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Chair

Mr. Stephen Fuhr

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.)): Welcome to the defence committee.

I would like to welcome the Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff, Lieutenant-General Paul Wynnyk.

Could you introduce your colleagues? Then I'll leave it to your for your opening remarks.

Lieutenant-General Paul Wynnyk (Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff, Department of National Defence): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

This is Dr. Denise Preston, from the SMRC; Lieutenant-General Charles Lamarre—who you've seen many times before—who is chief of military personnel; and Commodore Rebecca Patterson, who has appeared before this committee before as well.

Mr. Chair, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this study on diversity in the Canadian Armed Forces. I understand that as part of that study you wanted an update on the status of Operation Honour. As the Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff, I've been tasked by our chief of the defence staff, General Vance, to oversee the conduct of Operation Honour, which is, of course, a multi-faceted initiative that very much requires a team approach. For that reason, I have here with me the team that I just introduced.

Operation Honour is increasingly making the Canadian Armed Forces a safer and more welcoming environment for all, and the leadership of the Canadian Armed Forces is committed more than ever before to stamping out sexual misconduct.

A few weeks ago, our fourth progress report on Operation Honour was published. This report offered a comprehensive overview of what the Canadian Armed Forces has accomplished to date in an effort to eliminate sexual misconduct. It provides analysis, statistics and information on a variety of initiatives that have been undertaken across the Canadian Armed Forces.

My opening remarks today will constitute a brief synopsis of that report and touch on a few of the more recent developments with regard to Operation Honour.

[Translation]

Operation Honour was initiated in 2015. Over the past three plus years, we have significantly evolved and are confident that we have completed important foundational work, which was essential to

addressing sexual misconduct and effectively supporting those affected by it.

[English]

It's important to state up front, however, that while we are consistently looking at ways to improve our approach, we haven't gotten everything right and we certainly recognize there is much left to do. We've learned a great deal through our own experience and analysis, through collaborative work with the sexual misconduct response centre, from the assessment done by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, and from feedback provided by external experts and stakeholders.

Some of the measures that we implemented along the way have resulted in unintended consequences, and some of the initiatives and changes did not deliver the desired outcomes. For instance, we have not made sufficient progress in key areas such as policy and strategic cultural change, and that has hampered our overall effort.

We have acknowledged that more work is required, specifically with respect to the 10 recommendations made by the external review authority, Madam Deschamps. Those 10 recommendations remain the primary barometer of our progress and we are committed to implementing them to the fullest extent possible. Of course, that commitment is explicitly stated in the defence policy “Strong, Secure, Engaged”.

Sexual misconduct, however, is a difficult and complex issue to address; there is still much to learn. In light of the Auditor General's findings and our own internal review on Operation Honour, we've assessed our progress on the implementation of those recommendations and have determined that adjustments are required in our approach in order to achieve their intent.

Currently, we feel that two of the external review authority's recommendations have been fully achieved. Those are fully acknowledging the problem, and undertaking to address it and simplifying the harassment resolution process.

One more has been achieved in a manner that meets the intent of the recommendation while remaining consistent with Canadian Armed Forces structural, functional and jurisdictional parameters. That is allowing victims of sexual assault to request transfer of complaints to civilian authorities.

We continue to make progress to varying degrees on the remaining seven: establishing a cultural change strategy; establishing a centre of accountability; allowing independent reporting without triggering a formal complaint process; developing definitions and terminology; developing a unified policy approach; assigning responsibility for providing, coordinating and monitoring victim support to the support centre; and, finally, assigning to the centre the responsibility for the development of the training curriculum and for the monitoring of training on matters related to inappropriate sexual behaviour.

I will now briefly expand on what we are doing to address these deficiencies.

We're currently developing a campaign plan to focus our efforts moving forward. The plan will be informed by advice from external experts. It will have clear lines of effort, as well as dedicated resources to ensure success. It will drive our work in areas such as prevention, engagement, policy development, cultural change and finally—perhaps most significantly—victim support.

Support for victims has been and will continue to be our main effort for the next phase of Operation Honour. It will be our priority to ensure that victims remain confident that the Canadian Armed Forces will support them through all administrative and legal processes. We will ensure they have access to the services and support required to recover from harm.

The sexual misconduct response centre, led by Dr. Preston, plays an essential role in providing victim support, and its mandate is being expanded. It is independent from the military chain of command, reports to the deputy minister, and is central to refocusing and enhancing our efforts. That is why Dr. Preston is here with me today: as an independent voice. The Canadian Armed Forces' senior leadership fully supports the expansion of the centre's mandate and has confirmed that it will be resourced accordingly.

Moving forward, the centre will play a greater role in our overall approach to sexual misconduct. As recommended by Madam Deschamps in her 2015 report, the centre will drive institutional cultural change in a number of ways. It will provide expert opinion, contain subject matter authority, and provide advice on the development of policy, training, strategy and evaluation of programs related to sexual misconduct.

• (1535)

[Translation]

That said, the Canadian Armed Forces will remain responsible and accountable for Operation Honour and its implementation.

[English]

The sexual misconduct response centre will provide an authoritative voice to guide, support and monitor progress, helping the Canadian Armed Forces successfully implement and sustain these efforts.

The Canadian Armed Forces' relationship with the sexual misconduct response centre is still evolving. Our goal is to achieve a posture that will be effective for the Canadian Armed Forces, while not detracting from the independence of the centre. Let there be no doubt that the Canadian Armed Forces is fully committed to this.

Now, more than ever, we are humbled by the scope of the problem and the challenges we face in dealing with sexual misconduct effectively.

[Translation]

We are working hard to deepen our understanding of the problem, by analyzing existing information, connecting with stakeholders, conducting regular research as well as working with our allies and sharing best practices.

[English]

This work will inform the the development of the armed forces' Operation Honour campaign plan.

There is, quite frankly, no off-the-shelf solution to implement. There are no proven models to follow for an organization like ours. We need to find a Canadian solution that works for our people and for our organization.

We are taking into account external information and advice, and we're going to find better ways to ensure that it continually guides our work. We're going to push harder in those areas where we are not as far along as we should be. We will continue our research and take action on how best to address the harmful attitudes and behaviours that contribute to sexual misconduct. Those behaviours have absolutely no place in our culture.

Above all, we are going to ensure that we put our people's needs first. People are at the centre of everything we do, and the way that we support and treat them has a direct impact on our operational effectiveness and the trust that Canadians place in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Diversity and inclusiveness is about ensuring that all our members feel welcome in our organization. It is imperative that the Canadian Armed Forces foster a culture based on trust, respect and dignity for everyone. We believe that Operation Honour is making a difference in that regard. However, we still have a long way to go to eliminate the serious and persistent threat to the welfare of our people and to the long-term health of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Thank you again for your interest today.

[Translation]

I will be pleased to answer your questions.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, General.

The floor is yours, Dr. Preston.

[Translation]

Ms. Denise Preston (Executive Director, Sexual Misconduct Response Centre, Department of National Defence): Thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak today as part of your study on diversity in the Canadian Armed Forces.

I am pleased to be here to give you an update on the evolution of the sexual misconduct response centre, as well as a snapshot of the projects my team and I are working on.

[English]

Since its inception in September 2015, the sexual misconduct response centre has built its operations on the provision of response and support services to members of the Canadian Armed Forces affected by sexual misconduct. It offers confidential, bilingual, client-centred services to members 24-7 and may be accessed by members no matter where in the world they may be. The centre's counsellors all have expertise in working with survivors of sexual trauma and do not have a duty to report. While these services filled a critical gap, they are not sufficient to address the range of needs affected members have within the complexity of the Canadian Armed Forces environment. There is also a need for better coordination of support services and specialized training for those who provide support.

These observations related to support services, together with the results of internal reviews and the observations of the Office of the Auditor General, identified a requirement for a significant revision of and expansion to the mandate of the sexual misconduct response centre. In addition to our primary mandate of providing support to CAF members who are affected by sexual misconduct, we will provide expert advice and recommendations on a range of issues related to the prevention of and response to sexual misconduct and will monitor the Canadian Armed Forces' implementation of our recommendations. As a priority, we are working on a new version of our mandate. Here is an idea of how we plan to deliver on this new mandate.

