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## **Standing Committee on National Defence**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, February 9, 2017**

**Chair**

**Mr. Stephen Fuhr**



## Standing Committee on National Defence

Thursday, February 9, 2017

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.)):** I call the meeting to order.

I would like to welcome the folks from the naval reserve to testify in front of the Standing Committee on National Defence regarding the Royal Canadian Navy, naval readiness, and the defence of North America. Thank you very much for coming. Today we have Commodore Marta Mulkins, Captain Chris Ross, and Chief Petty Officer, 1st Class, David Arsenaault.

Before I give you the floor for your opening comments, I have some housekeeping for the committee.

We'll reserve 15 minutes at the end for committee business, and to keep everything orderly and on time, if anyone is speaking and they see this paper come up, they'll have about 30 seconds to wrap up before I have to yield the floor to the next speaker. I would appreciate it if people keep an eye on this piece of paper; it helps me quite a bit.

Before I yield the floor for your comments, I'd like to give the floor to Ms. Blaney, who has to give the committee a notice of motion.

Ms. Blaney, you have the floor.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

Today I would like to ask the committee members to give unanimous consent to waive the notice time for a motion and discuss the following matter at the end of today's meeting. The motion is as follows:

That the Standing Committee on National Defence undertake an urgent study on the persistence of risk of fire at CFAD Bedford which "will likely occur" and could have "catastrophic" consequences as determined by a 2015 National Defence Fire Risk Assessment; that the study include a review of fire and explosion risks at similar sites across Canada; and that the Committee report its findings and recommendations to the House.

Thank you so much.

**The Chair:** That motion contained an element asking us if we want to waive the time requirement. I'm going to put that to the floor. All in favour of waiving the time requirement on that motion as proposed by Ms. Blaney?

(Motion negatived)

**The Chair:** We'll wait the required time frame for that, then.

Commodore, thank you for coming. You have the floor.

**Commodore Marta B. Mulkins (Commander, Naval Reserve, Royal Canadian Navy, Department of National Defence):** Thank you, Mr. Chair and honourable members of Parliament.

We appreciate the opportunity to share with you some of the challenges and opportunities within your naval reserve, a highly dedicated and active component of the Royal Canadian Navy. I echo the previous testimony from some of my colleagues and superiors by saying it is an immense honour for the three of us before you to serve the diverse and talented team of sailors and officers of the naval reserve.

In this presentation I will speak about the reserve component of the Royal Canadian Navy, but I'll also touch upon some of the broader pan-reserve policies and initiatives affecting the naval reserve as well.

Who are we right now? The naval reserve is an organization of men and women who have been recruited and are based through 24 naval reserve divisions or units spread across the country from St. John's, Newfoundland, to Victoria, British Columbia.

The mission of the naval reserve is to recruit and train sailors and officers to be employed at sea and ashore across the Royal Canadian Navy, in the ships of the fleet out of Halifax or Victoria, in staff positions, and in intelligence and support roles.

[Translation]

The Naval Reserve also de facto represents the navy in communities across the entire country—as you can imagine for Canadians in cities far from the sea, Naval Reserve units are often the only reminder that they have a navy working hard on their behalf. One of our official four roles is to support the Royal Canadian Navy's strategic communications and outreach efforts.

[English]

But first and foremost, we are a seagoing service.

This cardinal principle drives all planning and informs decisions at all levels. As members of the profession of arms, we demand and deliver the same standards as our regular force counterparts. The reserve could not make a credible, relevant, or sustained contribution to the safety, security, and defence responsibilities of the navy and the Canadian Armed Forces otherwise.

Today the naval reserve is also an institution in the midst of very significant change. The reserve is just over 90 years old this year, and as you can imagine, it has had to evolve throughout its existence in accordance with the needs and resources of the day, including, as you are likely aware, surging so many sailors and officers toward the Royal Canadian Navy's Second World War effort that at peak strength of 96,000 personnel in the navy, fully 78,000 were reservists.

The current transformation is being driven by two major institutional reviews: the chief of the defence staff's 2015 directive on strengthening the primary reserves, an initiative that will expand and enhance the reserves by 2019, and the Royal Canadian Navy's establishment review of the naval reserve, which is meant to retune naval reserve structure and governance to meet the evolving requirements of the Royal Canadian Navy for the next 20-year horizon and which will also seek to meet the mandates as prescribed by the chief of the defence staff.

Most specifically, our model of employment within the Royal Canadian Navy is changing. We are moving away from the total force, niche operational role employment concept implemented some 25 years ago, which had naval reservists primarily responsible to crew the Kingston class of coastal patrol ships, to a new strategic reserve role of targeted augmentation, in which reservists will increasingly augment across the surface fleet of the Royal Canadian Navy and in support roles ashore.

● (1535)

[Translation]

This, along with the Chief of the Defence Staff's directive, has triggered us to review our entire structure, size and governance procedures within the navy as a whole.

[English]

As commander of the naval reserve, my explicit job is to deliver trained sailors and officers to be employed at sea and ashore in these new roles, and the implicit job of the command team before you today is to ensure that we have a successful force generation process in place to reliably provide this effect to the RCN year in and year out.

Establishment review will not only prescribe the number of reservists required in each occupation and at each rank level to deliver relevant and achievable effect at sea and ashore to the RCN and the Canadian Armed Forces, but will also enable, through the broader navy, the recruitment, training, and professional development of all those sailors. It must not only deliver stable growth and reliable training, but also enable rapid surge to emerging needs through agile processes. We anticipate the final results of this report in the next few months of 2017 and intend that this will best position the naval reserve to help the RCN meet its future challenges.

From the broader reserve context, the naval reserve is the second-largest component of the Canadian Armed Forces primary reserve, with an official establishment of approximately 5,500 members. However, our current strength is closer to 3,100 right now, due to a number of factors that had led to a net decline in strength over the past several years. Establishment review will seek in part to reverse

this trend, and it includes a plan to meet the chief of the defence staff's growth targets.

[Translation]

Despite the challenges of our current strength and transformation activities, however, we continue to send many sailors to the Canadian Atlantic, Pacific and sometimes even foreign fleets for training and for other employment at sea.

[English]

We are also expanding capabilities that support the fleet through our enhanced intelligence and logistical capabilities and the exciting new naval security team, a small-boat-based, on-water force protection team being developed within the RCN that will be crewed in large part by naval reservists.

Today as I speak, there are just under 800 naval reservists on full-time service, serving anything from two-week to three-year contracts, within the navy or the broader Canadian Armed Forces. In 2016, almost 630 naval reservists went to sea in some form, and 419 participated in a named operation.

[Translation]

Right now, there are 11 reservists sailing in HMCS *St. John's*, as that ship contributes to Operation Reassurance, operating in the Black Sea with vessels from several allied and partner nations for the next month. Several other naval reservists are currently serving around the world in Ops Foundation, Challenge, Artemis and Impact.

[English]

Some 225 more reservists are sailing in the Kingston-class fleet right now, contributing to any number of coastal and constabulary operations, including Operation Caribe, Canada's role in the Joint Inter-agency Task Force South's operation to interdict trafficking in the Caribbean and the eastern Pacific.

Many lines of effort are under way to consistently achieve all of the above, through both force generation and subsequent employment, the key enablers being the new recruiting process we are implementing to achieve much more rapid enrolment of reservists.

● (1540)

[Translation]

We are in the process of redefining readiness definitions and requirements for naval reservists for domestic and deployed routine and contingency operations.

We are improving retention both through Canadian Armed Forces initiatives and through the RCN's specific efforts—including the need to encourage more former regular force members to transfer to the reserve upon retirement.

[English]

We are converting to new business intelligence systems in order to better track readiness and generally align the management of the naval reserve enterprise more smoothly within the Royal Canadian Navy.

