

SENATE



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THE TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE OF VETERANS

Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs

Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence

The Honourable Roméo A. Dallaire, Chair

The Honourable David M. Wells, Deputy Chair

Cover photo

The last Canadians involved in the NATO training mission in Afghanistan (CCTM-A) board an American Chinook helicopter on March 12, 2014 as they leave the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) headquarters in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Photo: Cplc Patrick Blanchard, Canadian Forces Combat Camera, IS2014-3013-09

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WITNESSES A

MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

The Honourable Roméo A. Dallaire, Chair
The Honourable David M. Wells, Deputy Chair

and

The Honourable Senators:

Joseph A. Day
Daniel Lang
Vernon White

Other Senators who have participated from time to time in this study:

The Honourable Senators Andreychuk, Brown, Dawson, Di Nino, Downe, Doyle, Frum, Maltais, Manning, Mitchell, Mockler, Nolin, Stewart Olsen, Peterson, Plett, Rivard, St. Germain, Stratton, and Wallin.

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Martin Auger, Analyst, Library of Parliament
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Josée Thérien, Clerk of the Subcommittee

ORDER OF REFERENCE

Extract from the *Journals of the Senate*, Tuesday, November 19, 2013:

The Honourable Senator Lang moved, seconded by the Honourable Senator Neufeld:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence be authorized to study:

- (a) services and benefits provided to members of the Canadian Forces; to veterans who have served honourably in Her Majesty's Canadian Armed Forces in the past; to members and former members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and its antecedents; and all of their families;
- (b) commemorative activities undertaken by the Department of Veterans' Affairs Canada, to keep alive for all Canadians the memory of Canadian veterans' achievements and sacrifices; and
- (c) continuing implementation of the New Veterans' Charter;

That the papers and evidence received and taken and the work accomplished by the Committee on this subject during the Fortieth Parliament and the First Session of the Forty-first Parliament be referred to the Committee; and

That the Committee report to the Senate no later than December 19, 2014, and that the Committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until 90 days after the tabling of the final report.

After debate,

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

Gary W. O'Brien
Clerk of the Senate

Delegation to the subcommittee

Extract from the Minutes of Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence of Monday, December 2, 2013:

The Honourable Senator Day moved:

That the order of reference regarding veterans affairs adopted by the Senate on Tuesday, November 19, 2013, be delegated to the Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Subcommittee recommends that:

A Need for Research

Recommendation 1: That the Life After Service Studies (LASS) joint programs of research led by DND and VAC continue its work on the transition to civilian life of military personnel, and that a LASS study on veterans' employment post-release be initiated in the near future.

Strengthening DND Transition Programs and Services

Recommendation 2: That the CAF and DND, taking into consideration the results of ongoing research on transition issues, regularly review and upgrade their transition programs in order to continually enhance services provided to transitioning military personnel.

Recommendation 3: That the CAF and DND make the VAC transition interview mandatory for all releasing military personnel.

Recommendation 4: That DND and VAC reach out to federal departments and agencies and promote the hiring of transitioning CAF members and veterans into their public service workforces.

Strengthening VAC Transition Programs and Services

Recommendation 5: That Veterans Affairs Canada conducts a review to evaluate the performance of its Career Transition Service Program and its Vocational Rehabilitation Program at least every three years and report to both chambers of Parliament on its findings.

Improving the Transition of Ill and Injured Military Personnel to Civilian Life

Recommendation 6: That DND and VAC implement all fifteen recommendations made by the Auditor General of Canada in his October 2012 report on the transition of ill and injured military personnel to civilian life as soon as possible

Recommendation 7: That DND and VAC develop partnerships with civilian employers with the goal of developing more direct employment placement and retention solutions to ensure meaningful job opportunities for ill and injured transitioning CAF members and veterans.

Private Sector and Other Non-Governmental Transition Initiatives

Recommendation 8: That DND and VAC coordinate public sector, private sector and non-governmental efforts to assist transitioning military personnel and veterans. As top priorities in this regard, the Subcommittee additionally recommends:

- (a) That DND support the expansion of the Veterans Transition Program nationally, and ensure that serving CAF members affected by PTSD have access to the program;
- (b) That Veterans Affairs Canada support the expansion of the Royal Canadian Legion and BCIT's Legion Military Skills Conversion Program nationally; and
- (c) That DND and VAC assist Prospect Human Services in expanding the Forces@WORK program nationally and provide appropriate funding to achieve that end.

Enhancing Private Sector Employment Opportunities for Veterans

Recommendation 9: That the Canadian government recognizes renewing Commissionaires' right of first refusal on federal government guard contracts and that it also considers ways of encouraging the employment of veterans on federal government contracts with other security companies.

Recommendation 10: That the Government of Canada and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, while recognizing the many differences between the Canadian and American veteran support systems, explore the possibility of establishing a program similar to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Hiring Our Heroes initiative in Canada to help connect transitioning CAF members and veterans with employers in communities across Canada.

Recommendation 11: That DND and VAC increase their outreach efforts with the private sector and encourage civilian employers to hire transitioning military personnel and veterans. As top priorities in this regard, the Subcommittee additionally recommends:

- (a) That an official and centralized transition to civilian life website jointly operated by DND and VAC be created to coordinate public and private sector transition programs and services and help connect transitioning military personnel and veterans with civilian employers.
- (b) That DND take a lead role in providing civilian employers with a better understanding of military-civilian job equivalencies.
- (c) That DND and VAC transition programs enhance efforts to assist transitioning military personnel and veterans promote their military experiences, training, trades and skills to the civilian marketplace.

