



National Defence

Défense nationale

Deputy Minister

Sous-ministre

National Defence Headquarters
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0K2

Quartier général de la Défense nationale
Ottawa, (Ontario)
K1A 0K2

APR 30 2018

The Honourable Kevin Sorenson
Chair, Standing Committee on Public Accounts
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Sorenson,

As agreed upon in the Government Response to the Thirtieth Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled *Report 5, Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention, of the Fall 2016 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, National Defence submits its response to Recommendations 1-8, due 30 April 2018.

Sincerely,

Jody Thomas

Enclosures: 1

Canada 

Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention

As requested by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts in its *Report 5, Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention, of the Fall 2016 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, the Department of National Defence submits its response to Recommendations 1-8.

This response illustrates the significant measures taken by National Defence to address issues highlighted by the Auditor General and the Committee in its report. In the spirit of openness and transparency, the response also provides an update on plans to release the Operation GENERATION Directive this spring or early summer. This Directive was developed following a series of comprehensive planning conferences in 2017, which resulted in the decision to adopt a systematic and holistic approach to requirements, recruiting, production and retention.

The Directive identifies problems in the recruiting system, recognises that it does not meet the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF) strategic objectives, and acknowledges that more is required than incremental and isolated improvements. It will provide direction to examine key parts of the system and stipulate that fundamental changes be made throughout the recruitment and training process.

Greater diversity will be a focus of the Directive. National Defence will concentrate on how its recruiting, production and retention processes move it closer to achieving its enrolment targets for women and other Employment Equity groups. The changes it implements will make the CAF a more attractive place for everyone to work, and the Department is confident they will also contribute to system-wide improvements in recruitment and retention.

National Defence is implementing process improvements that will enhance recruitment and retention across each of its 102 occupations, as well as improve diversity across the force. The Department has begun by taking a holistic approach, conscious that there are a range of "macro-level" improvements to be made that will enhance the CAF system as a whole. National Defence will implement these improvements, evaluate their effectiveness, and then explore more detailed changes.

Recommendation 1

That, by 30 April 2018, National Defence provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to achieving the representation goals of women in each occupation in the Canadian Armed Forces.

In Report 5, *Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention – National Defence*, of the Auditor General's Fall 2016 Reports, the Auditor General recommended that National Defence "should establish appropriate representation goals for women for each occupation. It should also develop and implement measures to achieve them."

National Defence agreed with the Auditor General's recommendation and stated that, in addition to establishing a systematic and holistic approach to requirements, recruiting and retention in the near future, it had already developed a recruiting, advertising and marketing campaign in support of key recruitment priorities, including women. It also stated that it would use a Gender-Based Analysis (Plus) for its current recruitment process, and that – as part of recruiting more women as well as other under-represented groups into the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) – it would introduce priority processing, reopen closed or inactive files, and stand up the Recruiting and Diversity Task Force.

Canada's defence policy, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, outlines a new vision for the CAF: to reflect the diversity of the country it defends. National Defence is committed to attracting, recruiting and retaining more women across all ranks and promoting women into senior leadership positions. The goal is that, by 2026, women will make up 25% of the CAF population. Part of the Department's approach since the Auditor General's report has been to assess which programs have delivered results and terminate those that have not, so as to redirect resources towards more promising initiatives. Although the Department is still in the early stages of its recruitment drive, its efforts so far have yielded an increase in the percentage of women enrolled in the Regular Force and Primary Reserves: 14.9% in April 2016; 15.2% in March 2017; and 15.4% in February 2018. This past recruiting year saw the largest intake of women in the past several years.

Generally, the Department has begun by taking a force-wide rather than occupation-specific approach to this task. That is, it has been focusing more on increasing the number of female recruits entering the organisation than on distributing them across it, conscious that *volume* is the prerequisite to achieving better representation across occupations.

Ongoing Initiatives

As part of its efforts to recruit more women into the CAF, National Defence has taken immediate action in a number of areas:

- Recruitment of women from the general public;
- Re-enrolment of female former members of the CAF; and
- Recruitment planning.