In summary, the naval reserve features prominently in each of the four Es of the Royal Canadian Navy's executive plan. We contribute directly to excellence in operations at sea through our levels of crewing across the fleet and ashore. Our current work updating and sharpening our readiness levels is all underpinned by the inculcation of the Royal Canadian Navy's code of conduct and Operation Honour.

[Translation]

We are enabling the transition to the future fleet through our establishment review and our new recruiting system.

We are evolving the operations of the organization through the full engagement in the broader navy adoption of new business enterprise systems.

[English]

We are helping energize the institution by living up to the commander's intent of "people first, mission always" through new motivating roles across the fleet and ashore for all reservists and through increasing, rewarding local engagement in our communities across the country.

I hope that I have transmitted to you a sense of the value of the naval reserve within the broader Royal Canadian Navy. The obligation of the command team is, first and foremost, to ensure that the naval reserve remains an endeavour worthy of the time and energy of every reservist.

We welcome your questions.

**The Chair :** Thank you very much for that testimony.

I'm going to give the floor over to Ms. Alleslev for seven minutes. You have the first question.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Thank you very much for being here. There's no question that the naval reserves are a key component of our capability, and what a pleasure to have you here to tell us about them.

You mentioned that we have looked at a net decline in the number of reservists. I want to make sure that I understand. Are you having challenges in attracting as well as retaining, or just one or the other?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Thank you very much for the question.

It is something we have been studying very closely over the last little while in the naval reserve as well as across the Canadian Armed Forces as a whole.

With regard to the net decline in our strength that I'm referring to, over the last 10 years the trend has been, almost year to year, that there's been a different rationale or different reason triggering the net decline. In some years we deliberately reduced the recruiting input that we were seeking because we anticipated that there might not be sufficient training capacity in the given year. In other years there

were simply budget declines that led us to reduce the number of recruits we would seek overall.

However, we do feel now that we're in a position where we're going to be able to reverse that trend, and it's partly through the changes in recruitment activities. I can go into more depth on that right now, but there is basically a whole-of-Canadian Armed Forces effort under way to improve recruitment across the board, for both the regular force and the reserves. That was directed a couple of years ago, in fact, by the chief.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** From that perspective, you're talking about things that were military-driven, such as budget, as reasons for having lower strengths. Do you keep records of why people leave? Do you have a sense of whether the period of retention is increasing or decreasing, and do you have some reasons for the challenge in retaining people?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Retention is the bookend to the recruiting piece, obviously, and we're very interested in improving our retention as well. In fact, within the reserve in the last two years we've initiated both improvements to recruitment strategies, which are starting to bear fruit, and a working group to understand retention.

Retention in the reserve is a little bit different from retention in the regular force, because we are essentially in open-ended service. Reservists, who presumably have part-time careers, do have logical points throughout their reserve careers at which they might choose to move on, logical points being, for example, completing university, embarking on a civilian career, or starting a family. These are logical gateways.

The attrition numbers as a whole, even though they're higher than for the regular force, are partly due to being a component that transfers a lot of reservists into the regular force, so our attrition numbers do not represent a complete loss. We're starting to understand, in fact, how we can recruit more people the other way, from the regular force into the reserve.

● (1545)

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** My understanding is you're putting a little more focus now on understanding and analyzing that data over time as part of the new attract and retain program, particularly with the new change in role with the regular force navy. Is that a fair comment?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** That is absolutely fair. Part of our analysis right now is to look historically across what the trends were and to understand future ones. We might even be able to implement....

We have exit surveys, for example, when reservists depart the institution, to understand what made them decide to leave.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Could you share with us what the plan is in terms of the three main challenges that you're facing, and how perhaps people like us could support you or provide whatever you need to be able to address those challenges?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Thank you for that. Certainly there are challenges for the retention for reservists. First and foremost, do they see exciting employment? Are they going to be challenged by it? Is it worth their staying in? Are they motivated? I feel very much right now, with the transformation that the new reserve is undergoing and its changed role within the broader navy, that we certainly are offering that, and along with the new skills we are offering the opportunity to see the world.

Reservists also want to ensure that they will be able to progress in their occupations. Will they have access to leadership training and career progression as well? That is in place, very much so. This is a value that they can bring back to their civilian employer, so there's definitely a benefit to that.

These are some of the factors that we want to make sure are in place and continue to be.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** What about the structure, like class A, B, C? Is that in need of maybe an update, or is it working just the way you need it to?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** The different classes of service effectively represent the different level of service that the reservist is giving at any given point in time, from part-time service in the class A world to deployed operations or employment at sea, which is the class C, which is essentially equivalent to their regular force colleagues, with the same compensation, benefits, and the like.

Within Canadian Armed Forces military personnel generation, there is currently under way an analysis of the entire question of retention and compensation and benefits—a first principles study, I think they're calling it—which will review whether it's time to change how the terms of service work, the compensation and benefits, and exactly that type of thing. I don't have any knowledge at this time of their progress, but certainly the commander of military personnel generation is probably able to respond to that question more clearly.

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds for a question and a response.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** All right. I want to ask a little more about the structure and if you've seen any challenges, even anecdotally, on whether or not there might be some opportunities to improve that structure. If so, what might they be?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** In fact, as part of the establishment review that I mentioned in my opening comments, we're examining exactly that right now. At this juncture, the mission and roles that we foresee we're going to deliver to the navy and the broader Canadian Armed Forces are being taken into account in that structural review. At this point in time, we're about to complete a structure that will meet every mission that the navy is asking us to do at this point.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Paul-Hus is next.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, Commodore Mulkins.

When I was in the army, I was jealous of the naval force or the reserve. At the time, as you mentioned in your presentation, your mission was really clear and it was yours, and your way of doing things was very different. However, I see that there have been major changes in the past 20 years. I don't think the changes have been very positive, given that you lost this kind of mission. Right now, you are simply providing troops to join the regular force. It seems that your mandate is exclusively to prepare the troops, to send them to Class B or on short missions with the regular force.

We know that, to keep reservists, they need stimulation on a daily basis, or they will go do something else. In the report that you are about to prepare on your transformation, have you targeted points to attract reservists? Have you thought of aspects you would like to have and that you would like the government to accept?

• (1550)

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Thank you for the question.

[*English*]

This is exactly why the navy has re-oriented how the reserve will be employed. For the 20 years that the reserve was focused upon the Kingston-class mission, that was what we force-generated toward. It was a great mission, and thanks to that mission, the operational capability of the naval reserve today is at an extraordinarily high level.

However, over time, the force generation of individuals to go to sea for that full-time mission became difficult to sustain year in and year out. As a result of that, we see immense opportunities in the role of targeted augmentation across the fleet. That now opens up the experience of reservists beyond the coastal constabulary operations with which we've been preoccupied through the Kingston-class mission. Reservists will be part of the broader navy support to peace and security around the globe. That's why we're so pleased that so many reservists are sailing in support of Operation Reassurance today and will be deploying next year in support of the western Pacific deployment on the Pacific coast.

In addition, we are also developing some new specific team skills within the navy, such as the naval security team, the small-boat force protection team that will deploy to support protection of the fleets when they're in foreign ports. It will also be able to be used in support of the Government of Canada's capacity-building mandate with partner nations and allies around the world as well. This is an extraordinary and very motivating opportunity for naval reservists.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** There are 24 divisions spread across Canada, but we always have the impression that the navy is active either in the Atlantic or the Pacific.

What type of training do you provide to your personnel in the divisions deployed in the prairies or elsewhere?

[English]

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Yes, that's an excellent question. It speaks exactly to how we force-generate sailors. To be very precise, in the naval reserve the job is to force-generate individual sailors trained to a certain level of readiness, while an army reserve will often train individuals for deployment and also small subunits, small teams.