Recommendation 12: That DND and VAC develop and jointly manage an awards system similar to that of the CFLC, which would annually recognize private sector organizations that hire transitioning military personnel and veterans.

Recommendation 13: That the CFLC and DND consider expanding the ExecuTrek program in coming years and use it as an outreach tool to promote public and private sector hiring of transitioning military personnel and veterans.

Recommendation 14: That DND and VAC sponsor the organization of military career fairs to help employers and veterans connect with one another.

INTRODUCTION

Every year, more than 5,000 Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members are released from the military.¹ Leaving the military “family” is not an easy process for many serving men and women. “When you join the military, you go through a cultural indoctrination to become a soldier, sailor, airman or airwoman,” explained Andrea Siew, Director of the Royal Canadian Legion’s Dominion Command Service Bureau. “You are in a military community. You are looked after. It is unique. When you are released ... you [no longer] have that military community looking after you.”² Transitioning military personnel must now fend for themselves and their families, and some feel a sense of abandonment and alienation.

Over the past fifteen years, more than 140,000 people left the CAF and transitioned to civilian life.³ Most of them experienced a positive transition process. According to a 2011 study on the transition to civilian life of military personnel, conducted jointly by the Department of National Defence (DND) and Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), 62% of the CAF veterans who released from the service between 1998 and 2007 reported an easy adjustment to civilian life. The study also showed that 89% of veterans worked after their release from the CAF and about 72% felt that their military experience helped them in their civilian jobs. The majority reported to be satisfied with their work and their levels of satisfaction increased as time went on. Moreover, 73% reported that they were satisfied with their current financial situation. The veterans’ unemployment rate of 8% was said to be comparable to the rest of the Canadian population.⁴

However, while most releasing military personnel experience a positive transition to civilian life, some, unfortunately, do not. As the above-mentioned study revealed, 25% of the people that were released from the CAF in the 1998 to 2007 timeframe reported a difficult adjustment to civilian life.⁵ “That 25 per cent highlights that there is an urgent and unmet need, that some programs do not reach all veterans and that there is still more work to be done,” noted Brad White, Dominion Secretary of the Royal Canadian Legion.⁶

¹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 28 November 2012 (Peter Hart, Managing Director, Canada Company); Shaun Francis and Jaime Watt (Veterans Transition Advisory Council), “[Francis & Watt: Putting Veterans to Work](#),” *National Post*, 23 September 2013. In early 2014, the Canadian government reported that, on average, “each year, approximately 7,600 Canadian Armed Forces personnel [Regular Force and Reserve Force] leave the military.” Government of Canada, [The Road to Balance: Creating Jobs and Opportunities](#), 11 February 2014, p. 223; Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), “[Harper Government Improves Veterans’ Access to Federal Public Service Jobs](#),” 4 March 2014.

² Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 November 2011 (Andrea Siew, Director of the Dominion Command Service Bureau, Royal Canadian Legion).

³ According to the Department of National Defence (DND) and VAC joint research study published in 2011, 42,591 people were released from the CAF between 1998 and 2007. In 2012, the Auditor General reported that 98,966 CAF members were released between 2006 and 2011. DND and VAC, [Survey on Transition to Civilian Life: Report on Regular Force Veterans](#), 4 January 2011, pp. 19-21; Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG), “[Chapter 4: Transition of Ill and Injured Military Personnel to Civilian Life](#),” *Fall 2012 Report of the Auditor General of Canada*, p. 5.

⁴ DND and VAC, [Survey on Transition to Civilian Life](#), pp. 8-9, 57, 64 and 77.

⁵ DND and VAC, [Survey on Transition to Civilian Life](#), pp. 8 and 77.

⁶ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 November 2011 (Brad White, Dominion Secretary, Royal Canadian Legion). An online survey that the Royal Canadian Legion conducted in partnership with

Transitioning from military to civilian life can be a particularly challenging experience for members of the armed forces looking to find a new profession and meaningful work on the civilian job market after their release. The military and civilian worlds are very different cultural environments and the transition process can be overwhelming for many service men and women. Transitioning CAF members interested in working in civilian jobs after their release from the military must not only compete with the rest of the Canadian population for job opportunities, they must also adapt to new and very different work and cultural environments.

In the civilian culture, it is generally the responsibility of the individual to manage his or her career. People regularly change jobs or seek new employment opportunities. The situation is somewhat different in the military culture. In the CAF, it is the military that manages one's career. Most recruits join the CAF at a relatively young age and the military takes care of them and their families throughout their career in uniform. Although some choose to leave the CAF after a few years of service, most pursue longer military careers, some of which span over several decades. For many, serving in the CAF has been the only job they have ever held.

As a result, many releasing CAF members have little or no experience of civilian job application processes, how to develop résumés, how to prepare for job interviews, or how to sell the numerous skills and trades they've learned in the military to civilian employers. At the same time, many civilians employers lack understanding of the military and do not fully grasp the potential value that veterans can bring to their organizations.

