

Canadian Forces 2008 National Report To the Committee for Women in NATO Forces (CWINF)

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. The CF is doing more to reach out to a broader base of Canadians and to encourage greater diversity within the Forces. Membership in the CF is open to all interested and qualified Canadians, regardless of gender, race, culture or religion. All CF members are eligible to serve in all military occupations and there are no restrictions on the employment of women. The CF population is increasingly diverse, however all members share the same goal of protecting the country, its interests and values, while contributing to international peace and security.

Legislative Framework

The Employment Equity Act provides the legislative framework under which gender integration is implemented in the CF. The CF establishes representation goals or targets for each military occupation based on surveyed propensity to join and on the availability of women and other minorities in the Canadian Labour Market. The 2006 CF EE Plan indicates an overall goal of 19.5% women in the CF and expresses the commitment to adopting proactive measures that will make the CF inclusive for men and women of all cultures, on the way to building the diverse CF of tomorrow. Progress towards achieving these goals is subject to external review by the Canadian Human Rights Commission. The Plan enumerates specific employment equity and diversity tasks and identifies activities in support of those tasks their expected outcomes, CF commitment to EE and diversity is not just a legal or moral matter, but a matter of successfully adapting to Canada's changing demographics and sustaining the operational effectiveness of the CF into the future.

Policies

There were no significant CF policy changes introduced on the Gender Integration Front over the past year. In recent years, the focus has shifted from the introduction of new policies towards a more flexible application of existing policies. The aim is to provide employment options that are appealing to women and beneficial for CF recruitment and retention efforts. Where operational requirements permit, existing policies on Leave Without Pay, compassionate postings, parental leave, etc. can be utilized flexibly to allow women and men to transition smoothly in and out of the CF. This may allow them to fulfil family obligations, such as child and elder care without relinquishing their career in the CF.

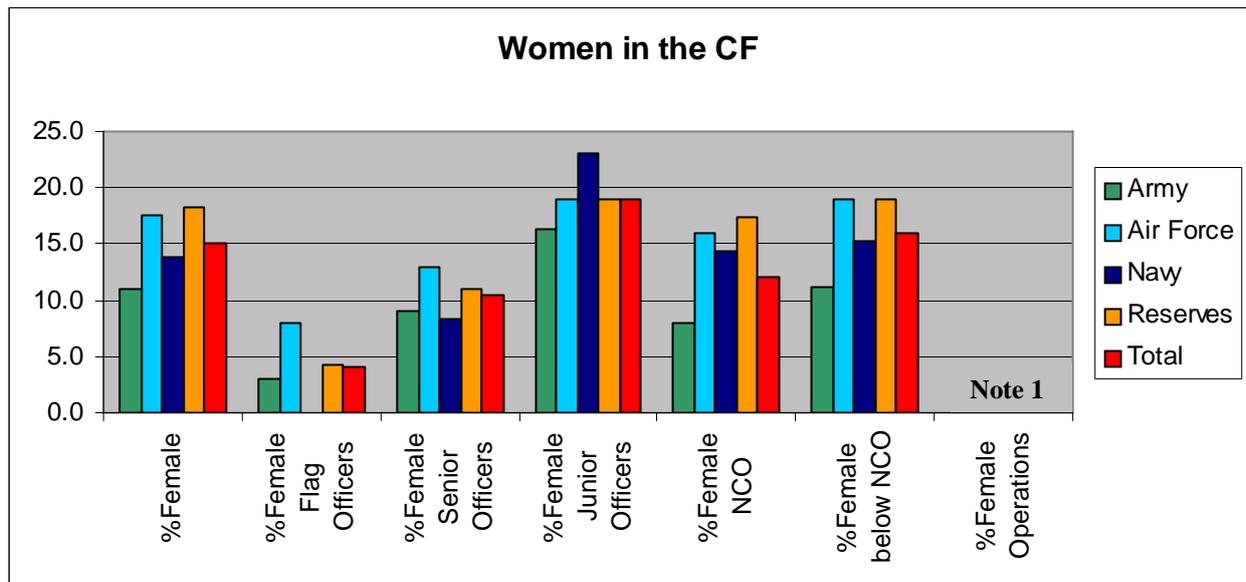
The Peace Support Training Center (PSTC) and Department Foreign Affairs International Trade have developed specific country cultural programs and awareness training for those to be deployed to and or in support of operations. The training emphasizes an awareness of gender, gender differences, and culture. The cultural

training and gender consideration components taught during pre-deployment training have allowed the CF to more effectively prepare personnel to effectively deal with cultural and gender aspects during deployment. This training approach has resulted in a net benefit in the operational aspect and in Afghanistan this shows both men and women respect by recognizing their differences and similarities to mainstream Canadian culture and gender interaction.

Organization

Table I: Representation of Women in the Canadian Forces (Regular and Reserve)

	%Female	%Female Flag Officers	%Female Senior Officers	%Female Junior Officers	%Female NCO	%Female below NCO	%Female Operations
	11.0	3.0	9.0	16.4	8.0	11.2	
Air Force	17.5	8.0	13.0	19.0	16.0	19.0	
Navy	13.9	0.0	8.4	23.0	14.4	15.2	
Reserves	18.2	4.3	11.0	19.0	17.3	19.0	
Total	15.1	4.0	10.4	19.0	12.0	16.0	Note 1



Note 1. The percentage of women deployed on CF operations normally corresponds with the percentages displayed in the columns to the left as gender is not a factor in selection for deployment. However, the percentage of CF women deployed to combat operations such as in Afghanistan is in the range of 8%. This lower percentage can be attributed to the higher concentration of Combat Arms personnel on such deployments and the lower representation of women within these military occupations.