Recruitment from the general public

Women are a focus of National Defence's recruiting, advertising and marketing campaign in support of recruitment. National Defence's recruitment strategy involves a combination of national, regional and local attractions and marketing campaigns. This effort is ongoing and still in its early stages.

Since September 2016, National Defence has also been working to increase to 25% the percentage of women enrolled at Canadian Military Colleges. A number of initiatives were taken with this aim in mind, including giving priority to female applicants who meet the enrolment standards for their desired occupations. The selection process for the academic year starting September 2018 is ongoing, but preliminary statistics indicate that of the 212 offers accepted to date, 46 (21.7%) are women.

In terms of recruitment of women specifically, a program called "Women in Force" was established in 2017 to inform and educate women about the benefits of a CAF career. This program was highlighted in Maclean's magazine in 2017. Four pilot courses of three and ten days' duration (two of each course) were conducted in the August to October 2017 timeframe. Ninety-eight women attended, of whom 34 have since enrolled. A decision on whether to continue the pilot program is being studied.

The CAF also re-engaged women applicants who had started, but not finished, the application process, to encourage them to consider employment with the CAF again. Of the 1,244 women contacted, only 17 enrolled – a success rate of 1.4%. Given the minimal returns, the campaign was terminated on 30 August 2017.

Re-enrolment of female former CAF members

The CAF also offered some former female members who had left the armed forces the opportunity to return on a full-time or part-time basis, depending on their personal situations and the reasons they had left. From December 2016 to March 2017, 175 letters of offer were sent to women on the Supplementary Reserve List whose former military occupations had vacant positions. Eight women re-enrolled, with no new additional enrolments foreseen from this endeavour. No plans have been made yet to continue this program.

Recruitment planning

In 2017, the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group used a Gender-Based Analysis (Plus) (GBA+) for the current Canadian Forces Aptitude Test to determine whether it contained any bias against women. The test is used both as a screening device, to ensure that all military personnel possess the minimum skills necessary to succeed in the basic training phase, and as an occupations guide, to place potential candidates in the military occupations that best suit their interests and abilities. It consists of 60 questions on verbal skills, spatial ability and problem-solving. The Recruiting Group's analysis concluded that the test did not contain any bias against women.

To help guide it in its actions, National Defence is using long-range planning models to develop annual occupational recruitment plans that will include representation of women in each occupational group, but not necessarily setting representation targets. These models involve the development and implementation of a five-year target with an action plan for each occupation to meet all recruiting needs. Long-range planning models will continue to be refined with each planning cycle.

Longer-term strategy

In parallel with the ongoing actions previously identified, further changes will be made once the Operation GENERATION Directive is issued by the Deputy Minister and Chief of the Defence Staff. As it implements this direction, National Defence will be focusing on how the improvements it makes to its recruiting, production and retention processes move it closer to achieving its enrolment targets for women and make the CAF a more attractive place for women to work.

Recommendation 2

That, by 30 April 2018, National Defence provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to achieving the representation goals of other designated groups—including visible minorities and members of Canada’s Indigenous peoples—as identified in the Employment Equity Act, for each occupation in the Canadian Armed Forces.

In Report 5, *Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention – National Defence, of the Fall 2016 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, the Auditor General stated that “National Defence, under the Employment Equity Act, must identify and eliminate employment barriers and take measures to ensure that women and other designated groups are appropriately represented, taking into account the need for operational effectiveness.”

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts took the Auditor General’s reference to the Employment Equity Act as its starting point and asked that National Defence detail its progress in achieving the representation goals of designated groups other than women (addressed in Recommendation 1), namely visible minorities and members of Canada’s Indigenous peoples.

In response, National Defence stated that the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) had drawn up a Diversity Strategy and Action Plan to help develop a more diverse organisation by ensuring its recruitment process was responsive to the changing demographics of the Canadian labour market. It also stated that it was working towards a more diverse approach to career management that would better balance CAF members’ needs with those of the organisation.