To start, we are in the midst of developing an enhanced response and support coordination program, otherwise known as a case management service. This program will provide better coordinated and broader support for Canadian Armed Forces members who have experienced sexual misconduct regardless of whether or not they have reported the incident. Members will have a single point of contact in this sexual misconduct response centre who will provide case management services, assistance in navigating both internal and external services or processes, in-person support, practical assistance in completing forms or victim impact statements, and accompaniment.

These services will be available to affected members, with consent, from the time of first disclosure until such time as they indicate that support is no longer required. The model is based on best practices in the field. In fact, we hired an external consultant with decades of experience in a parallel provincial victim support program to advise us. It is also based on gaps identified in internal and external reviews of Canadian Armed Forces services available to victims and on consultations with retired and still-serving members who have experienced sexual misconduct.

We want to focus on ensuring that members are at the centre of our response and that their needs guide our actions. More information on this program will be available in the coming months as we continue to progress to the next stages of its implementation.

● (1540)

[Translation]

Secondly, the centre will also fund, through a contribution program, sexual assault centres located near the largest bases and wings in Canada to increase support options for victims of sexual

assault outside the Canadian Armed Forces. This program is just getting underway.

Third, the centre will play an important role in guiding the national victims strategy, which is in the early stages of planning.

[English]

In relation to providing independent, expert advice, SMRC has provided recommendations to CAF on a number of recent policy documents and on the content and process for developing the new policy on sexual misconduct. Other examples include membership in the sexual assault review program established by the Canadian Forces provost marshal to review unfounded cases of sexual assault, the provision of advice on cases of sexual misconduct within the military justice system or other complaint processes, and membership on numerous relevant working groups with CAF partners. These examples speak to CAF's increasing recognition of the need for and value of specialized advice related to sexual misconduct and to the increasing credibility of the sexual misconduct response centre. These types of engagements are essential to improving coordinated victim support services in direct accordance with Canada's defence policy, "Strong, Secure, Engaged".

While I strive to work collaboratively with Canadian Armed Forces service providers, I remain committed to the centre's independence, as recommended in the external review in 2015. An external advisory council was established last year to enhance and support the centre's independence. In the last few months, the council was instrumental in providing expert advice and recommendations on important interim documents directly related to the implementation of Operation Honour and the external review authority's recommendations. These CAF documents include a clearer definition of sexual misconduct and a decision tree tool to guide members of the chain of command in responding to reported incidents.

An important inclusion in the decision tree is guidance on including, consulting and informing affected members at each step of the process. I'm impressed with the combined breadth of expertise on the external advisory council in the realms of victim support, legislation, policy and perpetrators, to name a few. I'm also impressed by their commitment to this work and the diligence with which they apply themselves to provide the advice we seek.

I believe that external advice and expertise is crucial to the success of the implementation of Op Honour as well as the centre's mandate. I encourage my team to seek outside advice and expertise as often as possible, which is why last December the SMRC hosted a forum on sexual misconduct where partners from the Five Eyes nations gathered for the first time to advance a common understanding of what is essential to improve support to victims of sexual misconduct within the military and to enhance prevention efforts. I was immediately invested in the forum because we had the incredible opportunity to exchange best practices on how to effectively address sexual misconduct in our respective organizations and how to best meet the needs of military members.

One of the best practices that came out of that forum was the importance of grounding our work within an evidence-based prevention framework. I recently hired an expert with many years of clinical research and administrative experience in the prevention, assessment and treatment of sexual misconduct. She will develop a comprehensive prevention plan and contribute to refining policy regarding perpetrators.

In terms of diversity, the StatsCan survey on sexual misconduct in the CAF indicated that members of the LGBTQ2 community are victimized at higher rates. SMRC staff have received specialized training from community agencies and are researching enhancements to service delivery to better meet the needs of these and other specialized groups.

In particular, they're considering whether the prevalence, circumstances, dynamics and impacts of sexual misconduct are different for these groups; whether they experience any unique barriers to reporting; and what service modifications might be necessary. The needs of diverse clients will be considered in the national victims support strategy that is under development. I am also seeking to add expertise on these issues to the membership of the external advisory council.

Finally, as we continue to identify and respond to developing trends by providing expert advice and monitoring CAF's efforts, my focus will remain on ensuring the provision of efficient, effective and compassionate support that is responsive to members' needs, helping them return to work in a healthy and respectful workplace.

Thank you.

• (1545)

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. Preston.

I'm going to yield the floor to MP Robillard. The floor is yours.

[*Translation*]

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

My thanks to the witnesses for being here today.

One of the objectives of the diversity strategy is to improve the evaluation of diversity policies. The witnesses we have heard in this study have often stressed the need for better measurement of the current diversity situation as well as the progress being made.

Can you give us some more details about the new ways of measuring diversity in the Armed Forces?

LGen Paul Wynnyk: Thank you for your question.

[*English*]

There are a number of ways that we're measuring diversity. I know that several of the members who are with me here today have talked about that before. I'd just like to stress once again that diversity is not just with regard to the female component. We've talked about the LGBTQ component as well the indigenous component.

In this particular case, I will hand off that question to the commander of military personnel, who is tracking all of that as part of his duties.

[*Translation*]

Lieutenant-General Charles Lamarre (Commander, Military Personnel Command, Department of National Defence): Thank you very much.

Thank you for the opportunity to answer your question, Mr. Robillard.

We conduct surveys. We make sure that our recruiting personnel keep track of who is entering the Canadian Armed Forces.

The annual recruiting process corresponds to the financial year. Of those who have joined this year, 17.3% are women, 12.6% are members of visible minorities and 3.5% are indigenous. We are seeking to have those percentages increase, while keeping an eye on the current situation. As for the composition of our personnel, the Canadian Armed Forces has the following objectives: 25% women, 8.4% members of visible minorities and, by 2026, 2.9% indigenous.

We have other data that allow us to see where we are at the moment. Right now, the armed forces has 15.7% women. In the last two years, the number of women in the armed forces has increased by about 1,300. For indigenous people and members of visible minorities, the figures are 2.8% and 8.7% respectively. That is quite significant for us. We are measuring everything and keeping an eye on it all.

We have established a strategy to increase diversity in the Canadian Armed Forces. We have to maintain those percentages, but we also have to make sure that the policies in place support those people. That includes all kinds of things, including religious accommodation. For example, a woman who is currently in a training program at the Leadership and Recruit School at Saint-Jean, asked to be able to wear a niqab. She decided not to wear it, but she can wear something else to represent her religion. Members of the Sikh minority have the right to wear turbans. We provide them with accommodations so that they can continue training in the Canadian Armed Forces.

All this is in place in order to increase diversity, because it is important for us. The research that my human resources research and evaluation team is doing at the moment proves that it is possible to implement solutions for those who want to join the armed forces and to increase diversity therein.

• (1550)

Mr. Yves Robillard: Thank you.

In recent weeks, a number of witnesses have told us that the difficulty in retaining women is related to their family responsibilities and the lack of support in the armed forces.

Can you tell us about the current provisions for women who want to blend their careers and their family responsibilities?

LGen Charles Lamarre: These days, that is just as much an issue for men as for women. That is why we have established very generous policies for those who have to take care of their children. Maternity leave lasts for twelve months and can be extended to up to 18. That allows parents to take care of their children and to create a solid bond with them before sending them to daycare, like all other Canadians. The parents need help when they return to work.

Even more important is that we have established very good policies so that women who take maternity leave are not penalized. We have the merit board. Those women are not demoted as they would be if they were simply absent. We look at their last evaluation and we give them the same score. A number of women have had one, two or three children and continue to progress satisfactorily through the Canadian Armed Forces.

Mr. Yves Robillard: I have one final question.

One of the aspects of your recruitment strategy is a social media presence. Can you tell us about the results of campaigns such as Women in Force?

LGen Charles Lamarre: Absolutely.

We can see people's interest in the Canadian Armed Forces on our website. People read what we post there and the ability to ask questions is very popular. They ask whether they can do this or that if they join the forces. It interests Canadians greatly. We also know that a lot of women visit our site.

What is interesting in all this is the interaction on different platforms. For example, the interaction with our female recruiters on websites or in podcasts is very popular. People sign in, ask questions and take an interest in what is happening. It helps to eliminate things that could discourage some people from joining.

[English]

So it eliminates the myth.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Robillard: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Welcome, Pierre, the floor is yours.