Recruitment

The CF has introduced several measures to attract greater numbers of qualified women from the Canadian workforce. Current activities targeting potential female applicants

range from local initiatives like Recruiting Open Houses for women on International Women’s Day, participation in “Women in Leadership” career days and speaking engagements at different universities in Canada where women leaders of business and industry have the opportunity to discuss their own careers with the leaders of tomorrow. At these latter venues, women in senior military positions share their experiences and provide women with important career information about the CF. Each major recruiting centre has a designated Diversity Officer whose primary responsibility is to liaise with key influencers in different groups and organizations. The recruitment of women is a priority. The Diversity Officers highlight the significant contributions made by women in the CF in Canada and abroad, and increase awareness of career opportunities for women and other in the CF. The increase in the representation of women in the CF in recent years is encouraging and suggests outreach activities to promote Diversity within the CF have positioned the CF as a viable career option for women.

Training

Academic achievement, leadership potential, physical fitness and a desire to serve in the military are the key criteria for all successful applicants. Currently, women comprise 21% of the Royal Military College’s (RMC) student population. Table 2 summarizes the courses of study by gender.

	Women	Men	Total
Bachelor of Arts	48%	45%	45.5%
Bachelor of Engineering	32%	39%	38%
Bachelor of Science	20%	16%	17%

Basic Diversity Training. Basic Diversity Training is given as part of the Basic Officer Training Course as well as on the Basic Military Qualification Course (Non-Commissioned Members).

Basic Leadership Training. Diversity Training in a Leadership Role is introduced at the Primary Leadership Qualification level (for promotion to Master Corporal or Master Seaman).

Advanced Leadership Training. More advanced training is provided on the Advanced Leadership Qualification course (for promotion to Master Warrant Officer or Chief Petty Officer Second Class).

Chief Qualification Course. Diversity is also an integral topic of discussion on the Chief Warrant Officer/Chief Petty Officer First Class Course.

Officer Training. The Canadian Defence Academy is currently exploring a delivery method for Diversity Training for junior officers (Lieutenants and Captains).

Base/Unit Leadership Team Training. The Director of Human Rights and Diversity and the Directorate Chief Warrant Officer deliver a specially designed Diversity Package to the senior leadership of the Canadian Forces (Base and Unit Commanders and their Chief Warrant Officers/Chief Petty Officers). This training is delivered either before or immediately after they take over command of their organizations.

Deployments

The CF does not differentiate between the sexes when selecting personnel for operations and women are an integral part of the groups serving on missions overseas. During 2007, CF women served on a number of international deployments including operations in Afghanistan and Darfur.

Career Development

Since 2000, five extra seats at Canadian Forces Command and Staff College (CFCSC) have been established for women. This special measure was introduced to address systemic barriers impeding career development of female officers, stemming from the exclusion of women in operational occupations prior to 1989. Today, women are employed without restriction across the CF and many more women are becoming eligible for attendance. However, the number of women actually attending the program has not been increasing at the same rate. The vast majority of women eligible for CFCSC still come from the non-operational occupations, but approximately 60% of the seats to CFCSC are reserved for those in the operational occupations. A recent study recommended the special measure be continued to compensate for women's persistently lower attendance rates at CFCSC.

Special Interest Items/Events (Recent and Projected Developments)

Maternity and Parental Leave and Benefits

The CF provides maternity and parental benefits that assist female and male members to balance the demands of military service with family responsibilities associated with the birth or adoption of their children. These benefits support policies of: gender equity by encouraging both parents to share family responsibilities; and employment equity, by encouraging the recruitment and retention of women. Maternity leave lasts a maximum of 17 weeks. Members may request a maximum of an additional 37 weeks of parental leave. Parental leave can also be taken for adoption purposes. Parents may split parental leave, but both parents cannot be on leave and benefits at the same time.

The principle underlying CF policy on maternity and parental benefits is that members shall have adequate time away from military duties with compensation allowing them to manage their new family responsibilities, free from undue financial or duty-related concerns. Members on Maternity or Parental Leave may be entitled to benefits equivalent to 93% of their regular pay.

CF Exit Survey and Attrition of Female Members

The CF monitors the rate of attrition for female members of the CF and conducts Exit Surveys that seek to establish which factors prompt female members to leave the forces before full service is completed. A comprehensive analysis of the Exit Survey data set (2005-2008) is currently being conducted. Although a full report on these results has not been produced, preliminary findings indicate that work and personal life balance (postings, family stability, spousal employment, etc.) remain enduring issues that

influence members' decisions to leave the CF. The results of this latest CF Exit Survey will be analysed to determine the factors which prompt female members to leave the CF and will be used as a basis for recommendation of corrective measures to encourage women to complete their full period of service.

Successes Regarding Gender Initiatives

A number of focus groups were held across the Navy to solicit input on women' issues. For example, in 2007, women of the Canadian navy were for the first time, very much engaged in the design of new classes of ships, particularly as it related to accommodation arrangements for women on board.

New Facts

The Army has seen the first woman Infantry Officer promoted to the rank of Major as well as the first woman Artillery Officer to be selected to attend Staff College. Finally, for the first time, a CF woman has been appointed as a Wing Commander (9 Wing Gander).

Conclusion

Demographic trends indicate that traditional CF recruitment pools are slowly drying up. Recruitment and retention of women, as equitable contributors to mission success, is becoming increasingly more critical. The CF is responding to this trend by developing new recruitment strategies and considering flexible employment options that will be more appealing to women and other minority groups.