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Chair

Mr. Stephen Fuhr

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• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.)): Good afternoon, everybody.

Welcome to the Standing Committee on National Defence as we continue our discussion on diversity within the Canadian Armed Forces.

I'd like to welcome, from Reserves 2000, retired Lieutenant-Colonel John Selkirk, executive director.

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

Lieutenant-Colonel (Retired) John Selkirk (Executive Director, Reserves 2000): Thank you for inviting comments from Reserves 2000 on diversity in the Canadian Armed Forces.

I've testified here before, so some of you have probably heard this little speech. Reserves 2000 is an alliance of Canadians who advocate providing more defence capability with part-time citizen soldiers. Our membership is nationwide and consists of Canadians from all walks of life, including retired members of the Canadian Armed Forces, both regular and reserve; academics; educators; community leaders; and others concerned with the defence and security of Canada.

Knowing I was coming here, I consulted with many of these members, and what I have to say this afternoon reflects the thoughts of our supporters from across the country.

My first comment is that overall, the reserves, and by this I mean the primary reserves, and of course the army reserve is the largest part, can be described as the component leading the Canadian Armed Forces in diversity, especially in the larger and more diverse population centres. In fact, this has been the case for a long time.

Now, Reserves 2000 does not collect data on diversity in the reserves, but there is information published by the Department of National Defence and publicly available, especially on gender diversity. In terms of gender diversity, according to data dating from March 2018 the percentage of women in the reserve force was slightly higher, at 16.3%, than the 14.9% found in the regular force. We are aware of the goal stated in the defence policy statement "Strong, Secure, Engaged" to increase the percentage of women in the Canadian Armed Forces to 25% over the next 10 years.

Recent policy changes have been made to allow army reserve units to make the units themselves responsible for attraction, recruiting and enrolment instead of using the very centralized process that existed before. The shift to local authority has seen a surge in recruiting success, and there is no reason to believe that the number of female recruits will not continue to grow in the months and years ahead. If they can be retained, the critical mass of women will grow, which in itself should assist with retaining even more women.

A new program of guaranteed summer employment for four summers after enrolment should help to retain more new reserve soldiers of both genders.

I would say, then, that the army reserve is even better positioned today to help the CAF meet the gender diversity goal stated in the defence policy.

These army reserve recruiting and retention initiatives should also attract and retain more members of other populations that are now under-represented in the Canadian Armed Force. There are, after all, 123 army reserve units located in 117 communities across Canada.

Where there is ethnic diversity, in particular in large metropolitan areas, army reserve units already reflect this diversity to a remarkable degree. In smaller communities, units are not as diverse for the simple reason those communities are not as diverse as the larger, metropolitan areas.

Decentralizing recruiting in the army reserve has already produced increased enrolment of new members from traditionally under-represented populations. Allowing units more autonomy in advertising and other methods of attraction could help to increase the percentage of these soldiers even more by allowing units to target potential recruits from under-represented populations more efficiently.

Each area of this vast nation of ours has its own distinct communities, and it's the units themselves that are best positioned to know what works best for them. Now, at this particular time units have very limited advertising budgets, and the messaging they do manage is quite tightly controlled from the centre.

With that said, it must be understood that while gender percentages are known and are being tracked, the same is not necessarily true for ethnic diversity. In fact, there's an article in the Globe and Mail today which points out that we don't collect this kind of information, whether it's in the armed forces or anywhere else.

Having a better database would allow better programs for attraction and retention to be developed, as well as provide the army chain of command with important information on skills that those soldiers may possess—for example, language skills beyond the two official languages—which could be hugely important to achieving success on future deployments.

Finally, I want to say a word about quotas. Supporters of Reserves 2000 are pleased that the defence policy statement speaks in terms of goals and not quotas. It is felt that setting quotas to meet the goals of more diversity would only contribute to inefficiency, dissatisfaction and probably even lower enrolment. The army reserve has shown the ability to increase diversity without quotas, and new recruiting and retention policies have opened the door to even greater success. We say let us continue on that path of success.

I would like to conclude my remarks with those very general terms.

I am sure you have questions of more detail, which I will attempt to answer today. If I don't have an answer, I will find out and get back to you in writing, or whatever other method you might wish me to use.

That concludes my opening remarks.

● (1540)

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

As you pointed out, you've been here before.

I'm going to give the first slot of seven minutes to Mr. Robillard.

The floor is yours.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses for being with us today. I will start with some questions for Lieutenant-Colonel Selkirk.

Your time in the armed forces has enabled you to observe progress made in terms of female representation. Can you give us some concrete examples of the benefits of increased diversity in that regard, especially with respect to women's participation in the decision-making process?

[English]

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: As you say, I've seen the landscape change dramatically since I joined the army in 1960. In those days, we had a Canadian Women's Army Corps, CWAC, and they were segregated into that organization. Since then, of course, women have been participating in every trade and officer classification across the whole of the Canadian Armed Forces. I've seen a remarkable increase in the number of women in uniform.

In my personal opinion, and I think in the opinion of almost all Reserves 2000 supporters, who include a good number of women supporters, it's been nothing but good for the Canadian Armed Forces and for Canada. I think a lot of good things happen when women and men work together. Let's face it: Men can learn a lot from listening. I think it's been only good for the Canadian Forces.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Robillard: The report by Ms. Deschamps and the Auditor General identified the need for a cultural change within the Canadian Armed Forces. What factors should our committee consider in order to measure and assess that cultural change?

[English]

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: I think the biggest problem there is how do you assess change in culture. What sort of specific markers can you put out there, so you can say, "Okay, we had three of those last year and now have five"?

I think it needs to be monitored, but I'm not sure how you would do that. Obviously, this committee can have an effect on changing culture and I would encourage you to do everything you can. I certainly don't have any specific ideas on how you would get that job done or how the armed forces would get that job done.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Robillard: Visible minority representation has also grown in recent years.

In your experience, how does that diversity benefit the Canadian Armed Forces? How might the Canadian Armed Forces benefit even more from that diversity?

● (1545)

[English]

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: First, it helps the Canadian Armed Forces, and I'm really going to just speak about the army reserve here. It helps because tapping into communities, beyond the traditional French, English, white communities, you're obviously opening up the potential of the bigger pool, so you can attract more recruits. That's good. Units can grow that way. They know that and they're working on it.

Second, for the nation, I think it's fabulous because—I could talk for 20 minutes about this—new Canadians are given an opportunity to participate in an important national program. I'm sure they feel better about that; so many want to do that.

The other big thing that I think is really important to the Canadian Armed Forces is the potential of those communities to assist in achieving the missions that the army and the rest of the forces have to achieve.

For example, on overseas deployments, it's important that you can work with the local population and there are lots of places where most of us don't speak those languages. However, somewhere in the Canadian mosaic there are people from that community and we need to bring them in if we can. We have to identify them as well and I don't think that we... Certainly, in the recruiting process the individuals are asked, I suppose, what language they speak, but that is just the two official languages. I think we need to do a better job about it.

I have anecdotal stories about the deployment in Afghanistan. We had people there who pretty much spoke the local language but nobody knew about it. That's a terrible waste if that goes on.

I think there's enormous potential from the point of view of the units themselves. They want to do this. I think it's good for Canada, but I also think that if we knew what we had or had a better idea of what—I'm sorry, I shouldn't say "we". If the army had a better idea of what they actually have in their inventory of personnel, I think it would be incredibly helpful.

The Chair: You have about a minute for a question and a response.

Mr. Yves Robillard: Maybe one of my colleagues....

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

Mr. Selkirk, thanks again for coming back to our committee.

In your opening remarks, you talked about how to target under-represented areas of the population. Can you give us an example as to how you think that under-represented areas could be targeted?