[Translation]

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

In terms of the nature of the service, Operation Honour shows us that recruitment issues are the same as they were 30 years ago when I joined up. The same problems existed. At the time, diversity was less of an issue. They wanted to recruit more women. I was in the infantry; they wanted women. Women joined the infantry but, after basic training, they decided either to ask for a discharge or for a change in career. I am not sure that the situation has changed much, with some exceptions. Women who are born for that career will continue to pursue it. There is a woman general now, but she is the exception.

Are we not trying to tamper with nature too much? We talk about culture changes. I am not talking about sexual harassment, but about joining up, about the nature of military work in terms of what is involved in armed combat. It is completely different with the

logistics areas. In the combat trades, by tampering with nature, don't we end up shooting ourselves in the foot? We have been trying to recruit women for 30 years. Now we are talking about policies. We are politicians and you are generals, but what about the people in the field? You are saying that, after four years, you do not have any real results. I remember that, when I was a young lieutenant or captain, we received directives from Ottawa. We just looked at them.

What should we be doing today about the people in the field, in your opinion? Should we continue to force things, or should we find a different way to view the service, perhaps by proposing something else?

• (1555)

[English]

LGen Paul Wynnyk: It's a very good question. I joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 1981 and the situation has evolved substantially. To directly answer your question, what we want to do is create an environment in which there are absolutely no policy or structural barriers, and where young women are free to choose whatever they want to do. I do take it that the combat arms is not necessarily an attractive profession for women. It's not necessarily an attractive profession for men, quite frankly, but there should be absolutely no barriers in pursuing that line if you want to go in. We are getting there.

With regard to your comments on generals, we have 13 general and flag officers, but for the first time in some time we have a combat arms general, Brigadier-General Jennie Carignan. Some of you have met her. She has worked for me. She is leading a cohort of incredible female combat-tested leaders, quite frankly, many of whom have served in Afghanistan and proven that there are simply no barriers to doing what you need to do when you go in the field. They are still in a minority, but they are setting the example as we go forward. We have twice as many female general and flag officers as we had five years ago; we're up to 13. That's only going to continue to climb as we go forward.

I'm confident that we need to continue to make sure there are no explicit or implicit barriers as we go forward. General Lamarre is looking at a wholesale policy review to make sure there aren't things we have missed that are actually informal barriers to women progressing and choosing whatever profession they choose. I'm very confident, actually very excited quite frankly, that, as I said, we've got a cohort of combat arms females moving forward. We've had female commanding officers of artillery regiments, engineer regiments and a combat engineer regiment. We have not yet had regular infantry or armoured regiment ones, but we've had a reserve armoured regiment female CO as well. Those barriers are coming down.

General Lamarre, I don't know if you'd like to add anything.

LGen Charles Lamarre: I certainly would, and that extends throughout all of our units, our service battalions and the army, our large organization, some 600 strong. Quite a few of them have been in the command of women, who have done extremely well and continue to do well in the progressions for their careers, getting promoted to general officer ranks. There are a couple more this year and, if I'm not mistaken, that will bring us up to 15.

I think those are good, but more importantly there is also, as the vice chief of the defence staff was indicating, the elimination of the types of barriers that would have prevented them in the past. That includes everything that causes a higher rate of injuries. There's the whole idea of how the kit is fitted and everything else to make sure that doesn't cause them any problems. The other aspect is to make sure that we maintain our fighting capability, and that's an important point. Sometimes people think that you're bringing it down and it's not going to be quite the same. Nothing could be further from the truth. The standards for how we fight have to be maintained, because ultimately that's what we do.

The training that these women do and are successful in doing, and then the operations they conduct, are at the same standard, which is a very high standard and very demanding. You're right that we have quite a few occupations that are more and more popular. We tend to have a lot of our women grouped in about five similar occupations. That's why we want to broaden this up. Part of it is actually to let folks know that it's available. Hence, there's the emphasis that we're putting on making sure that Canadian women have the opportunity to see just what is available to them. This where we're going to be going in the next year and a half, to put an emphasis on making sure that this is known to them.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Do you have statistics on the cases of sexual misconduct? Do you know whether they occur more during operations when soldiers are together for long periods, or when they are on the bases, at work, or out of uniform? Do you know whether they are divided according to the environment, and in which situation they most occur?

[English]

LGen Paul Wynnyk: Before I potentially turn over to Dr. Preston and/or Commodore Patterson, I want to talk a little bit about statistics and data collection in general.

We're in our infancy in many ways of collecting that data we need. There is a bespoke database now called the Operation Honour Tracking and analysis system that's been designed specifically to track sexual misconduct and all those parameters that you mentioned. There are many other databases out there on the military police side, as well, and a few other areas that actually collect that, but I'm not sure that we have enough data right now.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Okay.

•(1600)

[English]

LGen Paul Wynnyk: Dr. Preston, do you have anything to add in 10 seconds or so?

The Chair: There will be time at the end. We can circle back on that if there's a will to do that.

Before I move to MP Garrison, I know combat arms is a bit of a tough sell, but your organization needs 270 pilots, so I would encourage all those who want to join to fly airplanes to do so as soon as possible.

LGen Charles Lamarre: [Inaudible—Editor] used to fly, as well.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Paul-Hus' question reminded me of a meme that's been circulating. One of the odd things in Canadian society is that men choose high-paying occupations like doctor, lawyer and CEO, while women continue to choose lower-paying occupations like female doctor, female lawyer and female CEO. I think we have to acknowledge that there are barriers. I've seen many of you here several times. I still want to acknowledge that the Canadian Forces has done a good job in acknowledging it has a problem, both with diversity and with sexual misconduct, in contrast to most other institutions in our society.

That said, I know you'll hold yourselves to high standards and we're going to hold you to high standards on performance on that. That acknowledgement is lacking in many other parts of Canadian society, so I think we're off to a good start.

I'm going to ask a question about two different things. I'll ask you, General Wynnyk. What do you see as the main barriers to making progress on diversity right now? Is that funding? You mentioned data. What are the main barriers to making faster progress on diversity? Is it recruiting? Where is the stumbling block?

LGen Paul Wynnyk: I will open this up to my colleagues after my comments.

I think it's just a general awareness across society that, once again, we are open for business. We would like to recruit, and traditionally we have recruited over the years from that white male cohort. That hasn't changed in 50 or 60 years. I think there are a lot of demographics that we have to do a better job of tapping into—and perhaps General Lamarre would like to elaborate on that as well—particularly in large urban areas where we have large immigrant populations who, once again, may not have any perception about the Canadian Armed Forces, but they may have a potentially negative perception about the military in general, depending on what countries they have come from, because we bring many refugees into Canada.

I think we need to do a much better job of, once again, focusing on the indigenous population. The indigenous population of Canada has a rich history of military service. If I recall from my time commanding in the army and being an indigenous peoples champion, I think we were up to about 7% in the Canadian army in the 1950s. As you're aware, we're under 3% right now, but we are doing a relatively good job, in my view, particularly on the reserves side with the indigenous programs that we have spoken about previously, attracting more indigenous Canadians and reflecting on the fact that they come from a warrior culture, and we are a warrior culture. There's actually a very rich indigenous heritage in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Those would be my initial thoughts, if any of my colleagues would like to add to that.

LGen Charles Lamarre: I would like to add to that. Coming back to the meme that is circulating, of course, all those people who might have different careers, they all get the same pay. It's always been that way and it continues to be because we're conscious of not having any of those barriers, but thank you for your words.

I'll talk first of all about recruiting. We had three OAG reports that told us that we had to get better at recruiting. We took them seriously. We've created Operation Generation. Operation Generation is a very specific operation, on a yearly cycle, for domestic operations. I'm the supporting commander and I get access to the resources of the environments to come and get us to do this. Specifically we're going after the groups that we want to come and bring their talent to the forces.

You're going to see that in the fall. There's going to be a ship, probably HMCS Saint John, with a helicopter deck on board. They'll do a Great Lakes cruise and they'll go specifically to those areas along the Great Lakes, all the way down to Toronto and past there. We're going to go and attract people, to come and see what it is we're doing.

First and foremost, because we want to get those specialties into our ships, we'll make sure that the audiences we're bringing in to meet the ships, meet the crews and everything else will include women and visible minorities, so they can themselves get a chance to do a hands-on.

Oftentimes, the challenge comes down to letting people know what the opportunity is. That's why we have to focus a lot more on letting them know. To that end, we have created, again as part of the response to the OAG report, a new website for recruiting. I encourage you to go and see it at forces.ca. In there we emphasize that this is an organization that will accept any and all Canadians who want to serve. We make it very visible, not only in the imagery but in the explanation, and we demystify things that in the past have traditionally stopped people from joining.