Diversity Strategy and Action Plan

The Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy and Action Plan were approved by the Chief of the Defence Staff in January 2017. This Plan, which promotes an institution-wide culture that embraces diversity and inclusion, and ensures initiatives and programs remain sound and relevant. The CAF Strategy also includes the Employment Equity Plan 2015-2020 for the CAF, which does the following:

- provides recruiting goals;
- describes how the goals were defined after consultation with internal and external stakeholders;
- outlines the appointment of various Employment Equity Champions;
- explains the involvement of four Defence Advisory Groups on Women, Visible Minorities, Indigenous Peoples and Persons with Disabilities;
- establishes various committees outlined in the Employment Equity and Diversity Programme Committee Structure; and
- lays out actions required to achieve the goals.

National Defence remains committed to increasing the representation of Indigenous Peoples and visible minorities to 3.5%, and 11.8% respectively, as outlined in the plan. Actions taken to that end include reinforcing diversity in the identity of the Canadian Armed Forces and its doctrine, modernising career management and all policies to support diversity and inclusion, and conducting targeted research to better understand diversity within the Department of National Defence.

Progress to date

The CAF is undertaking the task of recruiting Employment Equity (EE) groups (Women, Indigenous Peoples and visible minorities) to ensure it represents the diversity of Canadian society. Actions taken over the past year include various diversity-related initiatives such as priority processing, advertising and marketing, and the reopening of closed or inactive files. Implementation of the Action Plan is being undertaken with the enrolment requirements of CAF military occupations in mind. As the CAF further progresses towards these recruitment goals, and the organisation as a whole becomes more reflective of the Canadian society, it will explore the possibility of setting specific recruitment targets for occupations. Progress recorded since 2016 includes:

- Representation of Indigenous Peoples rose from 2.6% in April 2016 to 2.7% in February 2018.
- Representation of visible minorities rose from 6.7% in April 2016, to 7.4% in March 2017 and 8.1% in February 2018.
- As of mid-March 2018, the Department recorded a year-over-year increase of 34 Indigenous applicants and 111 visible minority applicants.

These figures may not capture all applicants, as EE recruitment is highly dependent on self-identification, which some applicants prefer not to do.

Longer-term strategy

In parallel with the ongoing actions previously identified, further changes will be made once the Operation GENERATION Directive is issued by the Deputy Minister and Chief of the Defence Staff in the late spring or early summer of 2018. As noted above, the Directive identifies problems in the recruiting system and provides direction on how to align its structure, governance and resourcing with the CAF's strategic objectives.

As it implements this Directive, National Defence will be focusing on how the improvements it makes to its recruiting, production and retention processes move it closer to achieving its enrolment targets for other Employment Equity groups – particularly Indigenous Peoples and visible minorities – and make the CAF a more attractive place for everyone to work.

Recommendation 3

That, by 30 April 2018, National Defence provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to improving recruitment and training capacity in the Canadian Armed Forces and how it aligns with the planning process to ensure that recruitment reflects the personnel required in each occupation.

In Report 5, *Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention, of the Fall 2016 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, the Auditor General recommended that National Defence “review its recruiting and training capacity and align this with its planning process to ensure that the recruiting plan reflects the personnel required in each occupation.”

National Defence agreed with the Auditor General’s report and stated that it was identifying additional resources to recruit the required personnel for each occupation and provide them with the necessary training to reach authorised levels by 2018. Implementation of these efforts is underway. Recruiting and training capacity have been increased, and more significant changes will follow once the Op GENERATION Directive has been released.

Recruiting capacity

In September 2016, the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group launched a review of all policies and practices generating delays in the recruitment process, including applicant-generated delays such as failure to provide requested documentation on time. While systemic problems will require a more holistic approach, the Recruiting Group then made incremental changes to address issues within its area of responsibility, notably adding 40 additional file managers in 2017 to increase the number of files being processed. The Regular Force recruiting goal is to process, within 60-90 days, 70% of all applications (i.e. those that do not involve complex security, medical or other considerations). The remaining 30% of applications will be processed within 180 days. The data for FY 2016-17 indicate that the Recruiting Group met its goal for Regular Force applicants, and that the average processing time for all files, including “complex” files, was 81 days.