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: Mr. Gerretsen, I think that the best way to do it is the old word of mouth. Once you get one individual or a couple of individuals into a reserve unit from an ethnic community, if those people are treated right and they really feel that this is a good thing to do, they're going to go back and talk to their friends about that and then we'll get more and more.

I think the key is to try to have a foot in the door, if you wish, of as many communities as is possible.

The Chair: I'm sorry. I'm going to have to hold it there. You've met your time.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I'll pick up when I—

The Chair: Yes. You'll get another opportunity.

Go ahead, MP Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Colonel Selkirk, welcome back. I'm going to have to get you out to my riding sometime to see the beautiful city of Selkirk, your namesake, right on the great Red River.

I appreciate all the work that you've done over the years on Reserves 2000. It's largely because of the advocacy of Reserves 2000 that we are now seeing the autonomy return to units in recruitment.

What are our units' strengths sitting at now compared to where they were before the change in strategy on reserve units going out to find their own members?

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: Thank you for that question, Mr. Bezan.

I'm trying to think of the latest numbers I was given on the increase in overall strength. I think since recruiting has been returned to units, the reserve army which was probably hovering around 18,000, all up, total strength, is now about 1,000 stronger, so 19,000 or so. That may not sound like a lot, but for years and years the graph was going the other way. Now it's on the increase.

There are two factors. It's not just getting more recruits in the door; it's retaining them as well. The other policy that the army has put in place, the summer employment for four years after they first

joined, didn't get a chance to really bite last summer, but we're all hoping that this summer and the years ahead, this will start that slope of increase to be even steeper.

It is working. There's no question about it.

• (1550)

Mr. James Bezan: Already you're saying the percentage of women in reserve units is running about 1.5% higher than in the regular force. Do you attribute that to the fact that reserve units are in a community and that it is part-time and more conducive to the busy lifestyles of women and being close to family?

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: That's my personal opinion and the opinion of a lot of our folks. I have no empirical evidence, and I don't think the department does either. I think it should be the subject of a good longitudinal study on that whole issue.

We feel, just from talking to people, that yes, women are not necessarily as inclined to want to, at the age of 19, get out of the house to go to Petawawa or some distant place. There are a lot who are more comfortable.... But they want to be in uniform, so this is a way to do that if you can do it on a part-time basis. I also believe that within the ethnic communities, which we do have females from, there could be pressures to stay a little closer to home. They don't want them to go away.

I think those two things are probably the biggest factors. This is all, as I say, anecdotal.

Mr. James Bezan: What percentage of our reserve units are combat arms?

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: Percentage-wise, I don't know. Here's what I can tell you. I can give you the absolute numbers, because I've never worked it out for percentages. Within the army reserve, we have 117 units: 51 are infantry; 17 are armoured, and I think it's about 17 or 18 that are artillery. Those are the combat arms. Then we have engineers, and I think we have about nine of those. Signals are at least another nine, probably more. Those two are supporting arms. Then in the combat service support, we have nine service battalions. In addition to that, there are a lot of army folks who are in medical, legal and other parts.

I'm sorry, but the bulk is—

Mr. James Bezan: I'm just wondering, because well over half are combat arms—

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: Oh, it's more than half.

Mr. James Bezan: We've heard some witnesses here say that is an impediment to some women getting involved. A lot of women want to pursue that career path and others don't. Especially, how many are rifle companies, for example?

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: Yes.

Mr. James Bezan: I'm wondering if you have the numbers. Do those units have a lower percentage of women? I'd like to get the statistical data to see whether or not some of the testimony we've heard bears out what people have said.

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: If we go back to what I mentioned earlier, from March 2018, the department has published those percentages. The overall percentage in the Canadian Armed Forces is 15.3%. In the reserve, the overall percentage is whatever I said earlier on, about 16%. It's a little bit smaller in the regular force, 14.9% or something. However, within the combat arms, there are not very many women. The total percentage of combat arms and supporting arms—infantry, armoured artillery, engineers and signals—is only 2.7%. That's in the total of the Canadian Armed Forces.

That tells me that a lot of woman don't necessarily want to be in the combat arms. You probably have to be a bit crazy, like me, to want to be an infantryman. It's a tough job. At any rate, I'm joking a bit, but I think there are a lot of women who just don't want to do that. What those numbers also tell me is that the combat service support, the air force and the navy, all have a lot more women than we're going to get in the army reserve. I'm not sure that we're going to increase those numbers in the army reserve combat arms very fast.

If I still have a moment—

● (1555)

The Chair: You have about 15 seconds left. Perhaps you could wrap up. I think there will be more time after for us to continue on that point.

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: Here's our concern within Reserves 2000. If somebody says every unit has to be 15% this year, 16% next year, and so on, it isn't going to happen in the combat arms. We have to accept that. If you start issuing quotas to get to those numbers, it just isn't going to work. Those units are then going to go down in strength. That's our fear.

The Chair: MP Garrison.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Thanks very much, Mr. Chair, and welcome back, Colonel Selkirk.

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: Thank you.

Mr. Randall Garrison: I would like to echo Mr. Bezan's comments on the effective work that you and your organization do promoting the profile of reserves and maybe helping to keep the government's attention on reserves. I know we still have a lot of work to do. I think the reserves are very important.

I was going to go a different way. I want to go back to what you and Mr. Bezan were talking about, because I think you're falling into a bit of a trap, called essentialism, in saying that the reason you don't see women in certain places is that they don't want to be there. Throughout society, when you examine and study that, you find that they're not there because of the barriers, not because of the differences of opinion. When you say not many women want to be infantrymen, neither do many men. There's something differential operating there. I think you have to be careful of making the assumption that women don't want to do things—

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: Yes.

Mr. Randall Garrison: —because that's not borne out in most other places in society.

When you said you're not in favour of quotas, and you stated that several times, how about targets? I think what we're seeing here is a lot of positive statements, and a few positive initiatives, but not much progress.

If you look at visible minorities in Canada, probably at least one in five Canadians belongs to a visible minority now. It's probably just about half that in the Canadian Forces. Of course, we're talking about women. Obviously, they are 50% of the population and only 15% in the Canadian Armed Forces, so we have very modest figures here and no real targets. For women, I would say there's a target of 1% a year, but it's so modest it would get us to 25% by 2026.

Again, all the studies in society show that a critical mass of women in an organization is something over 30%. Until you get to 30%, it doesn't change the culture of the organization. It doesn't have those impacts you were talking about, where things would actually multiply.

If you're not in favour of quotas, are you in favour of stronger targets, with measures to actually achieve those targets?

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: Yes, and as I said, we're delighted that “Strong, Secure, Engaged” talks about goals, not quotas. If you want to call them targets, or goals, yes, the targets should be set. I don't know how you know the ethnic makeup of the Canadian Forces, because I don't think anybody really knows that. Do you have statistics on that?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Yes, I do, from DND.

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: What percentage do they say come...?

Mr. Randall Garrison: It's about 11%.

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: That's 11% from non—

Mr. Randall Garrison: It's non-aboriginal visible minorities.

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: Okay.

In both cases, gender and ethnic, targets are the way to go. I still don't necessarily think the armed forces or the Department of National Defence know enough about the populations where units are located, or even—I don't know—about breakdowns within units, to say, “Okay, how are you guys doing?” That will vary across the country.

● (1600)

Mr. Randall Garrison: I certainly do take your point that better data will certainly lead to better policy. That's always the case.

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: Yes.

Mr. Randall Garrison: I guess the reason I'm choosing the word “targets” rather than “goals” is that targets usually have specified ways of getting there, whereas goals are just goals. I think we're still suffering from that: good intentions but lack of specific plans.

You say that the reserve units have been more successful when they've decentralized recruiting, and they're doing slightly better. I'm not disputing that at all. I think that is true. I certainly know that locally.

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: Yes.

Mr. Randall Garrison: What other than decentralization do you accredit that to? How is it that people locally managing recruiting are doing better?

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: First of all, they know their audience better.

