

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 demand that the CF embrace diversity as a core value so that and be seen 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

There were no significant CF policy changes introduced on the Gender Integration front over the past year. The Canadian Forces promulgated its new Employment Equity Plan in December 2006. The new Plan provides 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 to advance within their chosen career.

Current Strength

As of January 2007, there were more than 18,000 women serving in the Canadian Forces, which represents 17.3% of the total military population. This can be further broken down by component, with women making up 13.2% of the Regular Force, 18.8% of the Primary Reserves, 16.8% of the Canadian Rangers and 39% of the Cadet Instructor Cadre. The female fraction of the Regular Force continues to grow. The fraction rose by 0.4% for both officers and NCMs, double the rate of increase for 2005. The female fraction of the CF has steadily increased on average 0.3% for each of the last five years.

Table I provides total CF 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.

Navy

This year, the Navy will see the first female Naval Engineer to be promoted to the rank of Commander. The first female Surface Warfare Officer attended the Canadian Command and Staff Course over the past year and was recently selected to become Executive Officer of a HALIFAX class frigate, another significant first for women in the Navy.

Army

Women are an integral part of the groups being deployed on missions overseas, as the CF does not differentiate between the sexes when choosing personnel. Women have been deployed to many different areas outside Canada during the last year and are employed in many command and critical positions within the support elements. The Canadian Army continues to make progress in the integration of women in Combat Arms, although representation figures still remain low for most occupations. In 2006, Canada lost its first female combat soldier in Afghanistan during a firefight with Taliban insurgents. She was also the first female to die during combat operations since the Second World War.

Air Force

The Air Force has recently adopted the use of new anthropometric selection aids, which are used to determine required human physical dimensions for pilots. Previous standards were established during the 1960s and had become outdated since they had not been adapted to modern aircraft, resulting in the rejection of many candidates, especially women and people shorter or taller than the standard dimensions. A new automated anthropometric selection technique has been developed, using digital photography and specialized software, which helps to determine whether an individual of a certain size could perform all of the essential tasks in our current and future aircraft cockpits. One of the main advantages of the new technique is that it validates and refines the anthropometric standards because it is directly linked to specific CF cockpit dimensions and operator requirements. New standards are based on bona fide operational requirements and it is anticipated that the use of this new technology will result in a higher percentage of applicants, particularly women, being accepted into the first stages of the pilot selection process. Further anthropometric analysis is underway for other non-pilot aircrew, with a view to expanding the use of this new technology to cover such occupations as Navigator, AESOP, and Flight Engineer at some point in the future.

Recruiting

The CF continues with its expansion with a goal to increase the Regular Force by 5000 personnel and the Reserve Force by 3000. 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. Specific outreach initiatives are carried out that focus on specific groups including Women, Visible Minorities, and Aboriginals. Over the past year, women made up over 18% of new officer recruits and 15% of non-commissioned recruits which represents a 1% increase for both groups over what occurred in 2005. The 2006 figures remain higher than current in-service representation percentages for women, and are an indicator that CF recruiting efforts for women continue to yield positive results.

Representation goals for Women

The Canadian Employment Equity Act provides the legislative framework under which gender integration is implemented in the CF. 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. The overall representation goal for women in the CF is 19.5% (Regular Forces and Primary Reserves). The current combined representation for women in these two components is 15.1%, however, progress continues to be made.

Attrition

Over the period 2001-2005, the total attrition rate across the CF was equal for men and women, at 6.2%. This trend continued in 2006 for officers but over the past year, attrition rates for women NCMs (6%) were lower than for their male counterparts (7%). This trend may indicate that women are remaining in non-commissioned ranks longer than previously. It is also the case, however, that there is a small female representation in the career fields of land operations and Facility Support where attrition reports are highest.

Research

Interest and Propensity to Join the CF. A 2006 survey of Canadians indicated that while men are still more likely to be interested in joining the CF, the gender gap has narrowed since 2000 when the survey was last conducted. For the subset of the Canadian population (6%) that is at least somewhat interested in joining the CF and at least somewhat likely to join in the next year, it is calculated that 40% were women and 60% were men.

Promotion Analysis. A study was conducted to compare Time in Rank and Years of Service for men and women. Overall, it was determined that career progression experienced by women was comparable to that for men. These results are indicative that the CF promotion system is fair to women.