Training capacity

The CAF’s focus is on improving its capacity to process basic training which is completed after enrolment for the majority of new recruits and was affected by the recruiting surge in recent years. To address this issue, National Defence increased the basic training capacity at its Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School to accommodate increased recruit processing. Of the 37 Regular Force military positions initially approved, seventeen were filled in summer 2017 with the remainder to arrive in summer 2018. Additionally, in response to new recruitment targets laid out in *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, a further 10 Regular Force military positions were approved, to be filled in summer 2018. As such, the CAF are in the process of adding 47 permanent Regular Force military positions to the Leadership and Recruit School to increase basic training capacity. To fill the gap until the new military instructors arrive, 27 civilian instructors have been working on a contract basis since April 2017. They will cease employment when their military replacements arrive.

Recommendation 4

That, by 30 April 2018, National Defence provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to improving the Canadian Armed Forces' three-to-five-year recruitment target planning including action plans for each occupation to meet recruiting needs, track progress, and take corrective action where necessary.

In Report 5, *Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention, of the Fall 2016 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, the Auditor General recommended that National Defence “develop and implement a three-to-five-year target with an action plan for each occupation to meet recruiting needs, track progress, and take corrective action where necessary.”

In its response, National Defence stated that it would examine its existing recruitment target planning mechanisms and implement changes to make improvements. National Defence is in the process of implementing these measures, all of which are linked to recruitment initiatives for women, Indigenous People and visible minorities. The upcoming issuance of the Operation GENERATION Directive will provide additional direction for these efforts and help address complex and systemic problems beyond the scope of the actions outlined below.

Changes to Occupation Review and Strategic Intake Plan processes

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) establishes its recruitment requirements on an annual basis via the Annual Military Occupation Review, which is a military personnel management tool designed for planning and sustaining the personnel strengths of military occupations, examples of which include pilot, engineer, mechanic and surgeon. The Review looks at each military occupation systematically, addressing both internal and external issues affecting it, and determines annual intake (recruiting targets) to meet personnel requirements using a long-range planning model. It also monitors the status of occupations' personnel strengths to ensure they meet CAF requirements and generates recommendations for changes to personnel policies and processes. The Occupation Review has historically been conducted over a three-month period, November to January.

To meet the requirements agreed to during the Occupation Reviews, a Strategic Intake Plan is then developed that outlines both the internal and external recruiting requirements. Internal recruiting refers to recruiting from within the CAF, often involving personnel wishing to change occupations. The annual recruiting targets delineated in the Intake Plan are identified by occupation and entry method (examples are Direct Entry or subsidised Regular Officer Training Plan for officers). The Intake Plan is then staffed for approval by the Commander of Military Personnel Command and is used by the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group and Director General Military Careers as the basis for their recruiting plans.

Since the Auditor General's report, National Defence has made changes by starting the Occupation Reviews process earlier, allowing the CAF to seek approval of the Intake Plan in time for the next year's recruiting plans to be developed and executed at the start of the fiscal year. There are no statistics yet to indicate the success of this change but the Department is confident it will allow the CAF to reach the recruiting targets – or leave it the time to address issues and problems, should they arise. In the past, when problems were identified, delays with seeking the approval of the Intake Plan resulted in working without recruiting targets several months into the new fiscal year. The Commander of Military Personnel Command approved the proposed FY 18-19 Strategic Intake Plan on 8 March 2018, which will now provide recruiting staff with firm targets to focus on.

The CAF has also developed a Strategic Intake Plan to define Primary Reserve requirements. As such, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN), Canadian Army (CA) and Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) all reviewed their Reserve intake plans at the same time as they reviewed their Regular Force intake plans, during the annual Occupations Review process. Each Service also completed a review of its respective Primary Reserve. Conducting Regular and Reserve Force Occupations Reviews in parallel will make it possible for more predictable and harmonised personnel generation and recruiting efforts across both Regular and Reserve Forces.