Most importantly, the over-centralized policies of two years ago meant that, for example, on Vancouver Island, you would have had people in your riding who would have had to travel some distance to be processed and that would have turned them off. Doing it all within the local armoury is much more efficient for one thing.

Another problem with the over-centralization, and this problem still exists, is that the medical people need to see every file. I find it a bit ironic that with doctors, who have a pretty strong professional organization, we couldn't say to a doctor, "Can't we accept your opinion on this from Victoria, in Halifax, instead of every file having to go to Borden for central processing?" This is something that I know the army is working on, maybe not desperately but at least hard, to change, but so far, that hasn't changed. However, because of those pressures, the time that the medical people have had working on files has been shortened considerably. That's another factor.

The security clearances have been shortened considerably.

Two years ago, from the time a potential army reserve recruit walked in the door of the army and said, "Gee, I might like to do this" until they could get enrolled, the average time was six months. This is for a part-time job. That has been reduced. I don't know what the figure would be today, but the last time I heard much about it, it had been reduced by probably half anyway. I think that shows the surge.

Mr. Randall Garrison: I don't mean to be hard on you this afternoon, because you've been a very effective advocate for more efficient recruiting.

Those were all good things to increase recruiting overall, but how do those changes differentially impact women, visible minorities or aboriginal people in getting into the reserves? I see how it does good things generally, and I'm totally supportive, but I wonder how it does have that differential impact.

The Chair: If you could answer briefly, I would appreciate it.

Thank you.

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: It's simply because you're going to get more people in.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm going to give the last seven-minute period to MP Dzerowicz.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Thank you.

Thank you for coming in. Thank you for your wonderful presentation and for your advocacy.

I'm going to continue a little bit along the same vein, and maybe even continue along the line of questioning that Mr. Garrison had started.

You mentioned that the way to actually recruit more from different ethnic communities is by word of mouth. How do you actually make

that initial dive into those communities? You need a certain group to come in so that word of mouth can actually proliferate. What might be some ideas there?

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: The fact that the units themselves living in the communities now have much more flexibility is a good start, because the recruiting sergeant or recruiting officer of any unit is going to have a good idea about his community and what the ethnic communities are within that community.

There are many ways it can be done, such as going to churches or mosques or schools and events to celebrate culture and all that sort of thing. They can do that. When it was too centralized, there weren't enough people to really get out and do it.

Right now, because we have put recruiters in every unit, we have probably increased the overall number of recruiters by at least double, probably even more. Right off the bat we have more people doing that job. If they get out there, and they know where those communities are, that's the way to go.

• (1605)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Okay. Thank you.

I come from the private sector. Before I entered politics I was in the private sector. One of the big ways in which we increased the diversity within our company was by providing incentive to our executives.

Are the right incentives in place at the most senior levels within the Canadian Armed Forces to actually increase diversity?

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: I don't know the answer to that question, because I don't know whether, for example, the commander of the army is given those sorts of goals as one of his objectives for the year or whatever. If we're talking about management by objectives or something like that. I'm afraid, then, I can't answer your question.

Commanding officers—we're now considerably down the chain—certainly have been told to increase the numbers of females and the ethnic diversity of their units. Going back to Mr. Gerretsen's question, however, they're not specific targets. They're not, say, get five more of this group this year or 20 of that.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Do you think it's a good idea for us to have targets, to have the right incentives for leadership to be motivated to actually meet their targets?

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: If it is a well-thought-out program, yes, I think it could be very helpful. Until the department has more data on what they're working with, however.... They need to know more about those populations out there.

The other thing is that you can't be a blanket: one size does not fit all in this great big nation of ours. For example, a rural unit—and by a rural unit I mean a unit probably in a small town—may not have very many people of different ethnic backgrounds. The battery in Kenora, for example, has a lot of indigenous people because the area has many indigenous people. In the regiment I'm most familiar with, the Brockville Rifles, I think we might have one or two, because there aren't that many around our part of the world. Any of these things has to be geared to the local situation.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Great.

I don't think the Canadian Armed Forces do exit interviews right now. Do you think they're a good idea?

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: I certainly do. I'm amazed, actually; I don't think it does happen, but I don't know. If it does happen, in the army reserve, at least, I'm not sure it's not just happening in a haphazard fashion. It might be good in some places and not others. I don't know. I have no empirical data on any of this, but certainly I think exit interviews are a great thing to do.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Okay.

I think I have a little time left.

Mr. Gerretsen, do you want to continue and take the rest of my time? We have about two minutes.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I'm happy to do that.

The Chair: It rolls right into your subsequent five minutes, so you'll have about six and a half minutes.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Perfect.

Mr. Selkirk, going back to this idea of quotas versus policy statements or direction, I hear what you're saying and I passionately believe that what you believe is accurate, in that quotas are going to create a scenario in which we might actually end up creating disincentives.

Can you expand on any anecdotal information you may have that would support the idea or anything you've experienced that might support it?

•(1610)

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: I can't think of any historical anecdotes, but my feeling and the feeling of a large number Reserves 2000 supporters goes like this: Let's focus on gender. If the unit requires, let's say, 20 new people in a recruiting year and you say, "Okay, half of those recruits have to be female," and partway through the year, most likely towards the end of the year, you have only three, the chance of perhaps making that up with more males diminishes. Therefore, you can wind up at the end of the period missing the opportunity to enrol people who want to do it.

Also there is a danger that good candidates might be turned away. Let's go on that 50% thing again. If the places for 10 male recruits are all filled and there are a bunch of really good male candidates, and they've only been able to attract three females, the likelihood of good males being turned away is there.

Therefore, you could diminish the overall numbers and you could diminish the quality of an intake of recruits in any given year.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Thank you.

I'll change gears a bit. When we talk about recruitment, and in particular how we're going to diversify that, it still comes back to some of the fundamentals around the recruitment process. I know that in Kingston, as regards the PWOR reserve unit there, I've had some conversations with people who have commented that there has definitely been an improvement in the cycle in terms of how long it takes to recruit, but there is still more work to be done.

Can you comment on that?

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: As I said earlier, the biggest thing that still needs to be improved is the delay caused by the medical process.

I've heard the surgeon general speak about the problems. He actually has been turning some files around in under 20 days, which is tremendous, a great improvement.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: That's incredible considering what it used to be.

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: Yes. However, what stuck in my mind was that this is not 1960 when I walked down to the armouries and within about three days I was signed up and drew a uniform, and so on. There are a number of medical issues that probably weren't even known then, allergies and others. He had a list and it all made sense to me. They have to take these into account.

The good old days will never return. I regret to say they'll never return in so many ways, but certainly the medical issues have to be addressed.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Okay.

The last theme that I have here relates to what we were talking about when I took the rest of Mr. Robillard's time, with respect to how you diversify and how you diversify in terms of attracting. Where I was going with that was in regard to something that has really stuck with me in this study and the various witnesses we've had, and a lot of it goes back into the fall, specifically as it relates to how we might treat different genders or different segments of the population differently when they're in their roles.

One thing I learned that I thought was very interesting, and a lot of people might innocently make this mistake, is by assuming, "Well, I need a woman in this role because of her maternal instincts." We've been told, and I totally agree, that it is the absolute wrong way to approach the situation. How do we make sure that we don't set ourselves up for the same type of discussion or the same type of scenario in the recruitment process?

That is where I was going when you said we have to diversify and reach out to different areas. I'm curious as to how we reach out but protect ourselves so that we don't end up falling victim, perhaps, to some of the stereotypes that exist.

I don't want to put you on the spot. If you don't have an answer now, you can always feel free to follow up later. However, it's something that's on my mind.

•(1615)

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: It's a pretty complicated question, and I don't have an answer at the moment.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Okay.

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: As you and I are neighbours, let's have a beer, and I'll tell you, but give me a couple of weeks to think about it.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: That sounds good, thanks.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Martel.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Good afternoon.