The naval reserve is different in that regard. The training takes two forms in the navy. In the first form, the occupation training, every sailor or officer will be trained specifically in the skill sets required for their occupation at sea or ashore. The second component is what we call the refresher or regenerative training, and this is specifically done to mitigate and prevent the loss of skills between the periods when reservists are employed at sea. The training delivered in naval reserve units is mostly focused on that regenerative training.

On the other hand, the occupation training is delivered through the broader naval training system. Regular service people and reservists alike are all plugged into that system. The training we deliver in naval reserve units is fairly robust in that regenerative training. Quite uniformly across the country, units will have small boats and will have fairly simple desktop simulator systems to simulate bridge watchkeeping or navigation or machinery control. Some units have marine diesel trainers and that sort of thing, which is all in an effort to make sure that we have the most current skills possible.

When we need other skills that we can't deliver, such as firefighting and damage control—a core skill set required at sea—we send our sailors to the navy's firefighting damage control schools, for example.

Broadly, that is the nature of the training we conduct in the naval reserve units.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Right now, there are about 800 reservists and the total number is 3,100. That means that 25% of your personnel are in either Class B or C.

Is that common? It seems to me that this number is high for Class B. Is it because the regular force is facing problems, and in order to make up for it, it badly needs the reserve?

In fact, how do you explain that there are so many reservists in Class B?

[English]

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** In general, in the full-time service, some of it is operational deployment, some of which is at sea. Some of it is the staff function that's required to operate the naval reserve as well. We also have naval reservists who are working throughout the naval staff and throughout the staffs of the broader Canadian Armed Forces.

There are different roles that reservists are playing in all sorts of places. It's not purely the operational role, though we are very proud and really do desire that we have as many folks as possible at sea at any given time. As we draw down proportionately from executing the Kingston-class mission, we are slowly increasing the proportion of reservists who are sailing in the other ship classes in the fleet, specifically the frigates.

The current target is to have reservists make up 5% of the companies of frigates that are deploying on named operations, and we are meeting that target right now. We expect that to change and to increase a little over time. As I have said, we draw down in the Kingston class specifically.

• (1555)

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** The question was about the percentage of full-time reservists.

Is this percentage exceptional or normal? Has the percentage of Class B reservists always been as high?

[English]

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** It's approximately 20% right now, and I think that's been a fairly steady state for the last few years as well. It's some of the class B services and shorter-term class B services. It's not necessarily all long-term service, which is perhaps the distinction that I think you're seeking.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Okay. Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Go ahead, Ms. Blaney.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you all so much for being here today. I always enjoy hearing the story of the reservists and really appreciate the work that you do for our country.

Major-General Derek Joyce, former deputy commander of military personnel command, said in June 2016 that targets for the reserve force were set at 28,500 for the 2018-2019 time frame.

From your perspective, are we on schedule?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Yes, and that is as directed by the chief of the defence staff. In the initiative from 2015 on strengthening the reserve, the directive is that the strength of the primary reserve is to grow to 28,500 by 2019. Part of the activities that we are working on within the naval reserve in the establishment review is a growth strategy to meet the naval reserves component of that directive. The naval reserve is directed to grow by a strength of 200 in that time frame.

At this juncture, with the growth strategy and the establishment review combined with the changes we have made to our recruitment strategies, we believe we will be able to meet that target.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Could you tell me a bit more about what you're doing specifically to increase your pool of candidates and some of the specific challenges you're facing? If we're going to be supportive, understanding those challenges is really important.

In my riding, I went to see the sea cadets recently, and they talked about one of the challenges. I know this isn't specific, but it really hit me. One of the challenges they have is that they can't get uniforms quickly enough. Really excited young people would come in, but they couldn't get uniforms. I know that sounds so simple, but all of these things are a pathway to getting them to be helping us in the long run.

I'm really curious about those challenges.

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Thank you for the question. It is something that we have looked at extensively. I think the two specific challenges that we have observed in the past have been that we were unable to generate enough applicants into the reserve and that the file processing times in the past have discouraged folks. It took too long, and students would give up and find another part-time job.

Those have both been tackled at all levels. The Canadian Armed Forces recruiting group has worked very hard to decrease the processing times for files. I think we are definitely seeing the benefit of that, even this year.

The second thing speaks to visibility. The ability to generate enough files comes with being out in the community with very active recruiters and great messaging. It's participating at events and doing a lot of outreach. Within our own lanes, the naval reserve has boosted the recruiters' activities and their mandates to be out making sure that more young Canadians are aware of the opportunities in the reserve. It makes it easier for them then to think about applying.

At the end of the day, the biggest draw of all is having great jobs. It is a part-time job that offers not only extraordinary, challenging, rewarding employment, but great benefits as well. It will help students to pay for university, and it then continues to allow them to participate and develop professionally. It's a really great offering right now. I think we're improving that even more through our current reorientation.

To finally answer your question, it's all about getting the message out, and I think we're all working hard on that within the naval reserve recruiting group.

● (1600)

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** We're certainly hearing that today.

Major-General Derek Joyce also said, "We have a relatively high attrition rate in the reserves. About 50% of our reservists leave within the first five years".

Can you tell us why, from your perspective, and some of the ideas you have that would support changing that situation?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Going back to my previous comments, attrition in the reserve is a bit different. It typically will be higher than in the regular force, since in the regular force the typical member has signed an engagement. However, attrition is not necessarily a negative thing, since they are often transferring to a different component of the reserve or into the regular force. In fact, from our own data just in last year's picture, the attrition for us over the last 10 years, averaging at about 15%, seems very high, but 40% of that attrition consisted of transfers into other reserve components or the regular force, so that's not a net loss.

As I also mentioned, there are logical departure points. The reserve is always going to be the third priority in their lives, after their family and civilian career obligations. Obviously, we understand that. However, wherever we can, we improve the reservists' ability to continue to progress—and this is part of our retention strategy—and make them feel they're contributing meaningfully while still balancing those other demands. That's what we're seeking. That's where we're hoping to have some more actionable strategies emerging from our own internal working group in the coming months.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Does the naval reserve have targeted goals in an effort to better reflect Canada? What thoughts do you have on attracting more women, visible minorities, and indigenous people?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** That's a great question. It's obviously one of the highest priorities of the Canadian Armed Forces as a whole to reflect Canadian society, and certainly we want Canadians to be able to see themselves in the naval reserve.

I am pleased to report that while the Canadian Armed Forces' target for the overall percentage of women is 25%, right now in the naval reserve the percentage of women is approximately 30%. We consistently have done very well there.

I don't have disaggregated data per se, but with regard to visible minorities and aboriginal youth, we probably have work to do there. That is part of our recruitment training and our recruitment strategy as well.

Our outreach strategy at the unit level is to make sure that we're visible to the different cultural groups through our recruiters. Actually, our recruiters are 40% women right now, and I think 13% are visible minorities. The recruiting teams also take aboriginal awareness training. There are lots of different efforts under way.

There's also a naval program called the raven program. It's a summer employment program that deliberately seeks to be a bridge to the aboriginal communities, for all intents and purposes. It increases awareness of the options for a military career. I think there were 40 participants in last year's program. Out of those, I think there were three successful recruits into the naval reserve. It is a navy-wide program.

There are lots of initiatives under way and lots of work to be done, but I think we're all pulling in the same direction right now.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Spengemann, you have the floor.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, Commodore Mulkins, Captain Ross, and Chief Petty Officer Arsenault.

Thank you for being with us. Thank you for your service. Through you, we offer our thanks to the women and men who serve alongside you in the naval reserve. It's an immensely important organization that does very important work.

I want to zoom in on one quick point, because it just jumped off the page, and then I'll ask you some more questions in the field of human resources and recruitment.