How do you do the PFT test? This seemed to be something that caused people to self-select out of the process. They can see how it's done and realize just how well they can do it. With a number of women doing the test, they can actually see that they are good to go.

● (1605)

Mr. Randall Garrison: I'll just stop you there.

I want to go to Dr. Preston and Commodore Patterson.

I would ask the same question of you. I will start by acknowledging again that there's a problem with sexual misconduct. I think that's an important step. What are the barriers you see right now in combatting the persistence of the problem? What is it that is needed at this point to make more progress?

Ms. Denise Preston: I think that we need to continue to make very clear progress on the OAG recommendations, for example. I think that we need to do a better job of marketing the good-news stories and the progress we are making. We certainly see this reality at our centre. What most people hear about are the negative stories, the things that have gone wrong and the people whose situations have not been adequately addressed. Those cases absolutely exist and they need to be better addressed.

We also have the benefit of hearing some of the positive stories where people say "you've met my needs, this has been resolved, I'm pleased with the outcome". I think perhaps we need a better public awareness campaign. Absolutely, as General Wynnyk said, the forces don't have it right yet. There's still a lot of work to be done in terms of policy, in terms of structures and in terms of enhancing support. All of that needs to be put in place as a priority.

Commodore Rebecca Patterson (Director General, Canadian Armed Forces Strategic Response Team – Sexual Misconduct, Department of National Defence): To pull that out a little bit further, one of our challenges is that we end up having to translate this expert advice into a tool that military members can actually use. Of course, we both focus on what this is really about, which is members of the Canadian Armed Forces. It's a very different way of thinking because we're very used to thinking in a very operational way, where we look at the outcome and then we put little pieces in between it.

Now we're looking at the behavioural aspects of what we're doing. The challenge is even in reshaping our thinking. I come from a health care background where we thought about people-centred pieces. I'm translating this and creating a military tool. It takes time. You can't buy time. It is what it is. It's that feeling of that pressing need to support those who are responding to it or being affected by it on a day-to-day basis. The challenges are time and translating this expert advice into what will work in the Canadian Armed Forces.

The Chair: I'm going to have to end it there and move on to the next speaker.

MP Spengemann.

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Thank you all for being with us again. I appreciate that much of the interest is in the area of sexual misconduct.

I wanted to just sort of round out our conceptualization of diversity and inclusion. On a previous occasion, I had a chance to ask about second or third careers for people later on in life to join the Canadian Armed Forces. I think the answer was quite comforting: There are avenues for people to join not only right out of university, college or even high school but later on, after a successful career elsewhere.

I want to ask a question about Canadians with disabilities. To what extent are the Canadian Armed Forces currently a career option for Canadians with diagnosed disabilities? I'm thinking of things like autism, Down's syndrome, epilepsy and perhaps even blindness. Are there thought projects under way to increase inclusiveness for those persons through career paths in the Canadian Forces?

LGen Charles Lamarre: We have just released a DAOD, which is a departmental administrative order and directive, that talks about disabilities. We do have some folks with disabilities in the Canadian Armed Forces. Those are related mainly to how they learn, for example. Also, as you all know, if we have members who have been injured in operations—we've had quite a few who have successfully carried on, including people who have returned to active duty and to theatres of operations with prosthetic limbs and the like. Those are ways in which we do that, and we accommodate those types of individuals because, of course, there's value to doing that.

What we do have, however, is the concept that I've called universality of service. It is the aspect that gives us the right to not necessarily have the duty to accommodate in certain areas. The reason for that is that it's been proven in certain cases that there is a bona fide operational requirement for people to be able to do certain things.

For example, you need to be able to carry a load and to be mobile in order to help extricate somebody from a situation—it might be a burning vehicle, a damaged vehicle, a ship that's suffered something, an aircraft—and all of those things have been recognized by the courts to say that these are bona fide operational requirements. Somebody who showed up at a recruiting centre in a wheelchair, for example, would not be able to do those things. There's a recognition that the kind of duty that we perform is so demanding that you're going to be in combat at some point potentially in your career, and you need to be able to do these things because it's not only yourself at that point; it's also the rest of your team. We have been given that.

Universality of service calls upon you to maintain that capability throughout your career and to prove that you can. We sometimes make accommodations for folks who can't anymore, and those will be for a specific set period of time. That's either to get them ready to go back in if they can rehabilitate or, if they cannot, to enable them to do a proper transition. They then have the advantage of our transition group and that can be a process that can take up to six years depending on their desire to keep on working and whether or not we have a position for which, for example, we know they would not be required to go and deploy in an operational environment. We try to do that for as long as we can keep them.

In the cases of autism and everything else like that, folks have to pass a Canadian Forces aptitude test. It is a timed test that gives us an indication of the cognitive abilities of the individual, and their ability to learn. That's really what it comes down to because that's an important aspect. In a learning organization such as ours, people need to be able to understand and to comprehend complex weapons systems or procedures, so that we can then conduct operations.

•(1610)

Mr. Sven Spengemann: General Wynnyk.

LGen Paul Wynnyk: To build on what General Lamarre said in addressing your question, I would add that we are very much looking, in the future, at adapting these different policies and perhaps having different standards of universality of service.

One of the organizations that work for me is working on something called force mix and structure design, which is really an evaluation of the structure of the Canadian Forces, in terms of whether it is relevant to the 21st century as we go forward and in terms of the actual design of units. A component of that is asking the very question that you asked, whether everybody needs to meet the same standard, because different jobs require different standards of fitness.

General Vance would be the very first to say, and he may have said it in front of this committee, that you don't need to be 10 feet tall and 250 pounds for every job in the Canadian Armed Forces. This is very applicable as we look at some of the new trades and occupations that are coming online. Cyber is one example, and the cyberwarrior of the future may not have to be trained to the same

level nor be as fit as the infantry soldier. To what degree we can accommodate some of the disabilities that you've mentioned, I'll be frank, we don't know right now, but we're certainly exploring that as we go forward.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: It's encouraging to hear your openness on that. It's very helpful. Thank you so much.

My second question, and I may have a chance to go back in the next round, is about the concept of culture. I had an exchange with Madam Justice Deschamps on that issue. To what extent do you think the concept of culture is a hindrance to the work that we're doing, not on criminal behaviour like sexual assault but on sexual misconduct? Culture doesn't exist independently of any one person's behaviour or actions. It's not something that floats around on its own. It's people-related. Is it a concept that people hide behind and slow down because they can say, "There's a culture of misconduct. It's going to take time to change"? We celebrate culture in other contexts as a very positive thing. In the context of sexual misconduct, it's something negative. Is there a way to transcend and move beyond it in order to solve the issue more quickly?

LGen Paul Wynnyk: I'll begin, and perhaps ask Dr. Preston at the end if she has anything to add.

I'm not sure I agree with the premise that we have a culture of sexual misconduct within the Canadian Forces. The vast majority of members of the Canadian Forces feel as passionately about this as we do—

Mr. Sven Spengemann: But the problem is cultural in nature. I wasn't going to say there's a pervasive culture, but as far as the problem is concerned, there's a cultural dimension.

LGen Paul Wynnyk: Well, there is. What we have to do is effect cultural change as we go forward. Of course, that's probably one of the most difficult things you do in any organization because that's changing attitudes and beliefs.

The first part of Operation Honour was essentially ordering people not to do bad things. I read Sandra Perron's testimony, and completely agree with what she said.

I could come back to that later.

•(1615)

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thank you, General.

The Chair: I know some of us have two, three or four devices. This is just a general reminder to members to make sure they're on silent. I would appreciate that.

I'm going to turn the floor over to MP Dzerowicz for a five-minute round.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. I have turned off my sound. Thank you for the reminder. It's always me.

Thank you so much for your interesting presentations. Thank you to many of you for coming back.

I'm going to start off with you, Lieutenant-General Wynnyk. You have indicated that we've not made sufficient progress in key areas. You said we have to push harder. You have identified some new steps.

How are you convinced that this route is going to lead to progress where before you were deficient in your progress? What makes you so sure that the steps you put in place are actually going to get us further than where we are now?

LGen Paul Wynnyk: I think it's a very good question.