I am very interested in statistics and numbers, and I have a question for you about that.

There are cadets in the regions and all over. They are 12 to 17 years of age. Some have a real passion for service and want to join the regular or reserve forces. Others belong to the reserves during their college and university studies. They are motivated to stay involved too.

I am curious about something, and this might be a hard question to answer. Do you have statistics about how many of these young people come up from cadets? Can you tell me approximately what percentage of cadets end up joining the reserves?

[English]

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: I cannot, because I don't think I've ever seen any percentages although, again anecdotally, many of us who were regular army said, "Oh, yes, I got interested in this when I was 12 years old as a cadet." I know that many people who serve in the reserves and in the regular force started off in cadets. I don't know whether that has ever been tracked, I just don't know. That would be a very good question as you pursue your investigations here.

I don't know whether you're considering perhaps having as a witness someone from the cadet organization. They're a part of the whole Canadian military picture. Unfortunately, I don't think they've been given enough resources and credit over the years. We can do more with cadets, I think.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel: Many develop an interest in joining the regular or reserve forces early.

Without data and statistics, it can be hard to adjust our strategy. I think it can be very hard to make progress and achieve different results without data and statistics.

[English]

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: I agree. I think I said in my opening remarks that there's an old saying that if you can't measure it, you can't manage it.

I don't think that these are areas that the department has done a particular good job in measuring, for sure. I don't have any numbers. I don't have anything I could give you that's concrete, but it is my feeling that you're absolutely correct. It's not enough. They're not doing a good job.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel: For me, things that can be observed and measured give me a lot of ideas.

Do diversity targets put more pressure on reserve units when they are trying to recruit members?

[English]

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: In a word, yes. Units are not rich in staff, so more pressure is not necessarily going to be helpful. On the other hand, we have to have goals to get to where we want to go.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel: Does the army reserve have a strategy to meet diversity targets without compromising on the recruitment numbers they need to meet operational needs?

• (1620)

[English]

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: I don't see that reaching our diversity goals would diminish the operational effectiveness; in fact, I think it would increase operational effectiveness. I don't think that those are mutually exclusive.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel: Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: Given the clock, we have about five minutes left and three speakers, so I'll let the next question go to Mr. Fisher.

If colleagues want to share their time, I'll leave that to them. We only have five minutes left with Mr. Selkirk.

The floor goes to Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll probably need two. I'm happy if someone wants the other three.

Thanks, John.

You talked about recruiting and you talked a bit about retention. I'm curious. What's the percentage of women you are retaining after they're recruited, and where are you trying to get to? I'm a little concerned with a lot of questions that were asked. Are you getting enough data from DND to be able to increase diversity?

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: First of all, we don't get much from DND. Whatever I know I pick up from the net and other publicly produced things. I suppose it could be figured out from your start point of how many people were enrolled, how many are left at the end of a year, and so on. I've never seen any numbers that break retention down by gender or any other way. It's just one number that I've ever seen.

Mr. Darren Fisher: You work more towards trying to keep them how?

I think it's important. We need to find a way to get that information so you can assess whether you're successful with retention. Recruiting can be great. If retention is not there, we're not going to hit those goals.

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: That's so true.

The problem is, if you don't retain the people who you've spent a lot of money to recruit, it's a waste of money. The Auditor General, in his spring 2016 report, reported that fully 50% of the recruits of the army reserve in the fiscal year before his report left before they completed their basic training. That is not a good use of resources. It's pretty inefficient. There's no breakdown by gender there. That could be done. That should be a pretty simple thing to do.

Mr. Darren Fisher: I think that sounds like a very important thing to do.

If you had your druthers, what type of data would you like to see collected?

LCol (Ret'd) John Selkirk: First of all, I think the gender data.... That's probably enough to start with anyway.

I'm surprised that Mr. Gerretsen has numbers there about.... I'm not sure how they were collected or what they say, but it would be useful for units if they could have some indication of ethnic diversity in their areas.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you.

The Chair: We have about three and a half minutes left. If Madam Gallant would give Mr. Gerretsen a minute at the end, he would appreciate that.

I'll give you the floor, Cheryl.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): I will do my best to be quick.

Colonel, you referred to your testimony. I'd been reading over that testimony from 2016. When talking about the state of the reserves, you said that the Auditor General is the authority. I agree with you completely in that regard. The in-depth, comprehensive nature of the studies makes the Auditor General the authority on the subject they're written on, and it should be treated as such.

We're properly trying to study diversity. In that spirit, I wish, first of all, to offer my condolences on the passing of the Auditor General, Michael Ferguson, and to his family. His services were today.

I'd then like to move an amendment to my motion of January 31, 2019, by inserting the words "Office of the" prior to the words "Auditor General". I now move:

That the Office of the Auditor General appear before the committee before March 31st, 2019 concerning the Fall 2018 Report 3 entitled – Canada's Fighter Force – National Defence, and Report 5 entitled – Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour – Canadian Armed Forces, and that the appearance be televised.

I think it's really important to debate the motion in an open forum because traditionally what happens is the debate starts and then with the [*Inaudible—Editor*] majority it gets a motion to adjourn debate. Then it goes behind closed doors and nobody ever hears about it again, which is why I'm so pleased that you raised the issue of the Auditor General and his being the authority. That is why I've moved that motion.

•(1625)

The Chair: We actually have about a minute to discuss it, so I'll open the floor to debate.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Chair, I am going to recommend that, given that Mr. Selkirk has reached the end of his time, we could

perhaps suspend the meeting for five minutes to say goodbye to him and then continue with committee business, if that's the wish of Ms. Gallant, for the motion she has put on the floor.

The Chair: The other thing is that we have 15 minutes at the end of this meeting to discuss it, if that works.

Mr. James Bezan: Well, that's not—

The Chair: It's in camera, but you want time.

Mr. James Bezan: Yes, but—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Can we at least—

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: I would agree with that, Mr. Gerretsen, that we suspend and then not go in camera but we discuss this motion and go forward from there.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Yes, we just pick up where we left off.

Okay, fair enough.

The Chair: Mr. Selkirk, thank you for your time once again, and thank you for your service to Canada.

I'm going to suspend so that we can bring in our other panellists.

Thank you.

•(1625) _____ (Pause) _____

•(1625)

The Chair: Before we resume debate on the motion, I want to acknowledge our new panellists.

We have the Honourable Marie Deschamps, former justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, via video conference from Montreal.

Thank you very much for being here.

We also have Laura Nash, who is in the room with us.

Thank you both. Please bear with us for a second while we deal with a motion that Ms. Gallant has put on the table.

Mr. Gerretsen has the floor.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Just for clarification, the copy of the motion that we have before us is the older version, which does not have the amendment. Are we discussing the amendment right now, or are we discussing...?

What are we discussing?

The Chair: We're discussing the amendment, actually.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: We're putting in two words. Instead of just having "the Auditor General", we're putting in "Office of the Auditor General" because, of course—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Then we should probably change the concerning "his Fall"—

The Chair: Right.

Mr. James Bezan: —and make it "the Fall...".

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: "Concerning the Fall"....

•(1630)

The Chair: We're talking about the amendment now, so go ahead.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Are we just talking about the amendment to change those couple of words?

The Chair: Then we're going to want to move to the motion, I suspect.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I have something to say, but I'll wait until after we've gone through this amendment.

The Chair: Okay.

Is there any other debate on the amendment to the motion?

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: We are on the motion itself.

Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Like Ms. Gallant, I express my condolences to the family of Mr. Ferguson. It's obviously an extremely difficult time not just for his family but also for what's going on in his office.

What I would recommend that we do, and I think then I can be supportive of this motion, is remove the words "before March 31st, 2019", because if we do that, then at least we can give the office some time to sort out who the new auditor general is going to be. That person would then have to be brought up to speed on the particular files, and then it would go from there.