The point that I saw is the overseas employment and some of the operations that are known to Canadians, including Operation Impact.

You mentioned that there are several naval reservists who are a part of that operation. Can you give us a sense of what kinds of functions naval reservists would conduct in that kind of an operation?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Yes, absolutely.

Unfortunately, I don't know exactly what those two—I believe it's two—who are participating in Operation Impact right now are doing. However, if they're not deployed-at-sea types of employment, it may be as intelligence officers working with the intelligence teams. We may have different support trades for those working in shore-based forward logistics components. They could also be employed in any range of staff positions ashore. Combined Task Force 150 has some naval reservists on staff there as well. It's a full range of employment.

•(1605)

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** On a more general level, it's quite likely—in fact, it's part of the system—that naval reservists would operate in land-based operations.

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** That's correct.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Do you have any idea of the proportion of land-based versus sea-based functions? That can probably vary greatly, depending on the mission in question.

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Certainly the preponderance of our folks on operational deployment are at sea. However, it is a good question. It probably varies all the time, because reservists volunteer for opportunities as they come up from the Canadian Joint Operations Command. They put their hands up and volunteer for all sorts of things.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** I wanted to explore with you—and my colleagues have already alluded to it—the reasons people would join the naval reserve. Most importantly, what could we as MPs potentially do to support recruitment initiatives?

What is your sense of the importance of the fact that you're navy as opposed to the fact that you're reservists? In other words, to what extent do you compete with the army reserves, for example? When people to come to you, do they come to you because it's an opportunity to serve at sea or because it's an opportunity to serve? Do you keep that kind of data in the intake process?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** I'm not sure that we keep that data.

I would like to think the attraction of going to sea really underpins a lot of people's vision of where they might like to be employed. I don't actually have that sort of data, to be honest.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** I'm not sure if I understood correctly. Do you provide specialized occupational training as the reserves, or is that something that the regular navy would provide?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Well, we have occupations that are essentially the same occupations as one sees in the regular force. The naval training system, writ large, is a vehicle by which occupational training is delivered. We will send our students to the naval training schools, the fleet schools.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Again, you may not have the numbers, but to what extent is prior career experience a factor in terms of what

somebody would seek out within the naval reserve? If they're engineers, if they're machinists, if they already have a skill set, is that a great factor in terms of making a decision to join the naval reserve, or is it less so?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** It's an interesting question, because the answers can be at completely opposite ends of the spectrum. Some people join because they have an interest—for example, a Red Seal cook might want to be a naval cook. On the other hand, we have people who join the navy and do not want to do what they do in their civilian careers. They specifically want a different job and work experience through the navy that isn't what they do in the rest of their lives.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** For the benefit of the committee and Canadians, could you take us through the process? If somebody were to walk into a recruitment centre, what would be the steps until they were ultimately deployed at sea or elsewhere overseas?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** To your question, I will open by broadly describing what the recruitment process is right now. Then I'll ask my deputy to address it, because he's actually been shepherding a change in the process just over the last few months.

We have been working at two different levels of changing our recruiting. At the Canadian Armed Forces level, which I alluded to before, there are our own internal changes. More recently, however, the chief of the defence staff also directed that the enrolment of reservists should be made very efficient, so that reservists for the army and navy would be able to be enrolled within 21 days. That change is fully supported by the commander of the army and the commander of the navy. That has just started to be implemented this year, and we hope it will bear fruit very soon.

For the process itself, I'll turn the floor over to the deputy.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Sure. I think that would be helpful to us.

**Captain(N) Chris Ross (Deputy Commander, Naval Reserve, Royal Canadian Navy, Department of National Defence):** The expedited PRes, or primary reserve enrolment, is the program that is under way right now. It was initially going to be a trial just in the Atlantic region. The chief of the defence staff said no, he was happy to roll this out as a program across the country.

What we have done—by “we” I mean primarily the Canadian Army, the army reserve, and the naval reserve—is we have found steps in the process that can be expedited.

Let's say somebody comes into the naval reserve division, talks to a recruiter, and at some point submits their paperwork. Maybe it's that night or maybe it's on another visit. As soon as they submit their paperwork, they will do a fitness test. If they pass the fitness test, then their paperwork is submitted. They will begin the process that primarily includes CFAT testing, or aptitude testing, which will assist in the placement of where they go in the system. They will also begin the medical process, which right now is one of the most time-consuming steps in that process. We've found efficiencies there. At the same time, they will begin the security process to get to what we call “reliability screening”.

Those processes will go on. At a certain point—the goal is within 21 days—we will have enough information so that we are comfortable to enrol somebody.

Before they are enrolled, there may still be a final step to go through. For instance, in the medical process there may still be a final hurdle for them to overcome. The key, however, is to get them in and get them training so that they're not waiting for what predominantly was months before we could get them in.

Once they're in, the model is that they essentially have two or three summers in which to reach what we call "occupational functional point". The first summer is recruit training. We teach them the basics of how to be a sailor. The second summer is when we begin the occupational training. Officers have an extra year in there, so they have an extra summer.

The goal is to reach occupational function point within two years for an NCM and within three years for an officer.

•(1610)

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Thank you.

I think that's my time, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** It is.

Go ahead, Mr. Gerretsen.

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

How long does that take, Captain Ross? Is it 21 days?

**Capt(N) Chris Ross:** The goal is 21 days.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** What realistically is the...?

**Capt(N) Chris Ross:** To be quite honest, we've just started it. Realistically, there is no reason.... We are very confident that in 21 days, give or take, we can get them in. It's not a hard and fast number, and it doesn't end at 21 days. We are just beginning the process now. Over the coming months we will be collecting that data and refining the process as we go.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Maybe we can get an update later on as to how effective it is—

**Capt(N) Chris Ross:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** —because this is a huge improvement from some of the other things we've been hearing from some of the other reservists.

Going back to the number of reservists, would you say the decline has been through attrition or would you say people are making a conscious decision en masse, so to speak, that they no longer want to be involved?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** The attrition over the last 10 years was touched on briefly. There were, I think, a number of different triggers along the way, but one significant trigger at one point was the introduction of the reserve force pension, which allowed a whole lot of people to make the decision that now was a good time to component transfer to the regular force. There were a series of one-offs, year-by-year triggers for perhaps higher-than-normal levels of attrition. However, we have stabilized over the last few years.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** With regard to the ability to attract new reservists, you talked about how people need to feel motivated and have meaningful employment. I interpreted that to mean that maybe that component has been lacking. Did I interpret that incorrectly? Is there improvement there?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Certainly we feel that the shift from the Kingston-class mission, which we had been doing for the last 20 years, to being able to participate in the full range of naval activities is quite a motivator.

All of us came up through the Kingston-class era and have benefited immensely, and we very much enjoyed our experiences going to sea on those constabulary missions in the coastal defence role, but in addition to that, which will certainly continue, reservists have more options in front of them now in support of the naval output as well. We are assisting the navy in meeting its broader missions.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** To go back to the decline in strength, you said there were a number of factors and you rearticulated one of them. What are some of the other factors that have contributed to the decline?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** In the past it was sometimes concern about the capacity in the training system. That has been rectified at this point. Other times it was purely budget questions. There were different reasons throughout the years, but as I said, it has been fairly stable over the last couple of years. Now, with the mandate for growth from the chief of the defence staff as well as the reorientation in our mission itself, we expect that we're going to turn the curve around and move from not just stable numbers but to growth again.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** What's the benchmark in numbers?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** We're starting from the 3,100 that we're at right now, if that's what you're—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** What's success?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Success will certainly be to meet the chief's target, which is to be up to 3,300 in strength by 2019.

•(1615)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Okay.

I think that's it. Leona, do you have anything else, or is there anybody else?