Long-range planning and forecasting

The Department has consistently incorporated analytical data provided by Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis into its long-range planning model, which is used to forecast personnel requirements across the CAF five years into the future. By conducting relevant and responsive research and analysis on personnel issues, this allows the CAF to improve and enhance the model.

The data of the long-range planning model guides the Annual Military Occupations Review, and National Defence has consistently examined its planning models and implemented measures for improvement, to ensure that adjustments can be made to the recruiting requirements by occupation, when needed. In the past, there was not enough focus on future years, but this has been corrected to allow for flexibility to amend recruiting requirements once a problem is identified.

As a result, National Defence's Strategic Intake Plan now also contains personnel recruiting projections five years into the future. This change will give the Department the foresight to adjust to new developments or respond to ongoing review and consultation with the key stakeholders (RCN, CA and RCAF), especially if any of the planning assumptions and targets deviate from their predicted paths. Thus, should the Department not meet recruiting targets for a given year, it will be able to adjust for future years with greater flexibility. The long-range planning models were validated during the most recent review process for each military occupation in fall 2017. Proposed intake targets were arrived at through data analysis and modelling of all requisite personnel generation planning variables.

Recommendation 5

That, by 30 April 2018, National Defence provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to implementing targeted measures to attract enough qualified applicants for all occupations in the Canadian Armed Forces for which it has difficulty attracting applicants, as well as the progress in recruiting them.

In Report 5, *Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention, of the Auditor General's Fall 2016 Reports*, the Auditor General found that the "Regular Force did not attract a sufficient number of qualified applicants for several occupations" and "recruiters lacked the necessary support to provide detailed information on every occupation." This is important "because attraction is the first step in the recruitment process. To be successful, the recruitment process requires a sufficient number of qualified applicants."

National Defence agreed with the recommendation and stated that it was developing an advertising and marketing campaign to target qualified applicants for critical occupations. This campaign would include a significant presence on various social media sites and prioritise those occupations for which it was difficult to attract applicants in its advertising and marketing activities. The campaign is part of an ongoing process.

Background

There are 102 military occupations in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). An occupation is classified as "critical" if personnel numbers fall below 90% of approved levels, "caution" if they are at between 90 and 95% and "OK" if they are at 96% or above. Occupations in which the required number of practitioners is low could fall from "OK" to "critical" in a short period of time if there is high attrition in any one year. A booming economy, in which civilian jobs are plentiful, typically results in attrition across a wide range of occupations as personnel flow into the civilian sector. Finally, some occupations – such as doctors and social workers – are almost always at "critical" levels because they are high-demand occupations in both the military and civilian sectors.

"Critical" and "caution" occupations also change on an annual basis depending on the requirements laid out by the Annual Military Occupational Review and the results of recruitment efforts that year, so recruitment priorities need to be adjusted annually. The Occupational Review is a military personnel management tool designed for planning and sustaining the personnel strengths of military occupations. The Review employs a systematic review of each military occupation and addresses internal and external issues that affect occupations, determines annual intake (recruiting targets), and monitors the status of occupations' personnel strengths to ensure their viability for CAF requirements. It then considers and recommends changes to military personnel policies and processes.

General and targeted recruiting

National Defence has developed a new overarching recruiting advertising and marketing campaign to position the CAF as an employer of choice and raise awareness of the 102 jobs and career choices within the CAF. This campaign supports key recruitment priorities including women, diversity, Indigenous Peoples, critical occupations, and the Reserve Force. Implementation of Phase 1 of the "Dare to Be Extraordinary" marketing campaign started in January 2017. Phase 2 started in June 2017 and involves new advertisements and a new placement strategy in conventional and digital media outlets.

Key performance indicators will be collected during the campaign. The CAF will be watching for increased web traffic to specific web pages, conducting public opinion research testing to measure awareness of the recruiting awareness campaign, and monitoring the number of online applications by individuals who self-identify as part of an Employment Equity group.

