

Canadian Forces National Report to the Committee for Women in NATO Forces

Introduction

The Canadian Forces (CF) is an all-volunteer military, whose members are drawn directly from the Canadian population it serves. As a national institution, the CF strives to reflect Canada's cultural, ethnic, gender, and bilingual makeup, as well as its regional diversity. Evolving Canadian demographics demands that the CF embrace diversity as a core value and be perceived as an employer of choice for all Canadians. Recruiting and employing women in the CF is not only the law and the "right thing to do", but first and foremost, it is an operational imperative.

Policies

- The Canadian Forces will be promulgating a new Employment Equity Plan later this year. The new Plan will provide the framework for measures designed to ensure that women, as well as Aboriginals and Visible Minorities, are accorded an equitable opportunity to join the CF and advance within their chosen career.

Current Strength

As of January 2006, there were just over 16,000 women serving in the Canadian Forces, which represents 16.7% of the total military population. This can be further broken down by component, with women making up 12.8% of the Regular Force and 20% of the Primary Reserves. Table I provides total Regular Force representation by gender. Tables II and III provide representation by rank for Regular Force officers and Non Commissioned Members (NCMs).

Table IV presents the representation of women across the Navy, Army and Air Force. In addition to the operational occupations, these numbers include the support elements, such as Logistics, Medical, and others, in which there is a higher percentage of women. Finally, Tables V and VI provide representation data for the various CF Military Occupations.

International Deployments

CF Women are selected for operational missions in the exact same way that men are - based on their rank and qualifications. When it is an individual's turn to go, she or he must go. Individual participation as UN Military Observers (UNMOs) remains a voluntary undertaking. There are currently no special incentives for women to deploy on missions. However, a number of CF women have served on UN missions and their experiences speak to the positive impact that women can bring to the peacekeeping mission.

As of December 2005, 41 women were deployed on UN Peacekeeping missions, which represented 17.8%. Three CF Women are currently deployed to the Sudan for OP SAFARI as UNMOs. Women also comprise almost 9% of CF personnel deployed on OP ARCHER in Afghanistan, Canada's contribution to the international campaign against terrorism.

Navy

To date, although a number of women have now reached the senior officer level in the Maritime Surface and Naval Engineering occupations, no woman has yet been promoted beyond the rank of Lieutenant-Commander. The first Naval Surface Warfare Officer has been selected to attend the Canadian Command and Staff Course, commencing in the summer of 2006.

Army

Women are an integral part of the groups being deployed on missions overseas as the Canadian Army does not differentiate between the sexes when choosing personnel. Women have been deployed to many different areas outside Canada during the last year.

Women are employed in many command and critical positions within the support elements. As well, the Canadian Army continues to make progress in Combat Arms integration. A female is the Deputy Commanding Officer (DCO) of a Reserve Force Armoured-Reconnaissance unit and another is the DCO of a Reserve Brigade. Even the non-commissioned ranks are starting to see soldiers in leadership roles, with a female infantry Master Corporal currently deployed to Afghanistan as a Rifle Section second-in-command. Women continue to be integrated into all sectors of the Canadian Army.

Air Force

The CF Employment Systems Review identified Air Crew Selection (ASC) and the anthropometric (body size) standards as possible barriers to the employment of women as Aircrew. In response, research into gender norms for ASC and anthropometric standards was carried out. Results are pending.

Representation goals for Women

The Canadian Employment Equity Act provides the legislative framework under which gender integration functions in the CF. Research indicates that the propensity for Canadian women to join the military is approximately 20%. The CF sets representation goals or targets for each individual military occupation based on this surveyed propensity to join and the availability of women in the Canadian Labour Market. For example, while 20% of women may express a willingness to consider a career in the military, it is unrealistic to conclude that they are equally interested in joining certain occupations such as combat arms, pilot or naval technician, which continue to have low female representation rates more than 15 years after gender restrictions were lifted. In setting representation goals it would be ideal to have comparable civilian occupation workforce data, but it is not always possible, given the unique nature of military duties. Notwithstanding, we must also examine to what extent *we can influence* women's "propensity to join" the CF in general and combat arms and other operational occupations in particular. For example, by eliminating unnecessary barriers within all CF occupations it may be possible to increase women's propensity to join, to choose heretofore "non-traditional" occupations, and to remain in the CF for a fulfilling career.