The immediate phase one of Operation Honour—and this is my terminology and no one else's—was to address the problem right away. That was once again to implement the duty to report. We understand that has had some perhaps negative ramifications in some cases, but it was to actually physically stop, where possible, sexual misconduct, heighten the awareness of sexual misconduct, and put in place mechanisms to deal with it.

But what we didn't put in place is the cultural change model that we have been talking about just recently, which is to change those beliefs and attitudes.

I think we've reached a bit of an inflection point with the feedback we've received from our own internal assessment of the report from the Office of the Auditor General, so I'm confident now that we've entered a new phase. It's the beginning of a new phase where we have to look at coming up with a cultural change strategy. It will be informed by Dr. Preston. As Commodore Patterson mentioned, she's working on it right now to actually come up with, amongst many things, lines of effort and different ways to address this, and to measure it as we go forward.

What we found is the only way to measure cultural change in any aspect, not just sexual misconduct, is through anonymous surveys. We've only done one. We've administered a second one. We expect the results in May. That will be the true measure, quite frankly, of whether we're having success or not.

I can speculate, but we are putting performance measurement in place against which we can benchmark.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: I appreciate that. Cultural change is just one. You have mentioned seven areas where there are deficiencies. I do want to point that out.

I don't know why it is, but for 20 or 25 years I've had to deal with the issue of the progress of women and sexual assault of women in different areas that I've had to work in. I found the model that works is leadership at the top incentives and accountability for the senior leadership team, establish base data and a way to measure progress, and then transparency and reporting. I hear some aspects of it, but I don't hear that model here.

On leadership at the top, I think we've established the problem has been recognized. I've mentioned incentives before. I think if we really want to push harder...I'm not seeing how that is actually going to ensure that we are going to achieve progress.

I know we can't have the same incentives as maybe the business world, where we can give bonuses, and people are evaluated and given more money, but maybe incentives could be provided. You don't progress in terms of your career if you're not achieving certain objectives that you're trying to achieve at a particular stage.

I would love to hear a little more about maybe some incentives, if there has been some thought to them, because I'm not sure we'll actually see the progress that we would love to be able to see unless

we actually provide those types of incentives and accountability from the senior leadership team.

You talked a bit about the base data and having some difficulty even gathering some of that data, and then still trying to find a way to measure it.

Maybe I will pause here. I'm not sure who wants to address it, but I do have another seven minutes so I will be continuing with this line as we move forward.

Who wants to address that?

LGen Paul Wynnyk: I'll start, and then perhaps Dr. Preston and everybody else can join in.

I completely agree with the points you've raised. Quite frankly, we're in the process of tackling them and thinking about them right now. In terms of leadership at the top, I agree that it's not just a matter of pushing harder, but I have to be very frank. When we're looking at general officers, it takes about 30 years to grow a general officer. This is not something where you can pull somebody up from 20 years or 30 years ago.

There are exceptions, but on average, when you become a brigadier general or a commodore, you're at the 27- to 31-year point. We've reached down very far to ensure that we're providing opportunities for all minority groups in the Canadian Forces, and I include women in there because they are in a minority percentage-wise. The chain of command is being held accountable to make sure we're examining every individual, to make sure we're not necessarily privileging them, because it is a meritocracy and it has to be a meritocracy, but that the same opportunities are afforded to everybody as they go forward.

The chain of command is being held accountable to that. There is complete buy-in, in the chain of command, that we need to do better and that we need to increase the proportion of not only women, but visible minorities as well across the Canadian Armed Forces.

In terms of measuring, I completely agree. We've only recently started collecting a lot of that data. OPHTAS just came online in October or September. That is new, and that is bespoke.

● (1620)

We are in the process of taking that limited data that we have and looking at ways of integrating that database with the military police database and a number of other databases, but respecting confidentiality all the way. That is in no way connected to the database that Dr. Preston maintains, because we need to maintain that independence.

We have to get better. We know that. We think we have a plan in place there.

Dr. Preston, do you want to add anything?

The Chair: Briefly, please. We're getting close to the time.

Ms. Denise Preston: The only thing I would add is that you're right that culture and leadership are important. Those are critical organizational factors that relate to sexual harassment in the workplace. However, there are a number of other factors that are related as well.

For example, we can't lose sight of who the individuals are who are committing this type of behaviour, because the fact is, the majority of people exist within this sexualized culture and don't behave in this way. There are things that are different between people who choose to behave in this way and people who don't. Therefore, we need to do a better job of looking at individuals.

One of the other things that the forces have done that will be positive, other than looking at culture change, is that they recognized that they have failed to appropriately take into consideration expert advice in terms of guiding and developing their strategy. It was very much developed within CAF without that expert advice. Now they've recognized that, so further responsibilities are coming over to our centre.

The other thing is that one of our responsibilities will be to monitor how CAF is doing, so there is that type of oversight function as well.

The Chair: Thank you.

MP Martel.

[*Translation*]

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

I live in Saguenay, in a region. Often the reality of regions is different from the reality of major centres. We have little diversity, few cultural minorities, compared to what we see in the Canadian population in general. CFB Bagotville is the third largest employer in the region. We also have two reserve units. A lot of kids are fascinated by the idea of a career in the Canadian Armed Forces. They are also fascinated by drones.

I would like to know whether there is a plan to study the differences and adjust the recruitment objectives according to the communities where the units are stationed, in particular the reserve units.

[*English*]

LGen Paul Wynnyk: I'll begin, and then perhaps General Lamarre might want to address that.

Once again, I can speak from my experience as the former army commander. I widely recognize the diversity across Canada, the diversity in different types of units and the population bases from which they draw.

There is no move afoot, nor do I think there ever will be, to come up with diversity quotas in particular areas. With regard to women, absolutely we will continue to push forward. We've set a goal of 25%, but in more homogenous areas, particularly in the Saguenay, as you've mentioned....

Quite frankly, it's impossible to impose a quota on visible minorities or anything such as that, nor would we as we go forward.

What we're trying to do is make sure we're representative of Canadian society writ large and the communities in which we live. To contrast that, if we were looking at Toronto or Vancouver where we have large populations of visible minorities and they constitute in some areas the majority, we would like to reflect that composition in our units because we're a reflection of Canadian society.

General Lamarre might or might not want to add anything to that.

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

LGen Charles Lamarre: Yes, thank you very much. That is an interesting question.

The army is the service that employs most reservists in the Canadian Armed Forces. The Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff was the former army commander. One of the things he did during his mandate was to work to increase the number of reservists. The initiative was very successful. During that time, a full-time employment program was established. It is very popular. Last year, we hoped to be able to fill about 80% of the available positions, but we achieved more than 100%, in the sense that we had people on a waiting list. So the program will be in place again this year.

In the places with visible minorities—Vancouver, for example—a lot of units reflect the population. The Vice-Chief mentioned this previously but, in Vancouver, the second service battalion is based in a community that is almost entirely of Chinese origin. Eighty per cent of the personnel in the unit, therefore, have come from the Chinese community. It is interesting to see. We feel that it reflects the Canadian population. We anticipate many units of that kind in the future. In Toronto, we are also seeing units beginning to reflect the way in which our population is changing and becoming established. That is what we want to see and increasingly become the norm in the regular forces of the CAF. We really want the people of Canada to be represented when we deploy overseas.

Mr. Richard Martel: That's good.

Is it possible to find out about the diversity in the military police?

LGen Charles Lamarre: I imagine so.

[*English*]

LGen Paul Wynnyk: I cannot give you the statistics right now. We would have to come back to you. I would have to take it on notice. Offhand, I would not have that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel: Okay.

I would now like to talk about the auditor-general's report on inappropriate sexual behaviour in the Canadian Armed Forces. It indicates that, in a sample of 46 cases, 35 were closed and it took an average of seven months to process 31 of those 35 cases.

I want to know whether the military police is adequately equipped for that.

[*English*]

LGen Paul Wynnyk: Yes, they do.... But to give a bit of background, at one point the military police—and you may be aware of that—were told to resolve all cases within 30 days. That was a blanket direction to solve all cases. Sexual misconduct cases are hard and complex, and in fact we would have done them a great disservice by rushing them through.

The provost marshal right now has a special team that very much looks at sexual misconduct cases. He now has six teams that are specially trained in sexual misconduct. There is a liaison officer who works in Dr. Preston's office.