Veterans seeking job opportunities in civilian society must also sometimes cope with lower paying jobs. Although the proportion of low-income individuals is substantially less among veterans than in the general population, a joint study conducted by DND, VAC and Statistics Canada reported in 2011 that veterans' incomes drop an average of 10% during the first three years following their release from military service. Moreover, declines in income tend to differ considerably between different groups of veterans. Women veterans, for example, experience a 30% decline, veterans discharged for medical reasons a 29% decline, and veterans who served from 10 to 19 years a 21% decline. The study also reported that over one-third of veterans receive employment insurance at least once post-release.⁷ This information is significant, for as Philip Ralph, Secretary and Program Director of Wounded Warrior, explained, "financial stability is a very important aspect of a veteran's ability or inability to properly transition to civilian life."⁸

the University of Victoria in 2007 revealed that 54% of the more than 200 veterans surveyed described their transition to civilian life as "fairly difficult" to "difficult" and 23% as "very difficult." The study also reported that 37.6% of the veterans surveyed felt they did not make a successful transition to civilian life. Timothy Black and Chiara Papile, "Making It on Civvy Street: An Online Survey of Canadian Veterans in Transition," *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (2010), pp. 383-401; University of Victoria, "[Canada's Vets Face Tough Transition to Civilian Life](#)," 5 November 2007; University of Victoria, "[Canadian Veterans and their Transition to Civilian Life](#)," November 2007.

⁷ DND and VAC, [Income Study: Regular Force Veteran Report](#), 4 January 2011, pp. 4-5.

⁸ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 5 December 2012 (Philip Ralph, Secretary and Program Director, Wounded Warriors).

That being said, seeking a post-service civilian career can become a particularly daunting task for transitioning military personnel, and perhaps even more so for those who have been injured in the service of their country, who must now adapt to this new work environment with various handicaps.

The transition process can be particularly difficult for ill and injured individuals. The military careers of these veterans have been cut short because of their medical conditions and they must now adapt to civilian life with various physical disabilities and/or mental health issues. Several experts have testified before the Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence (referred hereinafter as the “Subcommittee”) about the challenges and difficulties experienced by ill and injured military personnel after they transition to civilian life, particularly those with Operational Stress Injuries (OSI) such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Prospect Human Services, for example, reported that medically released military personnel tend to face higher unemployment rates than their non-medically releasing peers, experience significant declines in income, and are often unable to maintain the standard of living they desire. They also require special “employment placement and retention solutions that address [their] physical and mental health limitations.”⁹ The fact that the CAF releases on average approximately 1,000 people for medical reasons in any given year,¹⁰ and that, between 1999 and 2013, more than 16,240 CAF members were released for medical reasons, indicates the magnitude of this issue. And the statistics do not include people released for non-medical reasons over that period who have subsequently developed physical and mental health problems associated with their military service.¹¹

CAF reservists also face difficulties with their transition. “The often unspoken reality is that the members of the primary reserve ... return home with little support that is requisite to managing their transition to civilian life,” explained Philip Ralph of Wounded Warriors. They often return to a civilian society that is “ill-equipped to appreciate, recognize or deal with their needs” and “should they seek access to the programs that are already in place, they often feel abandoned due to the realities of time and space coupled with the pressures of trying to provide for themselves and their families.” Moreover, as Mr. Ralph noted, “members of the primary

⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 May 2012 (Melanie Mitra, Chief Executive Officer, Prospect Human Services); Prospect Human Services, “Prospect Human Services Presentation Submitted to the Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs,” 30 May 2012.

¹⁰ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 2 May 2012 (Colonel Gérard Blais, Director of Casualty Support Management, Department of National Defence); Government of Canada, [The Road to Balance: Creating Jobs and Opportunities](#), 11 February 2014, p. 223; VAC, [“Harper Government Improves Veterans’ Access to Federal Public Service Jobs.”](#) 4 March 2014.

¹¹ According to a 2010 VAC study, 5,394 CAF members were medically released between December 1999 and March 2006. It is also reported in a 2012 report of the Auditor General that 8,026 people were released from the CAF for medical reasons between 2006 and 2011. According to DND, 2,829 CAF members were medically released in 2012 and 2013. VAC, [Rehabilitation Needs of VAC Clients Post Eligibility for the SISIP Vocational Rehabilitation Program \(Executive Summary\)](#), 23 February 2010; OAG, [“Chapter 4: Transition of Ill and Injured Military Personnel to Civilian Life,”](#) p. 5; DND, [“Medical Releases: Universality of Service and Support to Our Ill and Injured,”](#) 15 May 2014.

reserve face the real risk of losing their civilian jobs due to the injuries relating from their service.”¹²

In order to assist transitioning military personnel, DND and VAC have set up various transition programs. Many of them were introduced with the enactment of the New Veterans Charter in 2006. The purpose of these programs is to facilitate the return to civilian life of CAF members, and this includes helping them find meaningful post-service civilian jobs. The programs offer a range of services, from transition seminars and workshops to career counselling, vocational training and job search assistance. In addition, a number of non-government initiatives have been launched by community and private sector organizations to further assist transitioning military personnel with their search for jobs on the civilian market and to help connect them with potential civilian employers. And several private sector industries and companies have openly expressed an interest in hiring former members of the military and veterans. In sum, a growing number of resources are now available to assist releasing members of the CAF with their transition to the civilian workforce, and the situation is constantly improving.