Go ahead.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** How is naval strength calculated? How do you decide what it is? Is it an absolute number, or is it a ratio of the regular force navy, and therefore how you're going to effectively augment it?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** That is exactly the work of the establishment review that's under way right now.

It's a little of all the things you just said. The former establishment was geared to delivering the ships' companies of 10 Kingston-class ships and the supporting functions around that. You can do a calculation based on ratios and the like to force-generate the required numbers.

We're adjusting that now to eventually meet the 10% augmentation target across the surface warship fleet of the navy. A lot of the calculations are based on that and the supporting functions around it. In a nutshell, it's essentially a very complicated task that some very good staff are working on right now.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** It's a combination of both, then. Now we're looking at a 10% augmentation of the regular force navy, as well as fulfilling and continuing to fulfill the role of the Kingston class. Did I understand you correctly?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** No, not quite. We are going to start to draw down—

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Oh, you are.

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** — in the Kingston class, so the Kingston class will also be accrued to a 10% target.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Oh, brilliant. Okay, thank you.

**The Chair:** Ms. Gallant is next.

**Capt(N) Chris Ross:** I could just jump in, it's—

**The Chair:** I'm going to have to hold you there, Captain Ross. We might be able to circle back. I think we will have time, but I'm going to have to yield the floor to Ms. Gallant.

Thank you.

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

Is there something our allies do in terms of their naval reserve that we should be emulating here in Canada?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** That's an interesting question, because we all started roughly the same—the like-minded nations, the allies, and all of their reserves—approximately 90 to 100 years ago, and we have all evolved entirely differently, which is very interesting. The Canadian naval reserve is the only one I'm aware of that has a model of training sailors recruited off the street, for all intents and purposes. Other navies focus exclusively on reserves that are built upon former regular force folks.

Part of our shift right now toward the new augment mission, as I mentioned—and it's in the chief of the defence staff's directive as well—is to increase the strategic reserve of former regular force folks. In fact, in the last year we have seen an uptick in the number of component transfers of regular force members who are retiring before they have served a complete 35-year career and are joining the reserve, which is fantastic. Those folks are, just as much as all the other reservists, able to be employed in the future if they choose, back in their former occupations at whatever level they were at. They are a continuing asset now for the navy as well.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Are there any issues facing the naval reserve that are unique to your branch of the armed forces?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** That's a good question. I can't think of any off the top of my head. However, I'll look to my command team to see if we have an opportunity here.

**Capt(N) Chris Ross:** I'm not sure I completely understand the question. I'm sorry.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Are there any issues facing the naval reserve that are unique to your branch of the armed forces services?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** My chief just mentioned that by the very nature of what we do, we go to sea in ships, and the ships are located on the coast. As part of our budget, we have to have sufficient funds, always, to ensure we can travel to the coast, which we do. It's not a problem at all; it's just a factor that perhaps makes us a little different from our army, militia, or air force colleagues.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** How is the naval reserve perceived by the civilian population? What kind of relationship do you maintain with the civilian population?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** One of the four roles of the naval reserve within the navy is to connect with Canadians in our communities. It's that strategic outreach, the strategic communication with the communities.

One of the original intents of the naval reserve in having units across the country, as I mentioned in my opening comments, was to remind Canadians that we are a maritime nation and that there is a navy. We take that role very seriously. The units are fully participating in community events. They are essentially the flagships for the navy in their community. They contribute to formal ceremonial commemorations, but they also want to have a good rapport with the municipal structure, the mayors, and any other key leaders. It helps us in terms of visibility and in increasing people's understanding of the value of the navy. It helps us in recruiting as well, but it is also the right thing to do—to understand and be part of a community.

• (1620)

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Apart from what you've already described, how can we make a career in the Canadian Armed Forces more appealing to youth and recent graduates?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** That is the eternal question. I think we are doing a pretty good job of it right now, with the changes we're making in the recruiting strategy to expedite enrolment.

I would emphasize that there is no change in standard between reserve and regular force through this expedited enrolment process. It remains the same standard. The job is going to attract people who—and there are many ways to do this—want to be part of something bigger than themselves and have a unique part-time job that will potentially take them around the world and certainly across Canada, and have some very extraordinary experiences through their military service, as well as professional development opportunities. As I mentioned earlier, part of our issue is to make sure that this is properly communicated and better understood.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** I've just been cut off with the yellow sheet there. Thank you very much.

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

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

Thanks, folks, for being here.

I think we've seen that many of us have the same questions, the same types of interests, and we want to talk about retention and recruitment. I apologize if I haven't scratched out everything that has been asked. Some of the questions I might just word a little differently.

You talked about the decline over the last 10 years. I'm really interested in the reasons for that decline. You spoke about a number of factors for the decline, and you mentioned budget reductions. Was there a policy decision to reduce budgets strictly for the reserves, or was it that you were just doing the best you could with the budget you were given?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** That's a question that I'm not sure I can directly answer. I would also submit, though, that this was the period of the defence reduction action plan and the post-Afghanistan rationalization of the number of reservists who were working in full-time service. I think part of the initiative within the department was to make sure the overall number of primary reservists who were working in full-time service was brought back down closer to the pre-Afghanistan level. That probably worked its way into some of the policy decisions that were made at the time.

**Capt(N) Chris Ross:** There was actually a point, some seven or eight years ago, when almost 50% of naval reservists were working full time. We bristle now at the 800 number, the 25%, but at one point it was near 50%. There was a conscious effort to reduce the number of full-time naval reservists, because we had evolved into not just a strategic naval reserve but almost an operational naval reserve. There was a conscious effort to draw us back down to become a strategic naval reserve of predominantly part-time service.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** You spoke about the environment now. Are budgets returning? Are things blossoming? Is the program starting to come back?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Most definitely. Certainly over the last few years, the budget that the reserve has required has been absolutely available. There's been no issue with budget.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** You spoke a little about your tactics for recruitment. You talked about getting out in the community. You talked about finding ways to...I don't know if I want to use the term "make it sexy", but you talked about some of the different ways. Have you thought about or concentrated on the fact that the cadet program would offer natural recruitment for the reserve program, and is there some success there?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** I think there is great interest in cadets. Those who are interested apply. They absolutely do.

Chief, do you know how many more...?

**CPO 1 David Arsenaault (Chief Petty Officer, Naval Reserve, Royal Canadian Navy, Department of National Defence):** As far as I know, we make it a point to not be seen to be recruiting cadets into the Canadian Armed Forces; however, we do provide visibility to them as to what their options might be, and if they want to approach us, we're more than happy to have them. There are a number of ex-cadets in the naval reserve doing tremendous service for our country.

• (1625)

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** You don't use that specifically as one of your tactics for recruitment?

**CPO 1 David Arsenaault:** We actually look not to do that, because they are youth.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** You spoke about post-Afghanistan. When we had the Minister of Defence here, we talked about transitioning from the forces to being a veteran. What about transitioning from reserves

to being a veteran? Can you tell me a little about it? I have no knowledge of the process, or whether that's something you struggle with, or whether there are better levels of success than perhaps they've had in the regular forces.

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** That is a timely question. I don't think it's been a significant issue in the past in the reserves. In fact, many reservists will retire and don't even think of themselves as being veterans per se. That is changing, though, as we know.

In the past it was more on an individual basis. Somebody might have retired from the reserve with some type of medical pension, for example, that would be administered through Veterans Affairs. However, in the last few years we've learned that it is potentially a seam, so there is a Canadian Armed Forces-wide examination of exactly that type of transfer. We're reviewing those types of questions right now, at the chief of reserve level, with General Bury, who has oversight over all reserve policies.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** Do I have any more time?

**The Chair:** Essentially, you don't. You have 15 seconds or less.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** All right. I won't bother to try to get another one in. Thank you.