These, quite frankly, are cases that we don't want to rush. We want to make sure that the resources are brought to bear on this, that there's no shortage of resources. That's the way it's being approached to make sure that all the cases are investigated as thoroughly as they need to be. There's a wide variety, of course, depending on the circumstances of any particular case.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel: Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: MP Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Dr. Preston, going back to your earlier exchange with I think Mr. Garrison, you were talking about the unwillingness of CAF to accept recommendations previously.

Can you explain why that was?

Ms. Denise Preston: I'm not sure whether it was unwillingness per se. I don't know what to attribute the fact to. The fact is that Madam Deschamps, when she did her review in 2015, recommended that an independent centre be established and that it be tasked with a wide variety of responsibilities related to sexual misconduct.

That was not in fact the structure that was set up in 2015. There was Commodore Patterson's organization that was set up as a strategic response team. Our centre was stood up and specifically tasked with victim support.

In terms of why that happened, I'm not sure. The two organizations, for the past three and half years—

• (1630)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Who is responsible for making the decision to set it up the way that it ended up being set up?

Ms. Denise Preston: That predated me. That probably would have been the deputy and the CDF at the time, I'm assuming. The two organizations have been required to work in close collaboration, essentially, to ensure this priority is addressed. The Auditor General came in and essentially made the same recommendations and—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: The same as the ones that were not followed through?

Ms. Denise Preston: Yes. He recommended that there should essentially be a transfer of responsibilities from the CAF side of the house to the sexual misconduct response centre and that CAF should make more use of the expertise that they have, both within the centre and with external experts outside of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Do you think that there could have been some cultural element within the military to not want to put it outside of CAF?

Ms. Denise Preston: I would only be speculating.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Yes.

Ms. Denise Preston: Whether it was a cultural factor that they didn't want to reach out or whether it was simply... What I've certainly noticed working with CAF is that they're very task oriented and they very much have a culture of taking care of their own, so I think that they applied themselves to the best of their ability to do what they could and sought some input, for example, from other

military organizations, but I think didn't realize how complex this issue is and didn't realize the need for very specific expertise.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Do they realize it now?

Ms. Denise Preston: They do. I'm confident in that.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: When it comes to diversity within the military, do you think that there is a much better understanding now of what's required to make that work, from a cultural perspective?

Ms. Denise Preston: Do you mean with respect to diversity or sexual misconduct?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: No. I mean when it comes to diversity in terms of getting more women into the military.

Ms. Denise Preston: I would say yes. That's certainly not my area of expertise.

I think questions related to diversity would be better directed—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I'm only connecting the two because I think that unless the cultural elements around the sexual misconduct are properly taken care of, we're not going to be able to really expand where we want go in terms of diversity.

What I'm getting from you is that you do believe that those things are being looked at very seriously now and that it's perhaps being treated differently than it had been previously.

Ms. Denise Preston: I do. I've certainly seen a difference in terms of how the Operation Honour or sexual misconduct file has been addressed just since I came in. I've been there for two years. When I first came in, we were working collaboratively with the Canadian Armed Forces, but there were tensions and struggles over who should have responsibility for certain things. That has shifted over time for a number of reasons. I think part of it is that I had to come in, establish credibility, show them the value of the expertise and gain trust as well. Then the OAG made similar recommendations.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: General, did you want to add something to that?

The Chair: We're out of time. There might be an opportunity to circle back on that later on.

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

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): What is the current diversity makeup—female, visible minority and first nations—of the Canadian Armed Forces military police?

LGen Paul Wynnyk: Once again, I would have to take that on notice. I don't have that at hand. I have those statistics for the Canadian Armed Forces writ large, but we don't have that on hand for a specific branch, core or regiment. I'd have to go back.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: What is it for the JAG office?

LGen Paul Wynnyk: Well, it's the same thing; that's a specific branch. Like I said, all we have available right now is that—

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: What is it for the investigative services branch?

LGen Paul Wynnyk: I can't answer that question.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay.

What kind of training are the military police and the investigative services given in regard to investigating crimes related to inappropriate sexual behaviour? Are they given any special training by the RCMP or police services to investigate crimes of a sexual nature?

• (1635)

LGen Paul Wynnyk: Absolutely. There are now six dedicated teams in the Canadian Forces provost marshal's branch that have training in the investigation of sexual misconduct. Military police, writ large, are, as part of their training, given more emphasis on dealing with sexual misconduct and, in particular, providing that initial support to victims. In some cases, it's the military police that are first advised and first come in contact. A lot of emphasis has been put on that recently.

A lot of good lessons have been learned. Many of our military police have gone on courses. I know there's a bespoke course down in the United States with the United States military police. I think it's on the army side, and we're loading people on that course.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: What is the process to decide whether crimes committed within the Canadian Armed Forces go to JAG or the civil court system? Is there a separate system for crimes of a sexual nature, for sexual assault?

LGen Paul Wynnyk: Once again, it would depend on the nature of the particular offence or the particular crime. If it's a Criminal Code offence, that would be handled externally. It would depend on the circumstances as you go forward.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: If it was a sexual assault and criminal offence, whose choice would it be? Would it be the victim's choice or the alleged perpetrator's choice as to whether it would be done in civilian court or through the court-martial system?

LGen Paul Wynnyk: It would be the victim's choice. Well, the victim would report it, but once it's reported, I think that it depends on the nature of the defence.

Dr. Preston.

Ms. Denise Preston: Yes, I could clarify.

When a sexual offence occurs, there are a variety of factors that determine which police agency has jurisdiction. For example, if the offence took place in a civilian establishment, typically it would be the civilian police who are called, whereas if it happened at a military establishment, it would be the military police who are called. That would be one factor that impacts jurisdiction.

Certainly, the victim's wishes are taken into consideration in terms of where the charges end up being laid, but it's actually the prosecution who has the final decision-making authority as to where the case is going to be addressed.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: In a situation where the perpetrator admits it, and then the victim is hauled away to a separate unit and told that the perpetrator is being dishonourably discharged, and it turns out that he's not, and then the individual decides that maybe they can't get any real justice within the military justice system, how does that individual get the case switched from the military system over to the civilian system?

Ms. Denise Preston: As I said, the victim's views are taken into consideration and so are the circumstances of the case, as well as

where it happened, but it ultimately is the prosecutor's decision as to whether it's military or civilian. Sometimes cases are charged by the civilian police, and the civilian prosecutors choose not to prosecute. Those cases might get transferred to the military.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay. Some of the cases are referred to you. You receive reports. Do you receive reports of all the sexual assaults? What kinds of reports do you receive?

Ms. Denise Preston: We don't. When I say that we receive reports, I mean that we have a military police officer embedded in our centre who is able to take official reports if people who contact us are willing to make official reports.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Is it required for somebody who calls your centre as a victim to state their name?

Ms. Denise Preston: No, it is not. We work with people confidentially, as well as anonymously. There's no requirement for them to provide any identifying information.

The Chair: That little buzzer was right on five minutes.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Actually, it wasn't; it was four minutes.

The Chair: The clerk is timing it. It's five minutes, but there will be extra time.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay.

The Chair: I'm happy to circle back to you.

I'm going to go to MP Fisher.

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

Thanks, folks, for being here.

I don't have an awful lot. Ms. Dzerowicz was on the same track.

General Wynnyk, you were talking about the fact there have been some accomplishments, but that there's more work to be done. You also talked about the 10 recommendations in the report in 2015. Could you maybe outline what's left to be done and what you have done that needs to be redone because it wasn't successful?

• (1640)

LGen Paul Wynnyk: To build on what I said in the introductory comments, we're developing and implementing sort of a unified policy on sexual misconduct. In fact, this week—to give you an idea that progress is ongoing—the chief of the defence staff approved something called the Operation Honour manual, the Operation Honour decision tree and a forces-wide message that actually defines sexual misconduct. That may seem insignificant, but the definition of sexual misconduct is different to different organizations.

All those products were informed by Dr. Preston in a sense. She defined what the requirements were. They were then passed to Commodore Patterson and her team. I think they've been looking at these products for about four or five months. Then they were re-validated, if you will, given back to Dr. Preston to ask her, as an independent body, if this checks off and if this is what she were talking about.

That process has gone on. Dr. Preston may want to add to it. I think she even had the external advisory committee look at it, and then these documents have been issued to the Canadian Forces or are in the process of being issued. It might even be today or tomorrow; it's that fresh as we go forward.