“Critical” and “caution” occupations

National Defence is also examining all the policies, procedures and funding models for attraction and marketing so it can better concentrate on meeting its recruiting goals, especially for those occupations that are critical or historically difficult to fill. The historical data indicate that there are about 20 such occupations. For example, within the Royal Canadian Navy, sonar operators (who are responsible for compiling and analysing acoustic intelligence information onboard ships and submarines) are normally difficult to recruit. The majority of medical services practitioners (e.g. doctors, social workers, pharmacists, dentists and medical technicians/specialists) are other examples of difficult-to-recruit personnel. These medical occupations are in demand in the private sector and thus there is direct competition for personnel with highly sought-after skills.

There are unique and specific marketing campaigns to communicate employment opportunities in critical occupations. For example, when potential recruits visit the CAF recruiting webpage, they are notified of which occupations are hiring and it is the critical occupations which are always looking to hire. The Canadian Forces Recruiting Group has also established specialist recruiters to attract qualified health services personnel. More recently, the Treasury Board Secretariat issued signing bonuses for medical officers and some technical trades. For technical trades in particular, the Recruiting Group has partnered with community colleges where graduates of various programmes, especially those that are technical in nature, are looking for jobs.

“OK” occupations

The majority of occupations fall within the “OK” category. Historically, the CAF has seldom had any trouble recruiting for certain occupation such as army infantry soldier or Military Police officer. No additional efforts are being made to recruit into these occupations.

Results and tracking

In the FY 2017-18, the Recruiting Group met its overall recruiting target of 5,000 personnel. The actual number recruited was 5,032, although the targets for some occupations were not met while others were exceeded by an allowable percentage. For those occupations for which targets were not met, a concerted effort is being made to develop a targeted advertising and marketing campaign. The campaign is a top priority and includes job posts on Search Engine Marketing, LinkedIn, Indeed and other job web sites. An advertising campaign including Contobox, a media engagement platform, and other web banners promoting these occupations are being planned for summer and fall 2018.

Recommendation 6

That, by 30 April 2018, National Defence provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to improving the efficiency of the selection process, including better file management methods and increased flexibility in the recruitment process, with a focus on better meeting Canadian Armed Forces applicants' needs.

In Report 5, *Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention – National Defence, of the Fall 2016 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, the Auditor General recommended that the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) “should review its selection process with a view to improving its efficiency—including better file management methods and increased flexibility in the recruitment process—in order to maintain a sufficient pool of qualified applicants.”

National Defence agreed with the recommendation and noted that it was implementing various initiatives that included, but were not limited to, improving the mechanisms for selecting and training qualified recruiting staff and improving and expediting the overall enrolment process for Regular and Reserve Force applicants. The necessary improvements in selection process efficiency, file management methods, and processing flexibility are being addressed through a comprehensive review of the entire process, from the marketing and attraction of candidates through to enrolment and completion of basic and occupational training in order to reach Operational Functional Point (i.e. the point at which a recruit is fully trained and ready to commence duties at an operational unit).

A number of immediate actions were initiated in parallel with the establishment of a longer-term strategy. They are described in the sections below.

File management

File management is moving to a paperless system, based on the Canadian Forces Recruiting Information Management System, and applicants can now start and complete the entire recruiting process online. This allows for a rationalisation of file management processes, diminishing the potential for information to be lost and cause delays, and allowing a potential recruit to move quickly from one stage of the process to the next. The Department believes this will make for a better experience for applicants. The entire recruitment process has also been improved with the following additional changes:

- Adoption of a risk-management approach to security and citizenship, with waivers being granted for cases assessed as low-risk, if the security clearance is delayed.
- Expeditious enrolment once Reliability Screening (a level of security clearance) and citizenship issues have been addressed and confirmed.
- Implementation of improved benchmarking and data analysis, through the hiring of analysts to track performance data and analyse recruitment trends.