Recruiting

The CF is currently undergoing an expansion with a goal to increase the Regular Force by 5000 personnel and the Reserve Force by 3000, and further expansion is under consideration. This force expansion is occurring as Canadian demographics continue to shift, which increases the importance of attracting larger numbers of women and other under-represented segments of the Canadian population to the military. The majority of new positions under the force expansion will occur in the Combat Arms trades, an area where women continue to be under-represented.

The National Recruiting Attraction Plan (NRAP) provides strategic guidance that will ensure the CF will be promoted as an inclusive organization that includes women as integral members of the military team. Diversity must be a consideration for all attraction activities as well as in every recruiting advertisement, poster, and brochure used to promote the CF. An important part of the NRAP is outreach and that includes Recruiting staffs establishing partnerships at the national level with a variety of organizations such as the Canadian Interuniversity Sports. These partnerships provide direct marketing opportunities to both prospects and their influencers, in addition to reinforcing day to day networking activities at the recruiting centres and detachments. Finally, recruiters participate in numerous woman-focused shows and seminars, ensuring that female military members are present at all such events.

Over the past year, women made up 18% of new officer recruits and 14% of non-commissioned recruits. Although the percentage of women officer recruits was lower than last year, the 2006 figures are higher than current in-service representation percentages for women, and are an indicator that CF recruiting efforts for women continue to be successful.

Attrition

Over the past five years, the total attrition rate across the CF has been equal for men and women, at 6.2%.

Retention

The CF Retention Survey measures over 30 retention-related factors (work /career dissatisfiers and organizational issues) grouped into eight categories: role issues, job attitudes, organizational commitment, satisfaction with pay/benefits, satisfaction with job, satisfaction with other job concerns, satisfaction with relationships, and satisfaction with the CF. Interestingly, analysis revealed that organizational commitment was a stronger predictor of turnover intentions for the male survey respondents, whereas confidence in senior leadership had a stronger predictive relationship with turnover intentions for female respondents. New data, which will consider an expanded target population, will be analyzed in the coming months with an aim to identify the key influencers that cause CF members to consider taking their release and to develop strategies to address the problems.

Your Say Survey

While there were no major policy changes introduced on the Gender Integration front over the past year, a number of related studies and surveys were carried out. The “**Your Say**” survey measures attitudes of serving CF Members about various Human Resources issues. It provides comparisons and monitors trends. The survey revealed that men and women currently have similar levels of satisfaction with a career in the CF. Of significance, CF women’s attitudes towards a career in the military have improved over the past five years.

Command and Staff College Study

A study was conducted to examine the attendance of women at the Canadian Forces Command and Staff Course. The aim of the project was to assess a special measures program designed to increase the number of women that attend the course. This special measure allows for up to five additional positions on the course to be set aside for qualified female officers. The study determined that women from the support occupations continue to be well represented at Staff College. However, women in operational occupations are just starting to meet eligibility requirements. One attended the course in 2005 – a positive sign. Based on the results, it has been recommended that the special measures program be continued, because overall, women still attend CSC at a rate less than their male counterparts.

The study also produced some interesting, but perhaps not surprising, findings. It reinforced the belief that it is more difficult for women than it is for men in the military to “have it all” – a successful career and a family. The analysis showed that women selected for Staff college were much less likely to be married or living in a common-law relationship than their male counterparts (62% vs. 94%) and less likely to have dependant children (59% vs 86%). These statistics suggest a potential systemic barrier that could be a work/home life balance issue which must be examined in greater depth.

Employment Flow Analysis

The CF has examined representation, enrolments, promotions, and releases, to assess areas of adverse impact for women, visible minorities and Aboriginal CF members. We looked at rank in order to assess possible clustering of particular groups. The data indicates that while the number of women achieving higher rank continues to show steady improvement, in general, women continue to be clustered in the lower ranks, both for officers (below Major) and for Non-commissioned members (below Sergeant). In addition, while overall recruitment of women continues to exceed current representation, this is not equally applied across all occupations and clustering of women in some of the traditional occupations (ie. Medical, Dental, Clerical) is evident.