These are incredibly important documents because they address some of the confusion surrounding what constitutes sexual misconduct. How do you deal with sexual misconduct? What is a simplified decision tree? We're used to that in the Canadian Forces, yes or no. You follow the decision tree down. That is sort of translating what Dr. Preston has given into military-speak, if you will, as we go forward. That's one example of some great work that has been done primarily by Dr. Preston's team and Commodore Patterson's team that will help us as we go forward. Once again, these are not perfect documents. We're going to circulate them, and we're going to take them for a test run. We'll get feedback on them and amend them accordingly as we go forward.

I talked about the campaign plan, and I don't want to underestimate the importance of that. We're used to doing that in the Canadian Armed Forces; that's how we communicate. When we want to effect change or when we want to do something hard and complex, we come up with a campaign plan. That's the way we communicate in the Canadian Armed Forces.

It is a campaign plan to address Operation Honour, of which cultural change will be one aspect. I know I'm dwelling on cultural change, but I'm most concerned about that because that's the hardest task we have coming forward. That's changing attitudes and beliefs, as I mentioned before, and that involves everything. That involves training, it involves education and it involves what we talked about, which is getting more women into leadership roles and more women into the Canadian Forces so we reach that critical mass and just hammer home that this behaviour is unacceptable and won't be tolerated.

Another big part is that performance measurement framework. I'm quite excited about OPHTAS, the Operation Honour tracking and analysis system. As I said, it's the first bespoke system. What we have to do is develop those linkages to the other databases, all the while making sure we're preserving, where necessary, the confidentiality of the reports. I stress once again that it is completely independent from the database that Dr. Preston has. Information will only be shared if Dr. Preston thinks it needs to be shared as we go forward, but there's no link in those particular databases.

We're going to need time to collate and collect this data as we go forward. As far as I know, it's probably one of the first bespoke data collection devices or methods that we've seen in the Five Eyes countries.

Finally, we're well on our way to doing this under Dr. Preston, expanding the mandate of the sexual misconduct response centre and clearly defining the roles of the particular organization. That is not finished yet. We are still working on the terms of reference for Dr. Preston's organization and Commodore Patterson's organization, which fall under me, so it's clearly understood who does what.

Getting back to your original question, I think that was one of the bigger obstacles we had initially in the last three years, that confusion over who does what.

The Chair: I'm going to go for the last formal round to MP Garrison.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Dr. Preston, I want to thank you for the acknowledgement that groups within the Canadian forces are quite often victimized at different rates, LGBTQ2, visible minorities and others. I really welcome your saying you're going to study that a bit more. I want to put that on the record.

In your presentation, you said the centre will also fund, through a contribution program, sexual assault centres located near large spaces.

Can you tell me a bit more what that means in practice? It sounds like a very good thing.

• (1645)

Ms. Denise Preston: Yes. This stemmed from a budget 2018 commitment where the government committed funds to a number of government agencies to fund a number of initiatives all related to gender-based violence. The Canadian Armed Forces did receive \$2 million over a period. It's basically \$400,000 a year over five years to fund 10 sexual assault clinics that are in proximity to the 10 largest bases across the country. This is in recognition of the fact that these bases are already providing services to either CAF members or their families, for example. It's an acknowledgement of that and some financial compensation for that.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Coming from a community that has one of the 10 largest bases, I know that it will be very welcome in my community.

My second question is related to this. It's about the relationship between your programs and the military family resource centres. What I hear from military family resource centres is that because they are familiar to family members who might suffer from sexual misconduct or other things, sometimes they are the first door that people go through. There were some questions about how much training and how much they know about what should happen in that situation. I'm wondering about that relationship between the military family resource centres and your programs.

Ms. Denise Preston: It's a good question, and to be honest with you, it's not... I've met with representatives from morale and welfare services, but we haven't entered into a formal relationship yet in terms of looking at the demand on them and their capacity and what resources we might be able to provide to them. It's absolutely a valid question, though, because you're right; sexual offences and sexual misconduct often do occur within a family situation.

LGen Charles Lamarre: Could I add to that?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Sure.

LGen Charles Lamarre: The military family resource centres are part of morale and welfare services, which is under my organization. I'm glad you raised this, because they're one of our great resources. On those bases they often have extraordinarily good links with local community systems, whether it be sexual assault response centres or whatnot.

When families do come because something has occurred, the centres usually have all of those links already in place and can assist them. They also have great links, of course, with the military police and with any sort of organization, including the chaplaincy, that can reach out. There are a number of different ways in which these families can be helped as they go forward.

Mr. Randall Garrison: I guess my point here is that I believe they already do a lot of the work on some of these cases and they need to be assisted in doing that work, in terms of capacity and training. I know that they're very open to a closer relationship on these issues.

I'm probably out of time.

The Chair: You are, but there's good news. Given the time we have available on the clock, and the fact that lot of members would like a third and fourth round of questions—MPs Dzerowicz, Gallant, Garrison, Spengemann, Robillard and Fisher, you have all indicated that you wanted more time—I'll keep going. I'll give five minutes and then three minutes. The first four members will get five minutes and then the last three will get three minutes, very similar to what we've been doing. That should take us to the end. There is also a little bit of extra slush in there for anyone else who wants to jump in.

I will now yield the floor to MP Dzerowicz.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: My question is directed to Dr. Preston and Commander Patterson. I want to talk a little bit about the remarks that Commodore Patterson made.

How many incidents of sexual misconduct are not reported? Do you know?

Ms. Denise Preston: It's hard to measure what's not reported, but certainly we know, from decades of statistics in Canadian society and in fact around the world, that sexual offences are the lowest-reported offences. Typically, fewer than about 10% are ever reported. The ones that get reported tend to be the ones that are more severe in nature.

Within the Canadian Armed Forces, again, it's under-reported. The only way we can really look at that is if we look at the results from the StatsCan survey that measures anonymously people's reporting of victimization as compared with, say, the official police reports. There is under-reporting, for sure.

• (1650)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: I think the other way of asking it, although I know it's a bit of an unfair question, is what confidence do you have that there is confidence in the current system for reporting—i. e., you can actually go out and say that this system is one you would want to engage in, should there be an issue? That is question one.

Two, for those women who have reported some sort of sexual assault or sexual misconduct, to what extent have they had input into the current system that exists right now? I'm wondering if you've gone back to say, "You know, you've gone through this process before. How do we make it so it's a process that...if we had to recreate it from scratch?"

Could you respond to both of those?

Ms. Denise Preston: I think the measures we have of confidence are the annual "Your Say" surveys that are conducted by CAF.

Typically, a high percentage of people, usually around 85%, report they have trust in their chain of command to appropriately address sexual misconduct.

If I recall correctly, delving a little further into the data, the people who tend to have less confidence in the data, that extra 17% of people, tend to be people who have had experiences.

It's the people who have either never experienced it and never gone through these sorts of issues who have confidence. The people who have gone through them are a little more challenged.

That being said, linking to your second question is: what are we doing to address that? One of the priorities at our centre is that we want to develop a very robust stakeholder engagement process where we are constantly getting the input of people with lived experiences, whether they're former or current CAF members.

At present, we have a small pool of people who we are able to draw on case-by-case to get input on any number of issues, but we absolutely want to expand this, and that's exactly the kind of feedback we want. Based on their experience, what worked and what didn't? How could it be better? That sort of thing.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: We don't have time for you to go through the definition of sexual misconduct, but I'm assuming there's quite a range of sexual misconduct—

Ms. Denise Preston: It's very broad.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: —from something that's very basic and minor to something that's fairly extreme.

Ms. Denise Preston: Yes.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: We talked a lot about culture change. What was normal 10 to 15 years ago is very not normal now—

Ms. Denise Preston: You're right.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: —and so, I would hate for people to feel... I'm thinking about what happens to perpetrators, because often they don't necessarily want them going to a court system, but I would like them to either go through a course, or have some sort of mechanism to understand the correct current way of working.

Do you have some sort of a program in place for that?

Ms. Denise Preston: I'm going to let my military colleague speak about the processes that perpetrators would go through.

As a subject matter expert, I think one of the gaps that exists right now within the Canadian Armed Forces is that very response to perpetrators that you're talking about. There is a wide range of severity in this behaviour, and some of it can very readily and very informally be addressed at a local level. Some of it would mirror the severity of offences I saw in the federal penitentiary system, and those people would require specialized referrals for specialized assessments and intervention.

I think that's an area that definitely needs more work within the forces.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: What's your recommendation about how to deal with that?