**The Chair:** I'm going to give the floor over to Mr. Paul-Hus.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My thanks to the witnesses for being here today.

Before I proceed, I would first like to table a motion, which reads as follows:

That the Committee accept the invitation to travel to Slovenia at the conclusion of the study of the Defence of North America and travel to Latvia, Slovenia, Poland, Ukraine, Brussels and Vienna in order to study Operation Reassurance and Operation Unifier, visit our troops overseas, and meet with regional stakeholders: EU, NATO, and the OSCE, and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

It's about seeing the Russian threat and meeting our troops abroad.

[English]

**The Chair:** That is a debatable motion, so I'll open the floor to discussion on it. Does anyone want to weigh in?

Go ahead, Mr. Spengemann.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Mr. Chair, given the fact that we have our witnesses with us, for the benefit of some additional time for questions, I would propose that we deal with this motion in committee business.

**The Chair:** Okay. Is there a particular way you want to word that request?

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** I move to adjourn debate.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair: The Chair:** We're going to adjourn debate on the motion and continue.

You have the floor.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My questions are for Commodore Mulkins.

We have talked a lot about recruitment. Could you tell me what has been improved recently?

We know that the medical examinations take a long time. They have to go back and forth to Ottawa. Has that been resolved? And what about the security screening?

Those two factors have been prolonging the delays. Has that changed?

[English]

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** The medical clearance and the security clearance are two of the factors that will take a substantial amount of time for all enrolment files, both regular and reserve.

Within the Canadian Armed Forces, the security clearance process has changed immensely just in the last few months as a result of the adoption of new systems and processes. Reserve recruitment is benefiting from those changes as well.

It is important to note that the process they have in place, from which we're going to benefit, is really for the files of candidates who, for example, haven't lived outside the country, so it's much easier to do the work to validate and verify the past history. The files for folks who have lived outside the country will take a little bit longer to clear. In our own recruiting processes, they probably won't be recruited within the 21 days. However, they can still be recruited pending the eventual clearance of those files.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** I have a short question, and I would like a short answer, if possible.

I know there are often tensions in the military between the reservists and the regular force.

Are you experiencing the same tensions in the navy? Generally, do things go well?

• (1630)

[English]

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** In fact, we're in the process of reorienting how we employ reservists at sea. In the past many years, the Kingston-class vessels were primarily crewed by reservists. We're moving back to an era when reservists will be on every ship of the surface fleet. We're at the opening days of that era.

That said, I fully expect we're going to have a true one-navy collaborative approach. We come from the same training system and we have the same occupations, so we think it's going to be good.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** I want to go back to the issue of the operating budget for your 24 units.

In your training budget, how many man-days do you usually have per member? Is it 33 days?

[English]

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** We manage the budget in two ways. We estimate an average of 17 days of training for each individual, but on top of that, we also plan quite robust regional and national-level exercises or training events that will draw in folks from multiple units. In other words, there's training at the unit level that we budget for, the 17 days, but then there are a significant number of events above and beyond that, which people can volunteer for in order to keep up their readiness levels.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** On average, how many days does a Class A reservist have per year in a unit?

My question is about the winter training program only, because I know that, during the summer, reservists may be in Class B.

For a Class A reservist, what's your budget on average?

[English]

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** I will look to my deputy or chief to see if they know an average number of days.

**Capt(N) Chris Ross:** In the naval reserve division, the average number of days spent is 17 full days.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** That's all?

[English]

**Capt(N) Chris Ross:** However, added to that are the events outside the naval reserve division itself, and it is up to the member himself or herself to say, "I want to go on that weekend; I want to go to sea there; I want to participate in that exercise." Those are in addition to the actual days spent inside the naval reserve division. All those components will go toward enhancing a member's individual level of readiness, which obviously we will track as well.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Okay.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Paul-Hus, that's all the time you have.

I'm going to give the floor over to Mr. McDonald. Welcome to the defence committee. You have the floor.

**Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have a couple of quick questions, and I'll share any time left over with my colleague, as I think Leona has a couple of questions.

Commodore, you mentioned retention and attrition. People are not staying and people leaving, and you're not attracting the numbers you would like.

Do you find that the numbers are proportionally the same across the country when it comes to retention? As well, with not being able to attract, where were your numbers before? Were they higher than now? Are you seeing a shift where everything is going in one direction but proportionally it's still staying pretty much the same in regard to enrolment and retention and people leaving?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** That is exactly what we would like our current retention working groups to start to tease out for us. Are there regional differences? Is there a change in the—if I can put it this way—life patterns? Are people staying in longer or leaving earlier in higher numbers? That's exactly the type of analysis we're hoping to have in the coming months to better understand the situation and then to develop better strategies to retain more people.

**Mr. Ken McDonald:** Thank you.

Captain Ross, you were talking about the enrolment process and the 21 days if somebody young walked in. I know the commodore mentioned somebody, a Red Seal cook, but if somebody walked in to sign up to join the reserve—say a fully trained Red Seal electrician, a plumber, or whatever—would the process be any different? To attract fully trained tradespeople, what would they start at, or would they have to be retrained to some degree?

**Capt(N) Chris Ross:** The difference there is that when we say that all of our trades are part of the same as what's in the regular force, all the regular force trades are not part of the naval reserve. They have technical trades that we wouldn't have.

For a lot of those people who are skilled technicians, the electronics techs, we would try to convince them to have a career in the regular force. We wouldn't recruit them directly into the naval reserve. For anybody who comes in, obviously there is specific training that's required, basic recruit training, and everybody will have to go through that process. Some training can be.... We call it PLA, previous learning assessment, but predominantly they go through the naval training system.

•(1635)

**Mr. Ken McDonald:** I wasn't thinking of somebody who was looking to join the full-time armed forces or navy or whatever. It was the 28- or 29-year-old who's working at his trade now and would like to explore something different. He would still work at what he's trained to do, but use that expertise in the reserves.

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** We do have recruits who are coming in, and we talk predominantly about students, but in fact we are recruiting folks who are beyond their student years. Folks like that would still have to go through the basic training process and occupational training, because that's what they would need to be employed at sea in whatever occupation they would choose. We do see more and more people who do that, and they can perhaps do all of their training within one year and be ready to be employed at sea after that.

**Mr. Ken McDonald:** Commodore, do you think the levels of compensation for your reservists are at levels that should be able to keep the retention rates up high, or is that something that you'd look at as being a component to entice people to stay or entice people to actually join the reserves?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** I think overall that is exactly the type of question that's being examined through the compensation and benefits review overall. Certainly for a part-time job, the benefits in particular that are offered through the reserve employment of any reserve are really substantial and an attraction for some folks who want to join.

**Mr. Ken McDonald:** Thank you. I'll pass it to Leona.

**The Chair:** There's very little time left. Actually, there is no time left.

I think we're going to have some time to go around the block another time after this, but just to get the formal questions out of the way, I'm going to give the last formal question to Ms. Blaney.

You have the floor.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you.

I'm going to go a little bit in a different direction.

In 2008 the ombudsman recommended to the Canadian Armed Forces that periodic health assessments be made available to regular and reserve force members on an equal basis. In 2011 the surgeon general agreed that it should happen, and then in 2015, in the report on the feasibility of providing periodic health assessments to all primary reservists, the ombudsman reiterated this need, and it's still not happening. Can you tell us why that's the case?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** I think it is definitely a great initiative to be able to ensure that the part-time reservists are able to have the periodic assessments done as well. There was an initiative under way within the health services that was meant to be rolled out very soon, but I'm not sure of the status of it at this time. I actually would recommend that this question be brought to the head of the Canadian Forces health services.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you.