Conclusion

In summary, the number and percentage of women in the Canadian military continue to grow, although more slowly in some occupations than others. It is recognized that there is still much work to be done in order for the current momentum to continue. Implementation of the National Recruiting Attractions Plan and the CF Employment Equity Plan will enable the CF to move forward in its efforts to improve recruitment and retention for all designated groups, including women. However, the continuing challenge is to eliminate any remaining barriers, so that qualified women are able to join the Canadian Forces in the occupation of their choice, reach their fullest potential, and enjoy a long and rewarding career in the Profession of Arms.

Tables and Figures (as of 01 January 2006)

Table I: Total CF Regular Force Strength (1989 – 2006)

	1989	2003	2006
WOMEN	8,641	6,992	7,945
MEN	79,056	52,400	53,999
TOTAL	87,697	59,392	61,944
FEMALE REPRESENTATION	9.9%	11.7%	12.8%

Table II: Current Representation By Rank - Regular Force Officers

	GEN	COL	LCOL	MAJ	CAPT	LT	2LT	OCDT	TOTAL
Women	3	13	69	327	919	244	185	383	2143
Men	73	310	1039	2917	4909	783	912	1406	12,348
Total	76	323	1108	3244	5827	1027	1097	1789	14,491
% Women	3.9%	4.0%	6.2%	10.1%	15.8%	23.8%	16.9%	21.4%	14.8%

Table III: Current Representation By Rank – Regular Force NCMs

	CWO	MWO	WO	SGT	MCPL	CPL	PTE	TOTAL
Women	28	111	285	758	1087	2137	1396	5802
Men	644	1752	3393	5984	7334	14,027	8517	41,651
Total	672	1863	3678	6742	8421	16,164	9913	47,453
% Women	4.2%	6.0%	7.7%	11.2%	12.9%	13.2%	14.1%	12.2%

Table IV: Current Representation By Uniform – Regular Force Officers and NCMs

	Navy	Army	Air Force
WOMEN	1398	3329	3218
MEN	9958	28,094	15,946
TOTAL	11,356	31,423	19,164
FEMALE REPRESENTATION	12.3%	10.6%	16.8%

Table V: Female Regular Force Officer Representation by Military Occupation

MILITARY OCCUPATION GROUP	1989	2003	2006
General Officers	0.7%	1.4%	2.7%
Naval Operations	1.4%	10.9%	10.7%
Maritime Engineering	1.8%	9.8%	10.3%
Combat Arms	0.3%	3.8%	3.8%
Air Operations – Pilot	1.5%	3.6%	3.6%
Air Operations	7.1%	12.0%	12.7%
Aerospace Engineering	6.8%	14.7%	16.6%
Engineering	6.2%	11.8%	11.4%
Medical and Dental	41.8%	43.1%	44.0%
Chaplaincy	3.1%	12.8%	12.7%
Support	17.9%	16.6%	24.9%
Officer Cadets – Unassigned	15.4%	17.0%	26.0%
TOTAL	9.3%	12.1%	14.8%

Table VI: Female Regular Force Non-Commissioned Representation

MILITARY OCCUPATION GROUP	1989	2003	2006
Naval Operations	5.6%	9.4%	9.6%
Maintenance - Naval	0.5%	2.2%	2.9%
Combat Arms	0.4%	1.5%	1.4%
Air Operations - Transmissions	10.0%	10.5%	11.3%
Air Technicians	7.7%	8.2%	7.9%
Military Police	11.4%	10.1%	11.2%
Operations - General	14.1%	14.9%	14.2%
Communications/Electronics	0.8%	7.3%	6.8%
Medical	19.2%	36.4%	39.1%
Dental	46.8%	74.3%	78.7%
Electrical and Mechanical	2.3%	2.4%	2.7%
Military Engineers	2.2%	1.9%	2.3%
Clerical Personnel	35.5%	47.5%	51.1%
Music	12.8%	21.1%	21.0%
Logistical Support	18.7%	19.4%	21.4%
TOTAL	9.7%	10.7%	12.3%