The Chair: Unfortunately, we're out of time. I have to move on. I'm going to yield the floor to MP Gallant.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: General Wynnyk, I still don't understand when a case is severe enough that it would have to be handed over to the civilian courts. I believe we've been told before that if it is a criminal offence with a penalty of five years or more, it is supposed to automatically go to the civilian courts for a charge of murder or a charge of a very severe case of sexual assault.

In what circumstances would it be automatically referred to the civilian court?

•(1655)

LGen Paul Wynnyk: Once again, I can't tell you the precise answer.

I don't have the JAG here with me right now, but if it's a violation of the Criminal Code, the defining factor is the seriousness of the potential sentence that could result from that, but I can't give you the specifics right now. I would need to ask the JAG.

I think the five years you're referring to is probably the Beaudry case that came out recently, but I don't think there was any guideline with regard to five years before that came up.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Yes, the Beaudry decision does play into that, and I understand that's still in limbo, along with a number of cases: 24 cases, I believe.

LGen Paul Wynnyk: If I could just add to that, the director of military prosecutions.... The cases are not necessarily languishing or waiting for the resolution of that. If there are potential alternate charges or alternate ways of looking at that without diminishing the nature of the offence, they're looking at alternate ways to take some of them forward, and sometimes there are alternate charges.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay.

Dr. Preston, is there a different call centre, separate from your response centre, that victims are supposed to call?

Ms. Denise Preston: Do you mean victims of sexual misconduct? No, we're the only 1-800 confidential support centre.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Victims to whom I have spoken say that the first thing they're asked when they call in is what is their name.

Ms. Denise Preston: No.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay, well, we have a discrepancy there. In the Auditor General's report, do you know whether he audited the calls? Did they have people call in to see how the phones were answered?

Ms. Denise Preston: I don't believe they did that. If they did, they didn't tell us that they did. They asked us extensive questions and looked at our standard operating procedures in terms of how we handle calls, but that is a fundamental premise of our service, that our services are confidential and anonymous.

We do have a series of questions that we ask people, but we tell them straight up front that there is no requirement to provide any identifying information. In fact, we proactively offer to provide them with an alias that can be used to identify them within our database in the event they call back a second time. They can simply say, "I did

call previously, and this is the alias I was given," and then we're able to make a subsequent entry under that name.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay.

Ms. Denise Preston: It's absolutely not required, and we certainly understand why people would not want to provide that information.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: General Wynnyk mentioned JAG, and we did ask to have JAG back because we have outstanding questions. We have asked on several occasions that the Auditor General be called in, or the Office of the Auditor General, given his illness, to give us a chance to question him about his report on inappropriate sexual behaviour in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Therefore, I would like to move the motion that I gave notice for on Tuesday:

That the Committee, as part of its study on diversity in the Canadian Armed Forces, hold no fewer than three additional meetings regarding Operation HONOUR and that the findings be published in a separate report to be tabled in the House.

The AG's report did find that Op Honour was severely lacking in providing proper support for the victims of inappropriate sexual behaviour, which includes crimes such as sexual assault, rape and harassment. Worse, in fact, the report found that Operation Honour was not even designed with victim support in mind and that the services they do offer are poorly coordinated. Even worse, the victims are often not even told there are support services available to them, despite the legal requirement to do so.

As we've heard, some do receive the direction, but others are still unaware of it.

The Auditor General also found out that after the implementation of Op Honour, the number of reported complaints of inappropriate sexual behaviour increased from 40 in 2015 to about 300 in 2017. That spike was not due to an increased level of confidence in the system, but rather, the duty to report, which Operation Honour introduced. We heard from Madame Deschamps that the centre was supposed to be able to receive both formal reports and reports or disclosures from victims who initially only wanted to be supported; but to add that duty to report, there were people whose cases were made known to the military police and the chain of command, and now they're facing the end of their careers or they're being constructively worked out of their careers.

For that very important reason, among not having quite enough information from the JAG and this being such a crucial element of being able to recruit and retain the people we already have in the military, as well as the confidence of those who might not have undergone an assault themselves but who are looking to see how their colleagues are being treated, I would like to have another three meetings on this very important topic so that we can reach our goal of 25% of women in the military and lead the way on United Nations resolution 1325.

•(1700)

The Chair: That's fair enough. As you mentioned earlier, you did give notice of this motion in our last meeting, so it meets the requirements.

I'm going to open the floor to debate.

MP Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Chair, this just came up at the last meeting. Can we suspend for five minutes to caucus on this?

The Chair: We will suspend briefly.

• (1700) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1700)

The Chair: We'll resume the meeting.

MP Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: We do see the need and the benefit in holding the additional meetings as proposed in the motion. However, we're just concerned about how it's tied to this study and the amount of time that we have left on this study. We would like to propose an amendment to delete the words "as part of its study on Diversity in the Canadian Armed Forces"—everything between the two commas—and then to insert, after the words "three additional meetings", in parentheses, "at the determination of the subcommittee".

• (1705)

The Chair: That's your amendment as moved.

We'll debate the amendment.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: As we've seen throughout this Parliament, a number of motions and studies that we have put forward have just been delayed and never reached again, or just as they're being moved or are to be discussed, somebody from the government moves a motion to start another study. It goes on and on, and the issue really never does get addressed.

I think it's very important that this be part of the study on diversity because the whole point of this is to ensure that we have diversity among the Armed Forces. We've heard that operationally this is required because, as we saw in Afghanistan, women can only talk to women, so there's a key role for women in the military when they go into different environments.

We have seen the Auditor General's report. However, we have not been able to speak to the Auditor General or anyone from his staff. We have a very in-depth report, but we as a committee still have to understand that and put it into our study so that we are realistically making progress and getting more women into the military. I think we may even be able to hear from a few more women—maybe one—and not just women but people who have left the military, so that we can better understand.

Saying that they're having these exit interviews or going on about what they suppose, the measures that are being taken or the trade shows they go to is really not enough of a strategy. We have to give the confidence to the women who are currently serving that if something of this nature happens, if they're violently attacked, not only are they going to get treated but their careers are going to be protected, and they won't have to be afraid of reprisals.

What we've seen so far, and what we've heard here, is that it is the victim who gets taken from her unit and denied the career path and the education that's supposed to be involved in going from, for example, basic training to their actual career line. If we don't make

this part of the study, it will never get done. This is a delay tactic on the part of the government, and we need to move forward.

The Chair: MP Garrison.

Mr. Randall Garrison: I do think this is important, and we need to have some additional sessions. We have questions we're obviously not going to answer today as a result of the motion. My understanding of the intent of sending this to a subcommittee would be that we have so few meetings left, and we have estimates to deal with and the peacekeeping report to deal with, so there's going to be a little bit of a scheduling problem. I don't see it in the way it's been characterized by Ms. Gallant as a delay tactic. I see it as a scheduling challenge that the subcommittee would have to deal with.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Big time.

Mr. Randall Garrison: As for taking it out of the diversity report, I think it is intimately related to the diversity report, but I am concerned that we need to finish the diversity report and get something tabled in Parliament in a timely manner. Since the motion will still say a separate report would be written, we can address any implications from those additional meetings on diversity in that second report, so I'm going to support the amendment.

The Chair: MP Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Just as a matter of procedure, it should read, "the determination of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure". I think that was a given, but I mention it just for clarity.

Mr. Randall Garrison: It's more [*Inaudible—Editor*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Yes.

I would also just add that I see it as a scheduling issue. It's up to the subcommittee to decide what the schedule should be, so if the subcommittee wants to move things around, it's at the subcommittee's discretion to do that.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Again, the subcommittee is predominantly held by government members, and it will just happen behind closed doors and quietly die.

This is something that is not going to go forward. It's clear—just like the justice committee—that they want to delay instead of setting a time and putting it into the schedule right now.

• (1710)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: On a point of order, the bells are going off.

The Chair: Fair enough.

It's a 30-minute bell, so we have 29 minutes and it's just up the stairs.

Do I have unanimous consent to consider staying in session for another 15 minutes?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Chair, I move that the meeting be adjourned.

[*English*]

The Chair: I don't have unanimous consent, so I'm going to have to adjourn the meeting.

Very quickly before we go, I would like to get this on the record. Elizabeth Kingston snuck into the room when we were debating, and I want to recognize her. She's been our clerk, as we all know, for the better part of two years, and she has just retired after 35 years of public service.

We thank you for your service.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair: That's a nice way to end the meeting.

The meeting is adjourned.

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