The purpose of the study is to look at initiatives taken by the public and private sectors to promote the meaningful employment of releasing CAF members and veterans during and after their transition to civilian life. The Subcommittee began the study in October 2011. It held 17 meetings on the topic and heard testimony from 44 different witnesses, including representatives of the CAF, various federal government departments and agencies, particularly DND and VAC, and a number of community and private sector organizations, such as the British Columbia Institute of Technology, the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, the Canada Company, the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires, the Canadian National (CN) and Canadian Pacific (CP) Railways, Helmets to Hardhats Canada, Home Depot Canada, Irving Shipbuilding, Prospect Human Services, the Royal Canadian Legion, Wounded Warriors, and several others.

The Subcommittee would like to thank all witnesses for their contribution to this study. It is hoped that this report reflects, as faithfully as possible, the views they have expressed on the subject of transition from military to civilian life.

The report discusses some of the challenges and issues identified by witnesses and offers suggestions as to possible ways of improving the transition to civilian life process. It is subdivided into six sections. The first looks at the need for research. The second and third sections provide options to strengthen DND and VAC transition programs and services. The fourth section focuses more specifically on ways to improve the transition of ill and injured military personnel to civilian life. The fifth section looks at ways of reinforcing the bridge between the military and the private sector. The final section of the report provides options to enhance private sector employment opportunities for veterans.

¹² Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 5 December 2012 (Philip Ralph).

In addition, the report is composed of two Annexes, which provide a detailed overview of transition programs and services offered by federal government departments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, bringing together witness testimony and information available on the websites and in documents of these organizations. Annex 1 provides a list of some of the key transition to civilian life programs and services available to transitioning military personnel and veterans. Annex 2 provides a more detailed overview of the above-mentioned transition to civilian life programs and services. Annex 2 is subdivided into four main sections. The first provides an overview of the transition to civilian life programs offered by DND to military personnel while they are still serving within the CAF. The second section provides information on the transition programs offered by VAC to veterans after their release from the CAF. The third section takes a look at the transition programs and services provided by non-government organizations. The final section looks at the various private sector employment opportunities for transitioning military personnel and veterans.

IMPROVING THE TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE PROCESS

The Subcommittee applauds the public and private sectors for the numerous programs, services and opportunities they provide transitioning military personnel and veterans. The assistance they offer former CAF members in finding meaningful civilian employment post-release is most valuable. We encourage all of them to continue their efforts in this regard.

The Subcommittee would also like to applaud the growing number of public and private sector employers who hire transitioning military personnel and veterans. Our men and women in uniform devote their lives to the service of their country. The least their country can do after they are released from the armed forces is to continue to support them by helping them find good well-paying civilian jobs. Veterans possess a wide range of experiences and skills that could be of value to the private sector. More and more civilian employers are now realizing this. The Subcommittee would therefore like to take this opportunity to encourage the private sector to continue recruiting veterans.

That being said, the Subcommittee holds the view that more can always be done to enhance the transition to civilian life process for transitioning military personnel and veterans.

The Subcommittee would like to remind readers at this stage that detailed information on the various public and private sector programs, services and opportunities available to transitioning CAF members and veterans can be found in Annexes 1 and 2 of the present report.

1. A Need for Research

Much of what we know about the transition process and its challenges has been learned from various research studies undertaken in recent years. Work done by DND, VAC and Statistics Canada under the aegis of the Life After Service Studies (LASS) joint program of research has been particularly valuable and has provided important information on how CAF members experience their transition from military to civilian life. The LASS program was established a few years ago “to evaluate the New Veterans Charter programs which were introduced in 2006 to facilitate re-establishment in civilian life, and to fill gaps in understanding military to civilian transition in Canada and other countries.”¹³ According to David Pedlar, Director of Research at VAC, the LASS program was designed to “better understand the transition from military service to civilian life, and the short- and long-term health effects of military service on later veteran life courses.”¹⁴ The LASS program focuses on four research questions:

- *Re-Establishment: How are Canadian Forces personnel doing after transition to civilian life in terms of income, health, well-being, disability, and other determinants of health?*

¹³ DND and VAC, [Survey on Transition to Civilian Life](#), p. 19.

¹⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 9 May 2012 (David Pedlar, Director, Research, Veterans Affairs Canada).

- *Program Reach: Are existing transition / re-establishment programs reaching those in need?*
- *Unmet Needs: Are there unmet needs that call for new / revised programs?*
- *Program Effectiveness: How do VAC clients and non-clients compare in terms of income, health (well-being), disability and other determinants of health?*¹⁵

The LASS program has conducted several major studies, three of which were completed in 2011. These are *Survey on Transition to Civilian Life: Report on Regular Force Veterans* (January 2011), *Income Study: Regular Force Veterans Report* (January 2011), and *Canadian Forces Cancer and Mortality Study: Causes of Death* (May 2011).¹⁶

These studies are helping us better understand the various challenges faced by military personnel as they transition from military to civilian life. As David Pedlar told the Subcommittee, “these studies are powerful tools that enable us to advance our knowledge of a new generation of veterans. They will also allow us to answer critical questions about their life after service regarding health, disability, the reach of Veterans Affairs programs and their needs. This approach also allows us to compare veterans with the Canadian population.”¹⁷ What these studies show, among other things, is that while most veterans experience a relatively easy transition process, some do not and need assistance. Mr. Pedlar noted that “while the majority did report a good transition experience, a sizeable minority — about a quarter — said their transition experience was difficult... Therefore, we need to ensure our programs provide the support they need — support proportional to the complexity of their needs.”¹⁸

While research to date has provided valuable results that will help improve programs and services to meet the needs of transitioning CAF members and veterans, witnesses told the Subcommittee that more research is needed, especially on the challenges faced by certain groups of veterans. “To ensure quality of life after release and ease the transition from service, more research is required to determine the effects of service unique to the Canadian military demographic and unique to Canadian operations,” explained Andrea Siew of the Royal Canadian Legion.¹⁹ As an example, she told the Subcommittee that there was a need for more research on military and veterans’ health issues as well as on the experiences and challenges faced by women veterans. She was particularly concerned with the latter. “Women do have unique needs,” Ms. Siew explained, “and there needs to be more quantitative research to determine the lifelong effects of military service on women.”²⁰

¹⁵ VAC, “[Life after Service Studies \(LASS\): How are Canadian Forces Personnel doing after Transition to Civilian Life?](#).”

