessary or important to include?

**Ms. Andrea Lane:** Strictly in the context of my own personal opinion as a researcher and spouse, and not as a DND employee, I think one thing that could dramatically change the way that dual spouses are able to handle military life—as well as increase recruitment from ethnic minorities and new Canadians—would be to reinstate having CAF establishments in our major cities, the way that we did prior to a variety of base closures in I believe the 1990s. The places where people live in Canada—especially young people, non-white people, new Canadians and tech people—are not necessarily where we have our main military installations, so there's a disconnect there. If you're an ambitious young person in a couple and you want to join the military, it's very hard to uproot your entire life and go and live in a small town in a different province, in a rural community that you've never experienced. That would solve two birds with one stone.

In terms of the fairness question, I think almost every policy that is family friendly can be made “individual friendly” as well in terms of having the flexibility to take leave, for example, whether you need to care for a newborn child, you want to take a master's degree or you have elder care responsibilities. Every Canadian and every CAF member has something in their lives that they could use a bit of institutional flexibility with. Currently we have policies that

are designed for families, obviously, because that's a main concern, but to be able to involve people who don't necessarily have what we think of as a traditional family—to extend those leave options, for example, to parents or siblings or loved ones in different contexts—would be one way of making policies feel a little more fair, I think.

Nobody really wants to have a lot of sympathy for the single person who doesn't have kids and who's grumbling about taking the weekends so that their partner's colleagues can.... The reality is that more and more people are choosing to be child free or to live in relationships that don't look quite like traditional marriages, and we have to value their contributions as well and take their concerns seriously. There is some room there for improvement, I think.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** Thank you very much.

I'll cede the rest of my time, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Mr. Fisher is keen to get the 40 seconds.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** Thank you very much for that, Ms. Lambropoulos. I'll take that 40 seconds with Ms. Lane, if I could.

What does this most recent Russian aggression do for recruitment? I'm from the era of *Top Gun*, when that drove U.S. recruitment through the roof. Does this hinder it for Canada or does this enhance it?

**Ms. Andrea Lane:** I think it remains to be seen. As Dr. Okros said, people join the CAF for all sorts of different reasons. We did see a bump during the conflict in Afghanistan from people who really wanted to serve their country in particularly a combat way. I think we can expect there to be more awareness of the Canadian Armed Forces as a career, and if the anticipated procurement projects come into force, new kit is always an exciting thing that you can promote in recruiting ads and that sort of thing. I'm not sure if the F-35 counts as a “top gun” or not.

Yes, I would suspect that there will be an increase in interest in the CAF, but I think it remains to be seen whether that will actually lead to an increase in recruitment. More importantly, are the people who are interested in joining the CAF because of the war in Ukraine likely to remain in the CAF when the war in Ukraine goes away? I think that's again a different question.

• (1740)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Fisher. You've now ruined all those *Top Gun* movies for me and for probably everyone else on the committee. My goodness.

With that, I want to thank both of you. You were extraordinary witnesses. You've certainly helped launch our study on recruitment and retention in a positive way, and both of you have set out the complexities that are faced by the government, by the military and, indeed, by Canadian society. Again, thanks to both of you for this hour of your time. It has been hugely valuable.

With that, the meeting is adjourned.





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