I'm happy to support this motion, but first I would move an amendment that we delete the words "before March 31st, 2019".

The Chair: Is there debate on Mr. Gerretsen's amendment?

Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan: I don't believe that this is necessary. As noted previously, Mr. Ferguson has been ill for some time. His office has been presenting the reports this fall to public accounts and to other committees, on the various reports they tabled in the House. They are more than prepared to speak to these two reports, because the authors of the two reports are available to come to committee, as they have already appeared at other committees.

These two reports, though, are germane to this committee, especially the one on report 5 on inappropriate sexual behaviour and how it impacts diversity, which we're studying right now.

I think that the sooner we can have the Office of the Auditor General appear, the better it is, not just to hear and talk to them directly, but for the study we're doing right now.

The Chair: I have Cheryl, and then we'll go back to you, Mr. Gerretsen.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: As was discussed before, the Office of the Auditor General is... He is the authority on the impact that inappropriate sexual behaviour is having on our forces and on recruitment, retention, and well-being of women and of men. To ensure that diversity is a must for this committee, and if we want to include it in this report—if you're intending on having the report tabled before Parliament rises—it's incumbent on us to hear the testimony before we wind up the study.

The Chair: Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: All I was going to add was that, between now and the due date that has been indicated in the amendment, the House has a total of only 14 sitting days, which is two full weeks and one partial week because of the current House calendar. I think that setting this date is the problematic part of this. I'm happy to support the motion, provided that we remove that date. Obviously, I will be voting in favour of the amendment that I put forward.

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Gallant.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: I would just like to confer with the clerk as to whether or not in our schedule we have an hour that is not filled in these 14 days or in the next.

The Chair: Given what we're probably going to talk about in camera at the end, that might influence that answer. I'm not sure we can give you an answer right now. We have a very busy schedule, as you know, and there's very little time. I don't see anyone here debating against what you're asking for, but it's tight for timing and it looks like what they're looking to change is to just take that time out to give the committee some flexibility. That's what it looks like to me. I'm going to call the question on Mr. Gerretsen's amendment to remove the date from the motion.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Now we'll vote on the motion, as amended.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you very much for your patience. Madam Deschamps, I would like to give you the floor for your opening remarks. Thank you for being here.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marie Deschamps (Former Justice, Supreme Court of Canada, As an Individual): Good afternoon.

I am pleased to appear before your committee again. I know your current topic is diversity, which is a very broad subject. I was told that I was invited here to provide an update on Operation Honour and sexual misconduct.

Diversity is often viewed as a way to change culture, and cultural change is crucial to fighting sexual misconduct. My second recommendation to the armed forces is to establish a strategy to effect that change. My report includes a section on culture in which I discuss the importance of leadership, with an emphasis on women in leadership.

I have not personally followed up on my recommendations in an official capacity, but I have taken the time to stay informed about what has been happening. After receiving your invitation to participate, I tried to prepare an update on the situation.

As you may know, the CAF has had both external experts and internal people do a lot of research. There have been many reports about the impact of culture on sexual misconduct, the effect of language on that culture, social media, training, Operation Honour, and more. That's just a partial list.

I also know that a fourth report following up on Operation Honour will be coming out shortly, and I know the CAF has implemented a diversity strategy. I'm not sure if you have received a copy. The forces are still drafting their cultural change policy. The Sexual Misconduct Response Centre has also been given added responsibilities.

• (1635)

However, it has been quite a while since I last received communications from the victims themselves. It would be hard for me to tell you what is happening on the ground other than as a member of the public who, like many others and everyone in this room, has taken an interest in data released by Statistics Canada and the Auditor General's report. I know that all raises plenty of questions for the committee.

I also know your committee has been following up, and that, in my opinion, is vital because that kind of pressure is what makes things happen. You have heard from several witnesses, some of whom have shared some very enlightening remarks. It is also clear to me that many members of this committee are well informed about this subject.

Given that my knowledge of this matter is dated and that I am not in a position to provide up-to-date information, I won't waste your precious time with general comments. Instead, I will answer your questions, so over to you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much for your comments.

I'll turn the floor over now to Ms. Nash.

Ms. Laura Nash (As an Individual): Hi, everyone. It's quite an honour to see some faces that I know from TV. Thanks for having me here. I really appreciate it.

As a bit of background on me, I am an ex-professional athlete. I was on Team Canada three times, and I graduated from the University of Victoria. I was a champion wrestler in high school; I was fifth in Canada and second in Ontario. I won two awards at basic training in the military and I was near the top of my class in navy environmental sea training.

However, after my abusive husband left me in the middle of training in the navy, with my one-year-old son at the time, I had no assistance. I couldn't afford a nanny and I had no family within thousands of kilometres of where I was posted on Vancouver Island.

The base in Esquimalt offered only 20 day care spots for 3,000 people, so my son was placed on a two-year waiting list to get regular hours day care, but that did not include the 12 hours of nighttime care, so I had basically no way of sailing.

I let the school know that my husband was violent and that he left me with this problem. That's when I started noticing the senior officers treating me differently.

Three days before my graduation, when I was already posted to HMCS *Winnipeg*, I was scheduled to get my promotion and a pay raise, which would have very much helped me fly my baby back and forth across the country. It was the only child care plan I had. I would fly him to Ontario and leave him with my mom. My mom

took a break from work so that I could sail. It was costing me everything I had. I had no savings, no investments, nothing at the time.

Three days before I was about to graduate and all this was about to happen, a man named James Brun lied to the board at my school and said that I had 17 requirements when I had only four left. Karen Bellehumeur, who was head of the department at the school at the time, told me that, effective immediately, they were ceasing my training, that I had too many family matters to deal with.

I was kicked off the ship. I was not allowed to get my personal belongings. I lost my pay raise and my promotion, and I was removed from HMCS *Winnipeg's* roster.

I submitted a harassment complaint against James Brun and a grievance as well for what happened. Years later—the grievance took years—it was found that Brun did lie. I had papers showing that I had only four requirements to do and I could easily have finished the course. I should have had my promotion and I should have had the pay raise and kept on with my training, but that was actually the beginning of the end of my career in the military.

After I submitted the harassment complaint, I went to the female BPSO, base personnel selection officer. She is basically the human resources of the military, so I thought she would help me. I told her that the cost of flying my baby back and forth for child care was completely unsustainable and I told her that I would take any other job in the forces.

I didn't want to give away my commission. I was very proud of having a commission from the Queen, so I wanted to stay in an officer role, but I would also have taken anything. If they had wanted to put me as a supply tech and I would hand out clothes for the next 25 years of my life, I would be happy to, even though my heart was broken that I couldn't sail anymore because sailing is why I joined.

The BPSO told me that the CAF doesn't recognize having a baby as a reason to switch trades, and that when she deployed, she had admin too, such as changing her cellphone plan and finding a place to store her car. The military was comparing my baby, basically, to a hunk of metal.

I went for help to Karen Bellehumeur, who was my female head of department, and another woman, Kim Chu. I just wanted to switch trades into anything I could do. They brought me into their office and told me that if I didn't get rid of my kid, I would be fired. I couldn't believe that my own Canadian government would force me to give away my baby or terminate my employment, when all I wanted to do was serve my country. I knew that I was capable. I was willing to do any job they wanted me to do, and I had already given my baby away from when he was one until he was two—or I hadn't really given him away but sent him to my parents so that I could go to sea.

I had a family care plan, I could deploy, but I just wanted to do something else where I wasn't forced to give away my son.

I was basically in a catch-22. I didn't want to give him away. I didn't want to lose my job, because then I wouldn't have a way to support him, so I started to think of a third way out, which was suicide.

• (1640)

I volunteered for logistics, and I worked there for a year. I thought it would be a good trade for me to get into that wouldn't deploy as much. My son was two. I went to another female officer, Commander Roberts. She was the CO of base logistics at the time. She told me that I should have had an abortion and that these problems were my own fault for having a baby too early in my career. She also told me that being on the wait-list for the military day care for two years was just the way it is.