Do you agree with the ombudsman that policies are needed to bring medical care to reservists, especially to part-time reservists?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** I think that's an interesting question. That's the type of question that has to have a lot of analysis, which I certainly don't have knowledge of, and it may well be part of the compensation and benefits review. I'm not sure.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** I also want to ask a couple of questions about the naval reserves reorganization.

Could you tell us a bit about the goal of the restructuring of the naval reserves and realigning that toward the traditional CAF model of reserve service?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Yes. That's fundamentally what the establishment review is all about.

In order for us to be able to generate sailors to be augmenting in ships, there needs to be a whole structure put around that, both in order to generate enough sailors at any given time to meet the augment target of 10% across the fleet and also to have all of the apparatus around that to make sure that naval reserve units can operate, that naval reserve headquarters can operate, that careers can be managed, and that training can be delivered. Those all factor into the equation of what that structure will be.

There are two sides to it. There's the structure, which is what I was just speaking of, and there are also the processes—the governance—within the broader navy to ensure that there is sufficient training capacity year in, year out, and that there are sufficient employment opportunities year in, year out as well. All of those things are under way right now. They're coming together this year, in fact.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Okay.

In your view, should the naval reserve retain certain specific maritime defence responsibilities?

• (1640)

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** In that we augment the navy, I believe we are contributing to the broad spectrum of the national defence continental defence role just by virtue of how we augment the navy in its various roles.

Reservists are also working in the MSOCs, the marine security operations centres, so they are contributing to the whole-of-government defence and security picture as well.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Okay. What—

**The Chair:** That's your time. Sorry.

That ends our formal, structured, time-allocated questions. Other people around the table also want to continue to speak, so I'm going to give them the opportunity. I'll go to five-minute questions.

I'll start with the Liberals, then I'll go to the Conservatives, and then I'll circle back to you, Ms. Blaney, to make sure everyone gets a chance.

The person who got my attention was Mr. Spengemann. Sven, you have the floor.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I may not even need the five minutes, so I'll be happy to delegate it to another Liberal speaker.

I have a couple of discreet questions. My apologies if they appear a bit disjunctive. They're just cleanup questions in my mind.

Is there a Canada-U.S. relationship that's naval reserve to naval reserve, or is it strictly navy to navy?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** It's strictly navy to navy at this point, yes.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** There are no separate networks, even informal, between the two units, operationally or otherwise?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** No, not with the Americans. However, there are NATO connections—not specifically navy, but at the chief reserve level.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Is Canada's submarine deployment opportunity, to the extent that it's alive and well, available to reservists?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Not at this time. Traditionally, the level of training they have to do to qualify to become a submariner and to retain those skills has not been available to reservists. There's no plan at this time to change that.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** It hasn't been the case for some time. Was it ever, in the past?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** No, it's never been the case.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** You mentioned NATO. Are there opportunities for Canadian naval reservists to participate in NATO work, be that at headquarters or in planning and operations?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Yes, there are. Canadian naval reservists support NATO missions indirectly, obviously, and an example right now is that of the reservists sailing in HMCS *St. John's*. More directly, they can also be in support of some of the

NATO reserve working groups as well. For example, our chief of reserves will be leading a study in NATO for pre-deployment best practices of reservists. That's an ongoing engagement.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** That's helpful. Thank you for that.

On the gender and diversity work you mentioned, is that your own or is that the navy's? Do you have room to design or augment your own work to make sure you achieve gender balance or diversity to the extent that you've targeted within recruitment?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** It's from the Canadian Armed Forces all the way down. There are initiatives that we're doing at every level within the Canadian Armed Forces.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** They're Canadian Forces initiatives, then, not Royal Canadian Navy Reserve initiatives. Do you have room to augment, to change to—

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** I'm not sure I understand your question.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** In terms of targets, in terms of how you go about achieving diversity both on the gender side and in terms of cultural distribution across Canada, can you do more than what the navy is asking?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** We're certainly not being constrained. If we have opportunities at the local level to reach out more to cultural communities, absolutely....

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** I have a quick question on the bifurcation between officers and non-commissioned personnel. When you go to university campuses and recruit, are you recruiting with the mindset of recruiting officers, or not necessarily?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** I think we're going with the mindset that there's a whole spectrum of great employment, and officers typically have to be degreed or at least students who are in a degree program. It's certainly not exclusive. It's whatever type of work challenge will appeal to an individual.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Is it fair to ask you about the number of unfilled officer positions at the moment? Is there such a statistic, or is it simply part of the overall aspiration to grow? What I'm getting at is, where are your needs greater, on the officer side or on the non-commissioned officer side?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** It's probably weighted evenly across the board. Some occupations are full and some are not, both in the officer cadres and in the non-commissioned members cadres.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Mr. Chair, I have about a minute and a half, and I'd like to delegate it.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Gerretsen.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** I want to return to something. I'm going to be a little more direct this time. It goes to the ability to attract.

Earlier I brought up your words about meaningful employment and sense of purpose and people really needing to feel that. When he was speaking after me, Mr. Fisher talked about whether it was sexy enough.

I want to understand. Following World War II, there were 78,000 reservists, if I understand correctly. Notwithstanding the fact that it was at the end of a great conflict, has there been a deterioration or decline in the sense of, to use your words, satisfaction that comes from being involved in this particular line of work? We're still engaged in conflict throughout the world, yet there's a significant decrease in the number of reservists.

I know you gave a number of reasons, but is the sense of patriotism or the sense of wanting to fight for one's country different now with respect to reservists from it was following World War II?

•(1645)

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** I doubt that. I think it's more a question of being aware that there is a naval reserve that could afford fantastic personal development opportunities and employment opportunities. I believe it's more a need for us to make sure that we are seen in our communities, that people understand that's an option for employment for them. That's why that is one of our lines of effort to improve recruitment: to be reaching out to the right people, at the right places, at the right time—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** I found the comment very interesting—

**The Chair:** I apologize. I'm going to have to cut you off.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Are we going to go around the block a second time?

**The Chair:** We might be able to do that.

I'm going to yield the authority to Mr. Paul-Hus. Sir, you have floor.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to know whether the Canadian Forces Fleet School, which is in Quebec City, falls under your command, in whole or in part.

[English]

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** No longer. It's part of the naval training system. It is one of the campuses of the naval training system, run by the navy as a whole.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Okay.

Where do you train the reservists? Is it in Esquimalt, Halifax, Quebec City?

[English]

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** It can happen at any of the above, depending on what the particular training is and what level it's at. Sailors, through their careers, may be at any one of the schools across the country.

Chief, I don't know if you can add some detail on that.

**CPO 1 David Arsenault:** It's just that the level of equipment and whatnot changes across the three schools. The naval training system schedules courses that are specific for reservists, that are specific for regular force, and that are mixed. The instructors at any of the three schools could be regular force or reserve. It's really a pan-Royal Canadian Navy solution, and it works quite well for us.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** If I understand correctly, the training of the naval reserve is really integrated with that of the regular force. You do not have a separate reserve school.

[English]

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Certainly in the last 20 years that has been the case, in the sense that the preponderance of the training and developing courses and whatnot were executed through the fleet schools. The regenerative training, however, traditionally has been done at the naval reserve unit level.

**CPO 1 David Arsenault:** If I could answer, we do some aspects of the formal training that would be delivered in a school for the regular force through distributed learning at a naval reserve division in order to shorten the time that the reservist has to spend away from home, but it's the same training. It's just a different delivery method.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Fine.

Let me go back to the training budget and the operational budget.

Is the budget for all national reserve operations completely decentralized and independent from the Naval Reserve Headquarters? Are you with the maritime command? How does it work? Do you have autonomy in terms of management?