¹⁶ DND and VAC, [Survey on Transition to Civilian Life](#), pp. 1–103; DND and VAC, [Income Study](#), pp. 1–70; Statistics Canada, [Canadian Forces Cancer and Mortality Study: Causes of Death](#), 31 May 2011, pp. 1–13.

¹⁷ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 9 May 2012 (David Pedlar).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 November 2011 (Andrea Siew).

²⁰ Ibid.

*We do not have any research or knowledge base on the understanding of what issues affect women's health that is related to their military service. No studies are being done in terms of the stress [women] endure during their military service ... We know women typically are mothers. Of course, the wife does all that work and has responsibilities in the majority of households in Canada. Yet they serve their country, deploy and work in a non-traditional environment ... [Women] are working in a very male-dominated environment, and there are unique stresses associated with that. There has been no research to determine the effects of that.*²¹

The Subcommittee agrees that there needs to be more research on the transition to civilian life process for veterans. It is encouraged to see that the LASS program of joint research is continuing its valuable work in this area, including through its ongoing study on the mental health dimension. Similarly, DND and VAC are conducting a study on the transition of former reservists, which is expected to provide a better understanding of the experiences and needs of reservists as they transition to civilian life.²²

The Subcommittee welcomes the fact that studies on the transition to civilian life of military personnel are underway in Canadian universities and that the LASS program has developed a working relationship with the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research, an independent organization operating out of Queen's University and the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, Ontario, which was established in 2010 to foster the development of new military and veteran health research in Canada.²³ Mr. Pedlar told the Subcommittee that the Canadian Institute for Military and Veterans Health Research has been "very helpful" in helping the LASS partners connect with university researchers across Canada.²⁴ More than 30 Canadian universities have signed memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the Canadian Institute for Military and Veterans Health Research and are currently involved on military and veteran health research.²⁵

All of this research activity is certainly a step in the right direction, and we welcome the development of a growing body of scientific knowledge about veterans' experiences with transition and about their physical and mental health needs. At the same time, we note that of the more than 40,000 CAF members who deployed to Afghanistan between 2001 and 2014

²¹ Ibid.

²² Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 9 May 2012 (David Pedlar).

²³ Queen's University, "[Queen's and RMC Launch Canada's First Military and Veteran Health Research Network](#)," 2 December 2010

²⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 9 May 2012 (David Pedlar).

²⁵ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 12 February 2014 (Alice Aiken, Director, Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research). See also Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR), "[Organization](#)," "[University Members](#)," and "[CIMVHR: Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research](#)." On military and veteran health research in Canada, see Alice B. Aiken and Stéphanie A.H. Bélanger, eds., *Shaping the Future: Military and Veteran Health Research*, Canadian Defence Academy Press, Kingston, 2011; Stéphanie A.H. Bélanger and Alice B. Aiken, eds., *A New Coalition for a Challenging Battlefield: Military and Veteran Health Research*, Canadian Defence Academy Press, Kingston, 2012; Stéphanie A.H. Bélanger and Alice B. Aiken, eds., *Beyond the Line: Military and Veteran Health Research*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal and Kingston, 2013; Stéphanie A.H. Bélanger and Alice B. Aiken, eds., *Beyond the Line: Military and Veteran Health Research*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal and Kingston, 2013.

many are still serving and will be transitioning to civilian life in coming years.²⁶ Many of them have combat experience and a number have returned home with physical and/or psychological disabilities. According to DND, more than 2,000 CAF personnel were injured in Afghanistan in that period.²⁷ This statistic relates only to physical injuries and does not include individuals who developed mental health issues as a result of the mission. According to a recent DND study on cumulative incidence of PTSD and other mental disorders, more than 13% of CAF members who served in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2008 were diagnosed with an Operational Stress Injury (OSI) over an average period of follow-up of almost five years. Most of them suffered from PTSD (8%). The remainder (over 5%) were diagnosed with other types of deployment-related OSIs, such as depression and anxiety disorders.²⁸ When he appeared before the Subcommittee, Colonel Jean-Robert Bernier, the CAF Deputy Surgeon General, said he expects the number of OSI cases to increase in coming years.

