

**National Report From Canada
For the Committee on Women in the NATO Forces**

Introduction

This report will outline the status to date of the integration of women into the Canadian Forces. Current activities, initiatives and issues will be covered.

History

Previous reports have covered this topic. Of significance is the ending of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal order of 1989 requiring the Canadian Forces (CF) to remove all employment restrictions for women (with the exception of service in submarines) within a ten-year period. With the Chief of Maritime Staff announcement in March 2001 that submarine service was opened to women, all military occupations are now open fully gender integrated and the CF is in full compliance with the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

New Policy

As of December 2002, the CF is subject to the *Employment Equity Act*. The purpose of the *Act* is to achieve equality in the workplace so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability and, in the fulfillment of that goal, to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by women, Aboriginal peoples, members of visible minorities and persons with disabilities by giving effect to the principle that employment equity means more than treating persons in the same way but also requires special measures and the accommodation of differences.

Current Strength

As of January 2003, the CF (Regular Force) comprised 7419 women all ranks (Officers 1896, Non-Commissioned Members (NCM) 5523) (refer to Table I). Accurate figures for the Primary Reserve are not yet available but are estimated (1998) at 5787 women all ranks (Officers 609, NCM 5178). The concentration of women still continues to be in the

more traditional areas of support as well as Medical and Dental, but there has been some progress in the less traditional occupations, with particular successes in the Naval operations and maritime engineering occupational groups (refer to Tables II and III). There has been some modest progress in the combat arms occupations but this continues to be the least successful in terms of integration. The trend remains with women more likely to join the CF as an officer than an NCM (13.8% and 11.7% respectively). An analysis by distinct environmental uniform (DEU) shows that female officers tend to have a higher representation in the Navy while female NCMs have a higher representation in the Air Force (refer to Table IV).

Firsts for the Year

The first woman toured with the CF Skyhawks acrobatic demonstration parachute team during the 2002 season. The CF saw its first female CWO Command Chief appointment. The navy appointed the first Executive Officer of a Maritime Coastal Defence Vessel. Unfortunately, a first on a sad note, the CF experienced the first death of a female aircrew in 2002 when the pilot of a Griffin helicopter was killed, along with her crew, on a SAR mission in Goose Bay, Labrador. The navy has one female officer who has completed submarine training and three more who are various stages of the training course.

Recruiting

In common with other NATO countries, the traditional recruiting pool is shrinking and the CF continues to compete for available qualified personnel with the commercial market place. An overall recruiting shortfall has been identified and a project office has been created with the specific mandate to target recruiting towards those occupations that are considered “stressed”.

While the traditional male labour pool is shrinking, the pool of women is increasing. Women comprise 51.9% of the Canadian population and 46% of the Canadian workforce. Several studies completed over the past five years have indicated a consistent interest of approximately 20% of women in joining the Canadian Forces. This market has not been targeted well using status quo recruiting methods and the trends show that the recruiting share of women has continued to be flat (refer to Figures 1 and 2). The continued flat

trend for recruiting is of concern when an analysis of enrolments versus releases is performed. For female officers, the number of enrolments have mirrored the number of releases over the past six years, which has resulted in insufficient growth in their representation. Releases of female NCMs for the past six years have exceeded enrolments, which means the CF has been functioning at below replacement levels. The consequence of this is absolutely no growth in the representation of female NCMs. As a comparison to male officers and NCMs, it appears that these recruiting concerns can be generalized to both genders. In the past several years, in an effort to improve this situation, the Canadian Forces has developed new recruiting materials to target young women including specific posters, brochures and commercials. This year has seen a continuation of this effort, building upon the concept of teamwork. In addition, the CF has partnered with other employers in showcasing women in non -traditional occupations in the "Career Options for Women" series, shown extensively in schools and on educational television networks. Series three of this show concentrated on non-traditional and stressed occupations. The CF Recruiting Group has focused on a presence at women-focused shows and seminars and produced an information CD titled "Women in the Canadian Forces".