[English]

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Our budget is through the navy and is managed by us. However, it is now, as a result of the chief of the defence staff's directive of a couple of years ago, managed at the corporate level and is a corporate fund. It comes to us through the navy, but it sits in a corporate fund, and essentially we draw from that fund.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** What do you mean by corporate fund? I know that one of the problems with the reserve is that, after the budgets are set, a number of people take money and there is no money left in the end. Does the naval reserve have more control than the army over its budgets?

•(1650)

[English]

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** That's in fact the mechanism that was proposed in that directive. Having all of the primary reserve budgets held in a corporate account was deliberate, so that it would be very clear that the money that had been allocated to the reserves was being spent by the reserves.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** The money is earmarked for the naval reserve. That's fantastic.

I have asked all my questions. Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Ms. Blaney is next.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you. I have just a couple more questions.

What is the ideal role that you would envision for the naval reserve in the future?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** These are the types of questions that were.... The establishment review was preoccupied with meeting the missions as we understand them right now. I think any change in roles in the future is certainly going to be the purview of government, and I would refer the questions in that direction.

Within the tasks and missions that we have right now, as we are transitioning we are designing a system that I think will enable us to deliver on the naval mission and help support the navy and everything that it does going forward.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** With the navy review under way, I understand that there will be further decentralization of operations to the coasts. What will be the effects to the 24 naval reserve divisions?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** I'm not sure if I understand your question—decentralization of operations?

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Yes. That's what we're hearing. It will be decentralization to the coasts, so I'm just wondering what you think will be the impact on the 24 naval reserve divisions.

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** Yes, I think the chief was just orienting.

The mission of the naval reserve, of course, is just to generate the individual sailors who are ready to be employed at sea and ashore, so I don't see any difference to our mission or how we deliver training within the naval reserve units. There may be, as a result of what you're referring to, some type of change in how they're employed, but I'm not sure that I'm aware of exactly what you're talking about. Within the spectrum of our mandate to deliver trained sailors, I don't think anything would change.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Okay. Well, then, at this point I've asked all the questions that I have today. Thank you.

**The Chair:** We have some time left, so we'll do a lightning round. I want to make sure everybody has a chance to ask questions.

Mr. Gerretsen, do you need five minutes?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Captain Ross, you had made a very interesting point, which was that years ago 50% of those reservists were full-time employees. I'm curious as to what has led to that decline. Is it the fact that we live now in a world where people just don't have the same kind of time that they used to? Decades ago, there was usually one income-earner in a family, which maybe made priorities different. Is it the fact that people aren't looking at being in the reserves in the same way that they used to, and that is what's declined? Do you have anything...?

**Capt(N) Chris Ross:** The decline from 50% was a conscious effort by the Canadian Armed Forces. We were no longer functioning as a reserve force.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Is that something we need to return to?

**Capt(N) Chris Ross:** No, not at all. The National Defence Act talks about reserve service as being something other than continuous full-time service.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Let me ask another question.

When you have volunteer firefighters and regular firefighters, there's always a tension between them and sometimes there's competition. The regular force feels as though the volunteer force is stepping on its toes. I come from an amalgamated city in which we needed to amalgamate volunteer and full-time volunteer firefighters, and it's a very challenging process.

Does the same thing happen? Do you detect the same thing? Does that play into it at all?

**Capt(N) Chris Ross:** Sure it does, and we've all experienced that over the years, but I would say that in the last 20 years we have significantly bridged that gap. Through our operational role of manning the Kingston class, we have attained a higher level of credibility and we are viewed as being a more professional organization now than we were 20 years ago. That is something we see as very positive.

As we move forward into the next phase of how we will contribute to RCN operations, we have every intent of maintaining that high level of credibility and professionalism. We will do so better now by working alongside our regular force counterparts in the same ship, doing exactly the same jobs.

● (1655)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Thank you.

I'll just say that in Kingston, we have HMCS *Cataraqui* and we also have the PWOR, which is the army reserves. The individuals who come out of those programs are really solid individuals. They contribute a lot to the community. They get the loudest applause during a parade, and we're very fortunate to have them.

I commend you on the work you're doing, and hopefully we'll start to see those numbers increase again. I think ultimately that's what we all want.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Gallant.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** I'll be sharing a little bit of time with Mr. Paul-Hus.

With respect to the naval reserves, do we see any incidence of PTSD after they've returned from a mission?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** That's an interesting question. I don't have specific knowledge about that. I would refer you to the Canadian Forces health services studies. To the best of my knowledge there is no increased incidence of any type of mental health issues in the reserve population.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** I wasn't asking if there was increased incidence. Do you have any incidence of people suffering from this upon returning from a mission?

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** I'm not aware of any.

**CPO 1 David Arsenault:** I personally know of one who served in Afghanistan with the land forces. They were a naval reservist and they were diagnosed with PTSD afterwards and are receiving treatment for that. There may be others, but generally we don't tend to employ a whole lot of people in the type of operations where the prevalence of PTSD has been seen.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** If someone is suffering from PTSD, are the facilities and the professionals available to treat these people?

**CPO 1 David Arsenault:** Absolutely. Certainly part-time service makes things more difficult to arrange, but those services are available and those individuals are getting the aid they need in the same way that any other member who was deployed on that mission would get them.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Very good.

I'll hand it over to Mr. Paul-Hus.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Based on what you're saying, some of your troops are currently deployed on operational missions, including Operation Impact. I would like to know whether the naval troops' mission is considered a combat mission.

Are those people entitled to tax relief as a risk premium?

[English]

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** If it were under a CJOC mission, I would think they would have exactly the same benefits and status as the rest of their colleagues who are deployed right now.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Do you know for sure whether they are receiving tax relief?

[English]

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** I'm not certain of the case. I think establishing that would be an individual career management issue.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Thank you. I have no further questions.

[English]

**The Chair:** Ms. Alleslev has a question, but I want to give you an opportunity. Are you okay?

Ms. Alleslev, you have the floor.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** I have one last question, leveraging some of what my colleagues have asked about culture.

Having a much broader augmentation and integration between the two forces will represent a step change in terms of culture. Having been a woman in the military, I can say that sometimes culture changes present a bit of a challenge for the military.

I wonder if, as part of the establishment review, there will be a section on how to integrate and what to watch for and how to deal with that culture change that more than likely will occur.

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** That's a great question.

We are looking at something similar to that in the establishment review, but we don't look at it in terms of a culture change; we look at it more as the governance by which we ensure that reservists have access to the training they require, receive proper training, and have the right employment opportunities on a ship at any given time.

It works both ways, though. I have to stress that the augment role benefits the broader navy as well, not just because we're helping augment them in achieving their goals, but also because the navy needs to watch the personnel tempo, for example. I believe Admiral Lloyd, when he was testifying previously, talked about the need to track operational tempo at the individual level to make sure that some folks aren't away from home too much, for example, or are denied getting on their career courses because they are required on board their ship.

The reserve augmentation role is part of the management of the overall operational tempo at the individual level. It's very much a benefit. This is a dialogue at the governance level to make sure the right people can cycle out of their ships in time for their career courses or whatever their obligations might be. Reservists theoretically can cycle in and can support the overall tempo management.

• (1700)

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** In terms of a plan to monitor and ensure that this integration is seamless rather than, as in some cases in the past, making those changes and then realizing that it didn't go smoothly and maybe we need to have a SHARP program or Operation Honour—not that this would be the case in this case—maybe being proactive might be a better opportunity than facing the potential of a reactive response.

**Cmdre Marta B. Mulkins:** We already have reservists sailing in those ships. I think we would start to know if there were any cultural differences. I don't foresee any, because we have been working so closely together across the naval enterprise for many years now.

That said, it could possibly be part of the measure and adjust going forward as well.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** I'd like to thank the three of you for your appearance today.

Thank you for your service.

I'm going suspend to say our goodbyes, and then we'll resume committee business in camera.

[Proceedings continue in camera]







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