I went to mental health and told them that my chain of command was trying to force me to give away my child. The doctor put me on a temporary medical category, which temporarily prevented me from going to sea, so I thought, "Okay, this is my opportunity. I'm going to take this time, fill out my paperwork and switch trades."

At that time it looked like I was a shoo-in for air traffic control because I have great spatial ability, and I was hoping to get there and be closer to my family: problem solved.

I was ready to switch trades, but Dr. Boylan, another female doctor, told me, "I'm not signing your transfer papers because you've been to mental health three times for three different things." I was basically stuck in the military without a trade, without belonging to a unit and without any chance of promotion or advancement for four years. I was basically a walking pariah.

The only thing I could do was volunteer to work for public affairs. I think I did a pretty good job there. I was waiting for my medical chit to expire. I'd heard through the grapevine that if you didn't go to mental health, people would just think you were okay, so I didn't go to mental health for six months. I let my chit expire, went back to the doctor and said, "Please sign my forms so I can trade," and they said no.

At that point I was dealing with suicide and depression, and trying to raise my baby by myself. I applied for leave travel assistance to fly home that Christmas—this was back in 2013—and I found out that because I had given birth, I actually lost that military benefit to fly home. They pay everyone who is single to go home for free, unless you have a baby or get married. While my single friends got two free flights a year, I had to pay for both.

I got an email that Christmas too, saying that because I had a baby, I was bumped down to the second tier for the Airbus flights. While you get LTA every year to go home to visit your next of kin, the Airbuses fly back and forth across the country to help, so people get two flights. I got an email and had to wait a month. When that month came, I applied, but the airplanes were full.

Also, the military took \$700 off my paycheque for day care when my son finally got in and \$915 for rent, but a male officer who sat next to me on the same course got his room and board paid for by the military because he had a wife and a house back in New Brunswick,

pursuant to a policy called "furniture and effects". There was basically a \$3,000 pay gap just in those benefits.

From 2014 to 2017 I was never medically assessed. I received little treatment. I was still kicked out for medical reasons, without any medical assessment, and it's all because I stood up for my rights when I was treated differently as a mom. With the help of my employment lawyer, Natalie MacDonald, I initiated a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission for discrimination on the basis of sex, which has been purposely stalled by the CAF for one and a half years so far. I recently learned that through an email, through the Privacy Act.

Since being kicked out of the military, I've also felt some injustice too about how veterans are treated. I feel like I'm getting this window into how hard it must be for veterans who, for example, don't have limbs, just to fight to get some help.

I'm here today just to make sure that this doesn't happen, and I'm going to do everything I can to shut those doors that I fell through, because I think there are a lot of policies here that made it absolutely impossible for me to keep serving as a mom. There were many options where I could have stayed in easily. It's just that nobody would help me.

That's the end of my speech. Thank you, everyone, for listening.

• (1645)

The Chair: Thank you for sharing your difficult story with us. We needed to hear that so that we can make it better.

I'm going to give the first question to Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Ms. Deschamps, and thank you, Ms. Nash, for being here today. As the chair said, it's very difficult testimony to hear.

Ms. Deschamps, you kind of get credit as the catalyst for Operation Honour. I think we all can agree that it was created with the best of intentions, but we've recently heard testimony from women who explained that maybe they felt singled out by it. Maybe it was putting a target on their backs and hurting camaraderie.

How can Op Honour be tweaked or changed, in your opinion, to address this?

Hon. Marie Deschamps: You're asking me for an assessment of Op Honour, and I'm not sure I'm the best placed to do that because I can only read.... As I told you, I did my best to find out what was going on. I know that it took years. The last time I had a discussion with the forces, I told them that I couldn't believe the delay it took. Finally they told me that they understand what I mean. That's the way it is. I know it's a big ship to turn around.

How can it be better? There are lots of things that should have been done immediately in 2017. Four years later, there is a risk that the general population loses credibility or loses their confidence in the armed forces if they don't do more than that. I told them so.

What can they do immediately? I suggest that they find a case where they treat that more publicly and are more transparent as to what they are doing. For example, I mentioned that they have drafted a strategy on diversity. Well, I had to find that on page 25 out of 38 in the document that I received. Those things are very good. They should be more transparent on what they are doing, and they should be more transparent on where they missed. I know that they're trying, but there's much that needs to transpire.

•(1650)

Mr. Darren Fisher: They have the best of intentions.

You've been quoted in *The Globe and Mail*, stating that a "sexualized culture" within the military is behind an endemic problem with sexual harassment and misconduct. Can you elaborate a bit on that, and maybe tell us how you think this should be addressed?

Hon. Marie Deschamps: That's a very broad question. On this question of culture, I made a specific recommendation and told them that this should be the object of a specific strategy, because it will take years to change. Unfortunately, they've already taken four years, and we haven't seen the colour of the strategy yet.

When I met the generals immediately before the release of my report—you know how it works with the federal government; you extend your report, and then it's publicly released—I told them this was a huge piece of work that they had to undertake and that it might take a generation to change things.

At least, though, you need to start somewhere. Currently we don't see much of a change. In fact, they've tried, and when they've tried things they don't seem to have understood the consequences.

I read about the duty to report which was applied too drastically. You have to protect the victim. There is a balance that you have to establish between the need to go public and the needs of the victims. I think they tried to do too much internally. They need to rely more on people who are not as much imbued with the military culture.

This is what I now hear they want to do with the centre. I was told that the responsibilities of the centres will be increased in a very important way and that the centre will be able to hire experts. This is something that is very positive, but it comes very late in the day.

•(1655)

The Chair: We don't have a ton of time, and you have very little time to get a question and response, so I would appreciate our being able to move on to the next speaker.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: MP Gallant.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Speaking through you to Madam Deschamps, let me say, welcome back. I recall when you issued your report and came before our committee and we were able to question you about it.

I'd like to pick up from there. I'm really pleased that we have this opportunity to go back to look at your recommendations and do a bit of assessment to see what recommendations have, in your opinion, actually been achieved.

I know you have 10 of them, but one I'd like to home in on initially is the recommendation to create an independent centre for accountability for sexual assault and harassment outside the Canadian Armed Forces, with the responsibility of receiving reports of inappropriate sexual conduct. With the way that your recommendation was worded, and given the intent behind it and what you may know about Op Honour, do you feel that the spirit and what you intended to happen with that recommendation has indeed manifested itself?

Hon. Marie Deschamps: What I see is a disconnect between the intention and the way it was implemented. As you know, I recommended an organism that was supposed to be a very independent entity and that had a lot of responsibility. What they initially created was something with a tiny bit of responsibility. Initially, you may recall, because you've followed the file, it was called a call centre. It was not very well known and it was not properly resourced. What I hear now is that they intend to give it substantive authority whereby they can advise the military on what should be done, both on training and on drafting the policies.

Much had been done, but from the inside. They had created this other entity, the strategic response centre, which in fact had most of the responsibility that the centre was supposed to have. There was a big problem of independence.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Was it your intention that when a victim called that centre they would have a modicum of anonymity? In other words, they could trust in the person at the centre to listen to and note what occurred, but it would not be reported to the unit or the chain of command.

Was that the way it was supposed to be?

Hon. Marie Deschamps: The way I designed it was that this centre was supposed to be able to receive both formal reports and reports or disclosures from victims who initially only wanted to be supported. The centre was to be able to receive the victims and not be obliged to go to the chain of command.

Both kinds of reports were supposed to be under the responsibility of the centre. Even up to this date, the centre does not yet have the responsibility or the power to receive the reports.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: You know from the surveys you conducted how absolutely important it was that the identities of the people who share their stories with you were not going to get out. The first thing that happens is if they do call, they are asked for their name and unit and they are very concerned that their superiors are going to hear about this, and they worry about all the things we heard from Ms. Nash and those types of ramifications.