*[The] cumulative incidence study ... found a total incidence of about 8 per cent of people [who served in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2008] developing PTSD. That is 8 per cent overall, which includes the whole theatre of operations. Regarding those who served "outside the wire," 17 per cent, roughly, developed PTSD. Those "inside the wire" were about 13 per cent, with lesser proportions for those serving in Kabul or other locations. The total number so far who have presented for care, which changes every day, has been just short of 1,500. After applying that 8 per cent to the whole population that deployed during that time period and those who deployed subsequent to 2008, we would expect at least another 1,500 to present with that diagnosis in future. We expect our mental health care burden ... to expand significantly over the next few years.*²⁹

At the moment, approximately 15% of "CAF Regular Force personnel access mental health services each year," according to DND's *Surgeon General's Mental Health Strategy* for the CAF, which was released in October 2013.³⁰ In light of these facts, it will be imperative that the transition to civilian life and reintegration into Canadian society of still serving CAF members who have been in Afghanistan be as smooth and as problem free as possible. Some of them will have specific needs and DND and VAC transition to civilian life programs will be expected to provide assistance. In light of this, continued research on the transition process and the challenges faced by veterans post-release will certainly be of benefit in years to come.

²⁶ DND, "[News Release – Final Canadian Troops Return after the End of Military Operations in Afghanistan](#)," 18 March 2014; DND, "[Canadian Forces Deployed on Canadian Forces Operations](#)," 19 November 2012.

²⁷ According to DND, between 2002 and 2012, 158 CAF members were killed and 2,071 were injured in Afghanistan. DND, "[Fact Sheet: Canadian Forces' Casualty Statistics \(Afghanistan\)](#)," 10 June 2013.

²⁸ DND, "[Executive Summary for the Report on Cumulative Incidence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Other Mental Disorders](#)," 27 July 2013. See also David Boulos and Mark Zamorski, *Cumulative Incidence of PTSD and other Mental Disorders in Canadian Forces personnel Deployed in Support of the Mission in Afghanistan, 2001-2008*, Canadian Forces Health Services, Department of National Defence, November 2011, pp. 1-78; David Boulos and Mark A. Zamorski, "Deployment-Related Mental Disorders among Canadian Forces Personnel Deployed in Support of the Mission in Afghanistan, 2001-2008," *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, Vol. 185, No. 11 (August 2013), pp. E545-E552.

²⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 9 May 2012 (Colonel Jean-Robert Bernier, Deputy Surgeon General, Department of National Defence).

³⁰ DND, *Surgeon General's Mental Health Strategy*, Canadian Forces Health Services Group, October 2013, p. 5.

Additionally, the Subcommittee agrees with witnesses who argued that more research should be undertaken on the transition to civilian life of military personnel. Research on subjects such as mental health, women veterans and reservists would certainly be of benefit in the future. In addition to these important topics, the Subcommittee would like to propose an additional subject of research for the LASS program, to reflect evidence brought forward as part of the present study. The Subcommittee recommends:

Recommendation 1

That the Life After Service Studies (LASS) joint programs of research led by DND and VAC continue its work on the transition to civilian life of military personnel, and that a LASS study on veterans' employment post-release be initiated in the near future.

2. Strengthening DND Transition Programs and Services

The CAF, DND and Service Income Security Insurance Plan (SISIP) Financial Services offer various programs and services to military personnel prior to retirement and their transition to civilian life. By providing CAF members with opportunities in the areas of continuing education, civilian recognition of military training, career transition services, job placement in the private and public sectors, and vocational rehabilitation, the CAF, DND and SISIP Financial Services are providing our men and women in uniform with valuable tools, which, it is hoped, will assist them in achieving a successful transition to civilian life and finding meaningful post-release employment. The Subcommittee firmly believes that CAF members are better prepared to reintegrate into the civilian world as a result and that the trades, skills and experiences they have gained in the military will help them find well-paid post-release jobs that meet their needs and those of their families.

The Subcommittee hopes that the recent centralization of CAF and DND transition programs under a single suite of programs — Canadian Transition Assistance Programs (CTAP) — administered by one central organization (Directorate Casualty Support and Management, which reports directly to the Chief of Military Personnel) will facilitate the delivery of these transition services and make it easier for military personnel to access them. This is certainly a step in the right direction, for the Subcommittee has heard from certain witnesses that some transitioning CAF members were confused and not fully aware of all the programs and services available to them.³¹ The “one-stop shopping” approach adopted by the CAF and DND should help resolve this situation.

At the same time, we believe that more could be done to assist military personnel prior to their release from the CAF. The fact that 25% of CAF members find their transition to civilian life

³¹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 November 2011 (Brad White); Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 31 October 2012 (Anne-Marie Pellerin, Director, Rehabilitation and Case Management, Veterans Affairs Canada).

difficult suggests that improvements could be made to help them better plan and prepare for their release. One of the Wounded Warriors witnesses who appeared before the Subcommittee, for example, suggested that improvements be made to existing re-training and education initiatives, for instance by providing CAF members with the various equipment they require to practice their chosen trades after their release from the military. This could include laptop computers, tools, and other products. As a case in point, CAF personnel re-trained to become carpenters or plumbers may have received all the training they required while still serving in the military, but these individuals are still expected to supply their own tools in order to practice their new trade after they rotate into civilian society.³² This is certainly something worth considering, though it should be noted that some federal government programs already exist to help tradespeople purchase of tools they require to practice their trades. This includes, among other things, apprenticeship grants and tax deductions for tools.³³

The Subcommittee realizes changes to existing programs will not necessarily result in a 100% rate of satisfaction among transitioning military personnel. There will always be individuals who find the transition process difficult and who, for personal, medical or financial reasons, have a harder time than others reintegrating into civilian society. The CAF and DND have primary responsibility for providing transition programs and services to still-serving CAF members, and everything should be done to help releasing CAF members, particularly ill and injured ones, make a successful transition to civilian society. Improvements in the way transition programs and services are delivered to all CAF members will ensure that they have a better understanding of the resources available to them and what the military can do to assist them throughout the release process. Releasing CAF members will be better armed for their transition to civilian society as a result. The Subcommittee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 2

That the CAF and DND, taking into consideration the results of ongoing research on transition issues, regularly review and upgrade their transition programs in order to continually enhance services provided to transitioning military personnel.