Recruiting staff

Once applicants have commenced the enrolment process, their main contact is with recruiters. Since the quality of staff will have a direct impact on applicants' experience, the selection and training of recruiting staff are an important part of the process. The following changes have been made:

- *Improving mechanisms for selecting recruiting staff and managing their careers.* New parameters have been approved for selecting recruiters, file managers, and Military Career Counsellors. A selection and posting strategy has been created and shared with all stakeholders to facilitate selecting qualified recruiters.
- *Revitalising and improving recruiters' training, and scheduling it in September.* This change will ensure training occurs after new recruiters reach their units, so that no one is employed in a recruiting role without having received the appropriate training first.
- *Hiring 40 additional civilian employees (Full-Time Equivalents) as file managers in the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group to expedite file-processing.* An increase of this magnitude will significantly increase the capacity of the Recruiting Group to process more Regular and Reserve Force files. As of 16 March 2018, 19 of the 40 additional file managers have been hired; the remainder will be before summer 2018.
- *Adding 43 Regular Force positions to the Recruiting Group between now and the summer of 2019, in the form of Military Career Counsellors, Recruiters, or file managers to meet the increased demands.*

Reserve Force recruiting

With respect to Reserve Force recruiting, the CAF has developed an expedited Reserve Enrolment trial to drastically shorten the timeline to enrol an applicant. Agreements have been reached to fully transfer the responsibility for Canadian Army Reserve Recruiting to the Army itself. The Royal Canadian Navy has taken some initial steps in doing the same, although it is still in the early stages. The Royal Canadian Air Force is monitoring the efforts of the other two services before announcing its plans. Making individual services responsible for handling recruitment into their respective Reserve Forces is expected to improve the way things are done because it will be done at the local regions by experts with knowledge of the local conditions.

Recommendation 7

That, by 30 April 2018, National Defence provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to improving the tracking of Canadian Armed Forces members in occupational training in order to improve the timeliness of training.

In Report 5, *Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention – National Defence, of the Fall 2016 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, the Auditor General recommended that the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) should implement mechanisms for tracking members in occupational training in order to improve the timeliness of training. The Auditor General's concern was that there were considerable delays from one training phase to the next for some occupations and that the Regular Force lacked a consistent reporting method for personnel who were in training, including members awaiting training.

National Defence agreed with the recommendation and stated that the CAF would review its Basic Training List system to decrease wait times for military training by occupation.¹ The Department also undertook to continue modernising and improving its approach to training and education by leveraging new learning technologies, although it is only in the early stages of these efforts.

Background

The CAF expends significant efforts and resources to recruit qualified applicants, but its statistics indicate that approximately 20% of recruits do not complete their basic training and/or occupational training, either because they opt not to finish or because they are not successful. Given the resources involved in recruitment, it is particularly important that the CAF determine why recruits are unsuccessful and what it can do to increase the training success rate.

Basic Training List management

When recruits join the CAF, they are tracked and managed through the Basic Training List. There are dedicated Basic Training List managers for all the different occupations, and they assign new CAF members to various training activities, in accordance with relevant regulations, after completion of basic training.

A comprehensive review of the Basic Training List management system is underway. It indicates that although the system is workable, it does not provide adequate, consistent or accurate details with respect to wait times between enrolment, basic training and occupational training. It also shows that the metrics for attrition at each critical junction point in the system (i.e. at basic training and occupational training) need to be refined. Finally, it has been observed that a customised training and posting (employment) plan for each member enrolled does not consistently exist.

Although the Department is making small refinements to the system, it plans to wait until the effects of the Operation GENERATION Directive are fully understood before acting on its review. The Directive not only contains guidance for improving management of the Basic Training List but will also spur wider systemic adjustments. Actions are expected to be taken in the 2018-2020 timeframe.

¹ Occupational training is training for new recruits who have just completed their basic training and delivers the required knowledge and skills for recruits to be effectively used in their occupations.

Defence analytics

National Defence is also in the early stages of adopting a defence analytics program that makes possible better tracking and reporting on a range of defence activities. The project is currently in the “proof-of-concept” stage and the specific details of how training pipelines can be tracked are still being determined.