That's what goes through their mind when they've read in the news or heard stories or know comrades who've had that type of thing happen to them. From what has been reported from armed forces people to me, that is not occurring the way you intended.

What about reporting on a sexual assault and having the reporting done and the response to it completed outside the chain of command? Was that your intention? You know it's happening. It goes through the military policy.

● (1700)

Hon. Marie Deschamps: My intention was to have this restricted reporting where the victim was able to get the support and be confident that she was able to start the formal process. Only then would the information be conveyed or shared with anyone else. Other than that, the restricted report should allow, in my view, the victim to be confident that only medical professionals or any other support person would be called in, those about whom she would be confident. I always say "she", because it is 99% of the time. The intention was that the victim be confident that only the persons who were needed for her support would be informed of her case.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: It appears that when Operation Honour started, the intention was to manifest and exercise all of your recommendations. Over time it just has not occurred. There's not even training going on, recommendations on training and education. That hasn't happened to the non-commissioned officers who we're aware of. In fact, they call Op Honour, we heard in testimony, "hop on her".

Thank you for your service. We hope to see you in the future. Perhaps we'll have a lot more of your recommendations that have actually been carried out as intended.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm going to give the floor to MP Garrison.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to both of our witnesses here today.

I want to start by saying to you, Ms. Nash, that I know Mr. Fisher didn't intend it the way it might have sounded. It's not that the testimony is hard to hear, it's the testimony is hard to live in your case. So thank you for being here and being so forthright.

I would like to know if there are any places within the Canadian Forces or DND where you were able to find support through all of this.

Ms. Laura Nash: No. I even went to the padre at one point and said, "Hey, I don't want to live anymore; I don't know who else to go to." The padre sort of said, "Oh, I'm so sorry to hear that." I asked her if there was anything she could do, and the answer was basically no.

The mental health unit basically ended up not signing my forms to switch trades. People told me that was a mistake I'd made and I should never go to mental health. I think that's awful. It's there and we're paying people, so it should be there to help people.

The first reason I went to mental health was for post-partum depression. I had a little bout of it. There was no help there. I cleared it up just fine on my own. There was a B.C. provincial program that

was like a little meeting you went to with other women who had it and I thought it was very easy to get over.

The BPSO was supposed to be responsible for switching me into another trade, and to be honest, I feel that she just wouldn't do her job. I don't think my chain of command was really doing their job when they were trying to force me to give away my son.

I would say that I found no help from anyone but my mother, who ended up quitting her job to help me.

Mr. Randall Garrison: That's very disappointing, because I know the Canadian Forces have said they want to remove barriers to seeking mental health treatment. Your story illustrates two problems: the discriminatory problem, as well as the access to mental health treatment problem. Thus, it's doubly important to this committee, so thank you for being here today.

I want to turn to Ms. Deschamps. There are a whole lot of things I'd like to ask about here, but I want to focus on one thing. The Office of the Auditor General in its fall 2018 report talked about the problems they found with the duty to report. Therefore, I'm following up a bit on something Ms. Gallant was asking about.

They said that the approach of the Canadian Forces in establishing a duty to report any incidents of sexual harassment or sexual assault has led to lower reporting rather than increased reporting. I'd like to know your reaction to that finding of the report.

● (1705)

Hon. Marie Deschamps: I'm not surprised, because in imposing a duty to report, they're not taking a victim-focused approach. It's very good to make sure that the perpetrator, if I can use that word, is prosecuted and they can sanction the person; however, there has to be a balance, and the first person you have to look to is the victim, because the victim needs to be taken care of and sometimes the victim is not ready to report.

That's the reason I discussed the restricted report. You take care of the victim. You comfort her, and when she is ready, then you go to the sanctioning approach.

Mr. Randall Garrison: What you're really arguing is if the proper supports for victims are in place, this will ultimately not be a barrier to reporting, that eventually you will get official reports and complaints.

Hon. Marie Deschamps: That's correct.

Mr. Randall Garrison: I believe the response of the chief of the defence staff was that he had no intention of changing the duty to report, so I think we have some things to pursue here as a committee, given the Auditor General's report and your testimony.

Hon. Marie Deschamps: Well, it may just be a way to express it. If they keep the duty to report but they put as a prerequisite to take care of the victim and to ensure that she is comfortable with the way things are evolving, I would ask you to do a parallel to my recommendation that the victim be consulted as to which system of justice would be used for the prosecution.

In some cases, the victim might be more comfortable in the civilian system. In other instances, it might be the military system. However, this is an example of the victim-focused approach. In the duty to report, at the very outset, this has to be put in their mind, to look at the victim first.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Great. Thank you.

I want to ask you another question. You mentioned the diversity report and the diversity goals of the Canadian military. Right now, that is to increase female recruitment by 1% a year from the current 15%. By my count, that means we wait about 35 years for full equality in the recruiting.

I know it's not necessarily what you studied or your field of expertise here, but the goal seems quite low to me at an increase of 1% a year.

Hon. Marie Deschamps: I've lived through this increase. I'll give you the example of the judiciary, because this is the example that I went through.

When I was appointed in 1990, the first time, at the superior court, then prime minister Brian Mulroney had decided to increase the number of women in the judiciary. He made a very conscious approach and looked for women to be appointed. Over the years, we increased to a little over 25%, I think, but you have to look at which court.

It takes time. What is important is to achieve a critical mass.

To have a very visual image of what a critical mass can do in terms of an impact, just remember what happened at the speech which many of us watched on Monday, where there were more than 100 women dressed in white. Remember how long it took to get there. I looked at the number in 1917, and there was one woman in Congress. Then I added the U.S. Senate with the House of Representatives. There are now 131 women, and they are making an impact.

You don't need to go up to 50% to have that impact where you can achieve something.

I again go back to the example in the commercial environment. Even with the incentive of the Ontario Securities Commission, they're struggling to go beyond 15% and 20%.

• (1710)

The Chair: Madam Deschamps, I'm sorry, but I'm going to have to interrupt you. I hate to do that, but I have to move to the next person.

I'm going to yield the floor to MP Dzerowicz.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you so much.

Thank you, Madam Deschamps and Ms. Nash, for your important contributions today.

Ms. Nash, I'll start off with you.

In your ideal world, what would you have wanted the response to be when you said, "You know, I have a child. I'd like to change jobs. I want to be more flexible"? I know you said that you would have taken anything, but what would you have wanted to see?

Ms. Laura Nash: I would have liked to see the navy have a schedule that works better for parents, as the Coast Guard has, something such as three months on and three months off. That is something I can do. I can fly my son back and forth with that.

The way the navy works, you sail for one day and come back for 10. You sail for a month and come back for three months. You sail for 10 days and come back for a year. It's just all over the place, so it's nearly impossible without having a husband or a lot of money to have a live-in nanny, which some people did.

That's something that would have certainly worked. If not, then when I had to hand in my "I'm sorry, I just can't do this because of my son", I would have liked there to be a policy in the military for women such that when they go to the BPSO and say they have a baby and no other option, there is a way for the BPSO to say, "Sure, we'll switch your trade. Let's look at what you're good at." Then I would have been able to stay in, because there are so many jobs I could have done in the military.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you. That's important.

I've only worked in male-dominated professions my entire life. The Canadian Armed Forces, for lack of better words, is definitely a male-dominated environment.

We have to engage. Part of the change has to be from all of us. We can't order men to respect women or to change.

From your perspective, how do we get them involved to be part of the change?

Ms. Laura Nash: Do you mean to be part of the change in respecting women more?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: No, I mean just in terms of being a lot more open to different options. From your perspective, there was a very clear line in terms of what could be done. How can we engage more?

Maybe it's an unfair question for you. If you don't have a response, I have another question for you.