Environmental

The attrition of women from hard sea occupations remains greater than that of males. The Navy has completed the first part of a personnel study entitled "Why They Leave" in an effort to pinpoint lifestyle and quality of life trends in the attrition of personnel and to identify strategies to stem the flow of trained sailors. Part two of the study results received on attitude to diversity showed significant improvement in behaviours (reductions in sexist or racist behaviours) and smaller but still significant improvement in attitude. The navy has been conducting exit interviews, surveys and focus groups in order to understand why people are leaving. As the Navy has the most immediate need for increased intake of recruits, a cell has been created within the naval command staff with the specific mandate to assist recruiting services increase the number of persons applying for service in the navy. The navy is developing a "Recruiting Blitz" strategy for 2003. Recruiting of women in support occupations has been successful over the past year

however recruiting for naval technical and engineering occupations remains a challenge. The navy remains committed to increasing the numbers of women recruited. The test used for selecting Naval Officers is being evaluated to identify if gender and cultural biases exist. Of special note, women account for 10% of all ship's companies deployed in the war against terrorism

The Army deployed 27 women to Afghanistan as part of the 850-person 3 PPCLI battle group for Op APOLLO- the Canadian contribution to the War on Terrorism. It is hoped that many lessons learned will emerge as the Post-Operational Reporting process is currently underway. The army has begun a three-year Army Culture Project known as Project Director Land Personnel Strategy aimed at defining what the current army culture is and what it should be in the future. Employment Equity and Gender Integration issues will play a large part in defining that culture. The army issued its first Three-Year Employment Equity Plan (2002-2005) in anticipation of the Canadian Forces coming under the *Employment Equity Act* this fiscal year. A full-time EE desk officer position was staffed at Land Forces HQ and positions have been created at the Area level. By 1 January 2003, all of the five positions were staffed. Of note, female officers have filled three of the five positions.

A new army physical fitness standard should be approved by spring 2003. This standard, and the subsequent test, caters to gender differences. It will be a task based physical fitness testing, involving an expanded range of standard tasks representing work done in the field. Initial pilot runs conducted at the platoon and company level resulted in further modifications and re-testing before submitting the new programme for final approval.

The Air Force continues to concentrate on evaluating selection and training procedures, in non-traditional Air Force occupations, including fighter pilot and air navigator, in order to determine if these procedures have had an adverse impact on the continuing low representation rates of women in these occupations.

General

After a two-year study, the validation of the present CF EXPRES Test - the standard

physical fitness test used by all non-Army units - has been completed. The test, which has been in use for the past ten years, was evaluated to ensure that the methodology used in its development was still valid in light of the advances in the science on which it was based. While the study found that the test was still valid as a measurement of overall fitness, differing gender and age performance requirements had led to widespread misunderstandings about the test and the perception of a double standard. The study recommended modifications to the testing procedures to eliminate this confusion including the possible expansion of the present test factors to ensure that the test remains a valid measurement of overall fitness.

The new CF EXPRES Test is expected to undergo a three-year trial programme commencing in 2003. The new test is based on the 5 common tasks approved by the Environmental Chiefs of Staff. The test includes two new categories. The new EXPRES Test is designed to eliminate the perceived bias between the male and female standards.

Policies

Although studies have indicated that harassment awareness is widespread and the rate of complaints has diminished, the process of dealing with complaints has historically been time consuming, not well understood or misapplied. As a result, the harassment policy has been extensively overhauled with the intent to streamline the process to ensure the quick resolution of complaints. The resolution of complaints at the lowest possible level is the goal and the policy clearly delineates the roles and obligations of commanding officers, harassment advisors and harassment investigators. Training and guidebooks have been developed for both advisors and investigators to standardize procedures.

Maternity and parental policy has also been reviewed and modifications were made to better reflect the changing dynamics of the family. This policy now encompasses leave for adoptive parents and parental leave duration has been lengthened. Under the new policy, mothers are entitled to 17 weeks of subsidized maternity leave (93% of pay rate) with an additional 35 weeks of parental leave available to either spouse (in the case of service couples). These benefits also apply in the case of adoption.