Diversity Climate Survey. This study aimed to assess CF members' attitudes on a number of issues, including gender integration in the CF. Overall, CF members' attitudes towards women, gender integration, and policies and practices related to gender integration were somewhat positive, although women's perceptions are slightly less positive than their male counterparts.

Conclusion

In summary, both the overall number and percentage of women in the Canadian military continued to increase over the past year, although more slowly in some occupations than others. The challenge that remains is to identify and eliminate any 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 2007)

Table I: Total CF Regular Force Strength (1989 – 2007)

	1989	2003	2006	2007
WOMEN	8,641	6,992	7,945	8,339
MEN	79,056	52,400	53,999	54,736
TOTAL	87,697	59,392	61,944	63,175
FEMALE REPRESENTATION	9.9%	11.7%	12.8%	13.2%

Table II: Current Representation By Rank – Regular Force Officers

	GEN	COL	LCOL	MAJ	CAPT	LT	2LT	OCDT	TOTAL
Women	3	14	77	364	953	262	202	423	2,298
Men	74	309	1074	2905	4895	754	999	1557	12,577
Total	77	323	1,151	3,269	5,848	1,016	1,201	1,980	14,875
% Women	3.9%	4.3%	6.7%	11.1%	16.3%	25.8%	16.8%	21.3%	15.4%

Table III: Current Representation By Rank – Regular Force NCMs

	CWO	MWO	WO	SGT	MCPL	CPL	PTE	TOTAL
Women	27	119	313	796	1,151	2,261	1,374	6,041
Men	619	1,801	3,415	5,979	7,245	15,467	8,633	42,159
Total	646	1,920	3,728	6,775	8,396	17,728	10,007	48,200
% Women	4.2%	6.2%	8.4%	11.7%	13.7%	12.8%	13.7%	12.5%

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

	Navy	Army	Air Force
WOMEN	1,461	3,522	3,356
MEN	9,767	28,957	16,012
TOTAL	11,228	32,479	19,368
FEMALE REPRESENTATION	13.0%	10.8%	17.3%

Table V: Female Regular Force Officer Representation by Military Occupation

MILITARY OCCUPATION GROUP	1989	2003	2006	2007
General Officers	0.7%	1.4%	2.7%	3.9%
Naval Operations	1.4%	10.9%	10.7%	10.5%
Maritime Engineering	1.8%	9.8%	10.3%	10.5%
Combat Arms	0.3%	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%
Air Operations – Pilot	1.5%	3.6%	3.6%	4.8%
Air Operations	7.1%	12.0%	12.7%	12.7%
Aerospace Engineering	6.8%	14.7%	16.6%	17.3%
Engineering	6.2%	11.8%	11.4%	11.3%
Medical and Dental	41.8%	43.1%	44.0%	44.2%
Chaplaincy	3.1%	12.8%	12.7%	14.9%
Support	17.9%	16.6%	24.9%	26.3%
Officer Cadets - Unassigned	15.4%	17.0%	26.0%	30.4%
TOTAL	9.3%	12.1%	14.8%	15.4%

Table VI: Female Regular Force Non-Commissioned Representation

MILITARY OCCUPATION GROUP	1989	2003	2006	2007
Naval Operations	5.6%	9.4%	9.6%	9.6%
Maintenance - Naval	0.5%	2.2%	2.9%	3.1%
Combat Arms	0.4%	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%
Air Operations - Transmissions	10.0%	10.5%	11.3%	11.6%
Air Technicians	7.7%	8.2%	7.9%	8.0%
Military Police	11.4%	10.1%	11.2%	11.5%
Operations - General	14.1%	14.9%	14.2%	14.2%
Communications/Electronics	0.8%	7.3%	6.8%	6.7%
Medical	19.2%	36.4%	39.1%	40.0%
Dental	46.8%	74.3%	78.7%	80.9%
Electrical and Mechanical	2.3%	2.4%	2.7%	2.8%
Military Engineers	2.2%	1.9%	2.3%	2.4%
Clerical Personnel	35.5%	47.5%	51.1%	53.2%
Music	12.8%	21.1%	21.0%	23.7
Logistical Support	18.7%	19.4%	21.4%	21.8%
TOTAL	9.7%	10.7%	12.3%	12.6%