One area of improvement pertains to the pre-release transition interview offered by VAC to transitioning military personnel.³⁴ The transition interview provides releasing members of the CAF with an overview of the VAC programs and services available to them after they leave the military. “During that interview, we examine the person’s needs,” Charlotte Bastien of VAC told the Subcommittee. “Often, the members, when they are released, do not really have any needs. However, we don’t take any chances, we sit with them and we have a transition

³² Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 5 December 2012 (Philip Ralph).

³³ For example, see Canada Revenue Agency, “[Employed Tradespersons \(and Apprentice Mechanics\)](#),” “[Employed Apprentice Mechanics](#)” and “[Deductions for Tools \(Tradespersons\)](#)”; Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), “[Apprenticeship Grants](#)” and “[Red Seal Program](#)”; and Service Canada, “[Apprenticeship Incentive Grant](#).”

³⁴ VAC, “[Transition Interview](#).”

interview.” As she explained, nobody knows what can happen in subsequent years. Many people may have a job waiting for them when they are released and may not have any particular issues or problems related to their service at the time. However, should a problem develop over the years, it is important that they know that VAC is there and that it has a range of services available to assist them. “It may be an occupational or professional issue,” Ms. Bastien explained. “Perhaps the person needs to redirect her career or has certain limitations. It may also be a medical or psychological problem.” The transition interview ensures that military personnel know that VAC has to offer, should they have any peculiar needs post-release.³⁵ “We do not expect them to know about all programs and services,” explained Keith Hillier of VAC, “but we want to leave the message: If you think you have a problem, give us a call.”³⁶ Rear-Admiral Andrew Smith, Chief of Military Personnel, told the Subcommittee that DND is a firm supporter of the transition interview:

Every person releasing from the forces has the right, and we are quite disciplined on this, to have a transition interview with Veterans Affairs to ensure, whether they are ill or injured, that they are fully cognizant of the benefits, services and programs that could be available to them should they have a service-related illness or injury post-release.³⁷

That being said, the transition interview remains optional for transitioning CAF members. The only exception pertains to medically releasing military personnel. The CAF has made the transition interview mandatory for them. At the moment, only about 72% of the people released for non-medical reasons attend the transition interview.³⁸ The Subcommittee believes that many benefits can be gained from the transition interview and, as such, would like to suggest that the CAF make it mandatory for all releasing CAF members. The Subcommittee recommends:

Recommendation 3

That the CAF and DND make the VAC transition interview mandatory for all releasing military personnel.

Another area of improvement that the Subcommittee would like to suggest pertains to the hiring of military personnel in the federal public service. While some witnesses highlighted DND and VAC efforts to recruit veterans into their public service workforces, it was reported that few other federal departments and agencies had similar initiatives. It is up to each individual department and agency to be proactive in this regard. The problem appears to be one of communication. The Subcommittee was somewhat surprised to learn in the course of this study

³⁵ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 31 October 2012 (Charlotte Bastien, Regional Director General, Ontario/Quebec, Veterans Affairs Canada).

³⁶ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 14 December 2011 (Keith Hillier, Assistant Deputy Minister, Service Delivery, Veterans Affairs Canada).

³⁷ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 14 December 2011 (Rear-Admiral Andrew Smith, Chief Military Personnel, Department of National Defence).

³⁸ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 31 October 2012 (Anne-Marie Pellerin).

that few efforts were made by DND and VAC to reach out to the other departments and agencies to promote the value former military personnel could bring to their organizations. In Rear-Admiral Smith sees that “more as a Public Service Commission initiative to drive.”³⁹ The Subcommittee recognizes that not all military personnel might be inclined to work in the public service. It also recognizes that not all departments and agencies might be of interest to CAF members, or that most CAF members may not offer the right skill sets or experience for some departments and agencies. However, the Subcommittee is of the opinion that some departments and agencies, perhaps more than others, can offer interesting and exciting career possibilities to former military personnel. We believe that the trades, skills and experiences veterans learned in the military can be of valuable use to these government organizations, particularly those involved in national security, such as Public Safety Canada, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the Canadian Security Establishment (CSE), and Defence Research and Development Canada. Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard might also benefit from hiring former navy personnel. The Subcommittee believes that DND and VAC should assess the public service job market with a view to identifying federal departments and agencies most likely to find veterans’ skills and experiences of interest. They should also reach out to federal departments and agencies and promote their hiring of veterans. The Subcommittee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 4

That DND and VAC reach out to federal departments and agencies and promote the hiring of transitioning CAF members and veterans into their public service workforces.

3. Strengthening VAC Transition Programs and Services

The Subcommittee is of the opinion that the Career Transition Services Program and Vocational Rehabilitation Program, the Veterans Transition Action Plan and other transition initiatives introduced by VAC in recent years are important tools that assist veterans with their search for meaningful post-service employment in Canadian society. The Subcommittee encourages VAC to continue strengthening its transition programs and services so that veterans get the best support they can get after their release from the CAF.