Ms. Laura Nash: I think there is a loss of focus on the family and children are a problem to people in the military. I think that's unfair. There was a lot of grumbling on the ships about parents because they got to leave an hour early to go get their kids from school or whatever. You have people without kids who work the longer hours, sail more and fly more, and who also get the postings that nobody else wants. You can say that you're married and you want to stay with your wife or husband. That's a consideration to stay in Trenton, or a more desirable post. Then it's the single people without kids who typically get posted somewhere else.

I think that where the navy pays sea pay, it's a good start, because it rewards those people who do go to sea and work more. I would have liked to take less pay if that's what it took so that I could have my kid and work as much as I could.

It would be nice to see some sort of way of having more respect for families and parents but also respecting the people who do the extra work, because they're there too.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you.

I have another couple of questions and I have limited time.

I have one last question for you. I do this, too, and I have done it, in that I often go to women and automatically think that they're going to be more helpful, and that's often not the case. It's not that it's never the case—I don't want to say that—but it often isn't what I anticipated. I wonder if you have any other thoughts about how we can create a more supportive environment for women to support women within the Canadian Armed Forces.

• (1715)

Ms. Laura Nash: Absolutely. That is a very good point, because you may have noticed in my story that it was mostly women who I went to for help and I didn't get it.

When I walked into the cafeteria at CFB Esquimalt, I noticed something, which was that you don't see five women sitting together having lunch. You see four men and a woman sitting together, or you see a man and a woman, or two men and a woman. I thought that was very strange, because when I was a professional athlete along with a lot of men, when you would see a woman, you would just flock to each other and be friends. I thought that's how the military would be, too, but it's not.

I think that if there were some sort of training or something that helped women get along, it would be very helpful, because women can be very mean to each other. I think that maybe some women aren't taught how to get along with others. If there were something to help with that, I think that would go a long way.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you.

Madam Deschamps, I felt anxious when you were saying that there were some immediate things you wanted to see happen right away after the report was launched. It's years later now and much of it still hasn't necessarily happened, or a lot of things have been much slower. Part of me almost feels like we have to leapfrog now.

Is there something that we can do as a government to help incentivize leadership to move faster? Is it just additional resources? Is it particular incentives? Is it that we provide bonuses? Do we put in quotas? What is it that we can do to get them on the fast train to start implementing these recommendations?

Hon. Marie Deschamps: One thing that is often mentioned [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]

There is a problem with the sound. On my side I hear an echo, but I will continue.

I have often heard that a big problem is that the policies are shared with other departments, so that they cannot do what they want for the policies. The very first thing that I thought could be done quickly was to change the policy and then prosecute on that new policy, so that you would get things going and so, for example, the hostile environment is not still in the DOD. In my view, if there were support from the legislative side, this could be solved. That would be something that could be done quickly.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: It's to move faster on implementing the policy and the legislative changes that were recommended in your report. Thank you.

The Chair: I don't think we'll need 15 minutes, but we will need some minutes. We have enough time, given how little time we've

had, for one more question. By order of precedence, that five-minute question goes to Mr. Spengemann.

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

Madam Justice Deschamps and Ms. Nash, thanks to both of you for being here and for your service to our nation.

I want to circle back to you, Madam Nash, and an issue that my colleague just raised with you. It's the fact that you mentioned in your testimony three officers, I believe, or three women in the Canadian Forces, who were not supportive. This is an important issue for us, because we receive a lot of testimony on numbers, statistics, data and the logistics of recruiting more women. We have not reached a tipping point where the sheer number of women is going to help us change the culture, and I'll get to the word "culture" in a moment.

First of all, do you have any reason to believe that if those three Canadian Forces members you mentioned had been men, the result would have been any different or potentially even better than what you received?

Ms. Laura Nash: It's possible, but I don't know. I can tell you that I couldn't find any women mentors, though. As a former athlete, I always look for women mentors, and male mentors too—any gender—but particularly, for some reason, if there's a woman I look up to, she's a role model. I was in the forces for almost eight years, and I looked very hard, and I couldn't find one who was nice to me and also successful. Okay, maybe there was one.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: This might be a hard question to answer just off the cuff. To what extent do you think that is a factor of simply the lack of numbers? In other words, if we had 30%, 40% or 50% female officers or female Canadian Forces members, would that be different in itself just because of the numbers?

Ms. Laura Nash: It's just speculation, but I would hope so, and I would certainly think so.

• (1720)

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Okay.

Do you think that under current circumstances, if numbers were the same, you could train away this problem or would the chain of command just be so strong that you would have this conformity to culture from women if the numbers stayed the same, even if you tried to offer training to resolve this issue?

Ms. Laura Nash: I think if you just tell women who make it to a senior officer position or a high-ranking position to help the ones behind them, the younger junior officers.... If there's just some sort of, I don't know, a policy, or someone telling them that they just can't shut off who's below them. They have to look back and—

Mr. Sven Spengemann: That's what my colleague Ms. Dzerowicz was saying. Maybe there need to be incentives to do this.

In the limited time I have, I want to get to one more issue that's important to me.

This government and, I think, all of us around the table are taking the issue of mental health among our Canadian Forces members and veterans extremely seriously. To what extent do you think mental health injuries sustained in non-combat environments are amplified by the fact that we have a lack of diversity and a lack of gender equality in the Canadian Forces? Is there a compound effect between the two? I'm thinking that your testimony would suggest yes, but I'd like to hear a bit more from you if possible.

Ms. Laura Nash: Can you say the question again?

Mr. Sven Spengemann: On mental health and lack of diversity and the two coming together, do they mutually reinforce and exacerbate each other?

Ms. Laura Nash: I don't know if that has anything to do with it. I'm not quite sure if I can comment on that, unless you can say the question differently. I'm just not sure how to answer it.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Okay. Would you have a better support system within the Canadian Forces to address invisible injuries if there were greater diversity and if there were better gender equality?

Ms. Laura Nash: Well, because the doctor, who was a woman, was the one who wouldn't sign my papers when she knew that it would end my career, I don't think it would really help if there were more women, but as far as different cultures and different backgrounds go, very possibly. I would hope so.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Obviously, I'm asking you to speculate, because we don't have empirical evidence and we're forward looking on this, but thank you. That's helpful.

Madam Justice Deschamps, I have a question for you on culture. Culture is a term that often imparts very positive sentiments. We use it all over the place in a celebratory way as something that we champion and that we want to encourage.

When we talk about sexual harassment, and even sexual assault and sexual aggressiveness, as you describe it in the ERA, as

something that is cultural, is that a useful term? Is it something that we should maybe think about steering away from? Should we instead call it "endemic sexual harassment" or something that has less appeal? Culture sort of imports the idea that this will take a generation, that it will just go away if we go in the right direction, and that it's not necessarily something we should take seriously.

Hon. Marie Deschamps: Well, culture may be positive or negative, so I think we have to face it. If it's cultural, we need to change the culture. There may be many ways, but I don't think you can shy away from the reality.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Is the import of this the idea that this problem will take some time to resolve, rather than how we have an opportunity to be quick about it?

Hon. Marie Deschamps: You're right. You cannot be quick about it because—

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Is it fair to say that during the time we have to wait for this, many more women and members of the LGBTQ2 community will sustain injuries?

Hon. Marie Deschamps: Of course you need to have a system in place, but you have to start somewhere. Just changing the term will not resolve the problem. If you face the reality and you put in place.... But you have to start somewhere. This is it. If you start, you will increase confidence and you will get the ball rolling, but you have to start somewhere.

The Chair: Madam Deschamps and Ms. Nash, thank you both for coming and sharing your perspectives and your stories. We need to hear these things so we can craft substantive recommendations to the Government of Canada, and make these systems better for everyone who comes after you. Thank you again for being here.

I'm going to suspend very quickly so we can go in camera.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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