Recommendation 8

That, by 30 April 2018, National Defence provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to the development, implementation and analysis of measures to optimize retention for each occupation in the Canadian Armed Forces.

In Report 5, *Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention – National Defence, of the Fall 2016 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, the Auditor General recommended that National Defence “develop, implement, monitor and evaluate measures to optimise retention for each occupation.” The Auditor General’s concern was that attrition rates varied significantly and were particularly high in some occupations. In the 2015-16 fiscal year, for example, 23 occupations had attrition rates higher than 10%. In terms of retention, the Auditor General noted that strategies and measures were developed by the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) “on an ad hoc basis and did not focus on responding to the specific challenges of each occupation.”

National Defence agreed with the Auditor General’s recommendation, and stated that the CAF would take a Total Force approach to retention – balancing organisational requirements for retaining skilled, able members with an environment conducive to easy movement within and between components. The CAF is developing and implementing a retention strategy in accordance with the key milestones. The overall objective is to ensure that members remain qualified, competent and motivated. The retention of women in particular will be a focus, in view of the Department’s aim to increase the representation of women in the armed forces to at least 25% within ten years. National Defence also committed to ensuring that it manages occupational health by implementing tailored retention strategies.

Context

To develop an effective and long-lasting retention strategy, National Defence needs a full understanding of the factors that precipitate early release, including along occupational lines. The Department’s ongoing assessment is designed to provide that information, allowing it to identify and develop retention initiatives responsive to factors under its direct control – such as postings, career predictability/choice, and tempo – as well as those that affect members indirectly, such as economic conditions and family issues. Once it is complete, the Department will develop a realistic strategic framework comprising clear strategic lines of effort, effective guiding principles and achievable goals.

An optimised retention strategy will allow National Defence to listen to, and act on, feedback from CAF members, while looking at best practices in the public sector, private sector, and among our allies, to ensure that the Department sustains its cadre of talented professionals. As part of the investigation of the causes of attrition, National Defence will examine the role of demographic factors – such as age, occupation, and years of service – to frame and baseline the retention challenge. In line with guidance in *Strong, Secure, Engaged (SSE)* on growing a more diverse CAF, National Defence will pay particular attention to fully understanding retention issues for visible minorities, women, and other designated groups. The next decade will bring significant positive change in terms of the representation of women, visible minorities, and Indigenous peoples in the CAF, which the organisation will aim to consolidate.

Retention across occupational categories

Generally speaking, the CAF is not yet in a position to take an occupation-by-occupation approach to addressing retention. For now, the resources dedicated to developing retention programs are being used to understand and address CAF-wide issues. That said, occupations requiring special measures are being prioritized. For example, to enrol more medical officers, the CAF is targeting recent medical school graduates unable to find employment as civilian physicians. Moreover, SSE measures aimed at military personnel and their families, many of which will have an impact on overall retention of trained personnel, have yet to be implemented. Once that work is completed, it will be possible to focus on specific military occupations.

CAF retention strategy

The retention strategy development plan comprises four phases: orientation, strategy design, strategy implementation, and validation. The first two milestones are the completion of the orientation and strategy design phases.

Orientation

Phase 1, the orientation phase, began in April 2017 with a definition of the problem and a study of the factors, restraints, and resources required to solve it. This process involved laying out and testing assumptions, conducting an initial risk assessment, and running a cost-benefit analysis. The outcome of this phase was a Commander's Initiating Directive, which defines the actions required to develop and implement the revised retention strategy. This directive has been drafted and is expected to be approved at the end of April 2018.

Strategy design

Work on Phase 2, strategy design, has begun. Over the coming months, the project team will further consult stakeholders and subject-matter experts, review relevant literature, perform a systems analysis, and collect and analyse data to assist in the retention strategy's development.

Next steps

Owing to a major reorganisation at Military Personnel Command, prompted in part by a new focus on implementing the numerous personnel-related initiatives announced in SSE, there has been some delay in completing the design of the strategy. Nonetheless, the Command is confident that the total force retention strategy will be implemented in spring 2019.