Notwithstanding the fact that the ongoing comprehensive review of the New Veterans Charter launched by the federal government in the fall of 2013 might eventually result in changes to VAC’s Career Transition Services Program and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program,⁴⁰ the Subcommittee will be monitoring how the various VAC transition programs and services are

³⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 14 December 2011 (Rear-Admiral Andrew Smith).

⁴⁰ VAC, [“Review Demonstrates Government’s Commitment to Veterans and their Families,”](#) 26 September 2013; VAC, [“Minister Fantino Responds to Ombudsman’s Reports on the New Veterans Charter,”](#) 1 October 2013.

delivered to veterans in the near future. Particular attention will be paid to the Career Transition Services Program and how its new service delivery model progresses and affects veterans. It hopes that this new approach will be as positive for veterans as the VAC witnesses expressed to the Subcommittee. However, as this is a new business approach, the Subcommittee would like to suggest that VAC conduct a review of its Career Transition Services Program within the next three years to examine how the program has been performing since the introduction of its new service delivery model and that it reports back to Parliament on its findings.

In the course of our study, several witnesses spoke about the challenges encountered by medically releasing military personnel during and after their transition to civilian life, particularly when it comes to finding a new profession and meaningful civilian employment. The Subcommittee acknowledges how difficult the transition process can be for such individuals, who must now adapt to a new work environment while coping with psychological and/or physical disabilities. Recognizing that ill and injured military personnel and veterans tend to face higher unemployment rates than their non-medically released counterparts, often experience significant declines in income and have difficulty maintaining the standard of living they desire, the Subcommittee believes that DND and VAC should provide these individuals with the best vocational rehabilitation programs and services available.

However, Veterans Ombudsman reports on the New Veterans Charter released in 2013 identified a number of “shortcomings” with VAC’s Vocational Rehabilitation Program.⁴¹ The Veterans Ombudsman noted, among other things, that “the practice of building on a veteran’s existing skills, experience and training limits education upgrade and employment options, including access to postsecondary university education programs,” that the “tuition reimbursement limit [\$20,000] is insufficient to support participation in a full four-year university degree program at most Canadian universities,” that “there is inadequate performance measurement to track whether Veterans find employment following completion of a vocational rehabilitation plan and whether they stay employed,” and that “the effectiveness of providing two similar government vocational rehabilitation programs [SISIP Financial Services and VAC] to veterans is not clear” and “can be confusing to releasing Canadian Forces members.”⁴² As Veterans Ombudsman Guy Parent told the Subcommittee, “we ... need to strengthen the transition process to create more and better opportunities for vocational training.”⁴³

The Subcommittee is concerned with the “shortcomings” identified by the Veterans Ombudsman, but is pleased to note that VAC is willing to make changes to its Vocational

⁴¹ Office of the Veterans Ombudsman (OVO), [Improving the New Veterans Charter: The Parliamentary Review](#), January 2013, pp. 21-27; OVO, [Investing in Veterans’ Vocational Training](#), June 2013, pp. 1-29; OVO, [Improving the New Veterans Charter: The Report](#), June 2013, pp. 37-44.

⁴² OVO, [Improving the New Veterans Charter: The Report](#), pp. 5-6, 37.

⁴³ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 4 December 2013 (Guy Parent, Veterans Ombudsman). See also OVO, “Improving the New Veterans Charter: Briefing to Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs,” 4 December 2013, p. 11.

Rehabilitation Program. In October 2013, for instance, the department raised the maximum amount an individual veteran can claim for vocational rehabilitation training expenses to \$75,800. This change provides more flexibility in the preparation of Individualized Vocational Rehabilitation Plans, particularly with regards to tuition fees.⁴⁴ The Subcommittee believes that this is a path in the right direction. But more could still be done. The Subcommittee therefore encourages VAC to move forward with the implementation of all of the Veterans Ombudsman's recommendations to improve the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.⁴⁵

The Subcommittee also believes that DND and VAC should evaluate how their vocational rehabilitation programs are being delivered at least every three years and continually strive to improve these programs based on regular feedback obtained from the ill and injured military personnel and veterans who benefit from them. As such, the Subcommittee recommends:

Recommendation 5

That Veterans Affairs Canada conducts a review to evaluate the performance of its Career Transition Service Program and its Vocational Rehabilitation Program at least every three years and report to both chambers of Parliament on its findings.

4. Improving the Transition of Ill and Injured Military Personnel to Civilian Life

In October 2012, Auditor General Michael Ferguson released a report on the transition of ill and injured military personnel. It looked at the various DND and VAC programs available to military personnel who were released from the CAF for medical reasons. While the Auditor General acknowledged the wide range of support programs, benefits, and services offered by DND and VAC to help ill and injured members of the military make the transition to civilian life, he found the “transition process complex, lengthy and challenging to navigate” and reported that it was “difficult to access services and benefits in a timely manner” due to the “complexity of eligibility criteria, lack of clear information on support available, the amount of paperwork involved, and case management services that require further improvement.” He also found that both DND and VAC have “difficulties in communicating and meeting service delivery standards and requirements, particularly as they relate to assessments and case management services.” The Auditor General concluded that “National Defence and Veterans Affairs Canada need to improve the way they help ill and injured members and veterans understand and access the

⁴⁴ Department of Justice, [Canadian Forces Members and Veterans Re-Establishment and Compensation Regulations](#), Last Amended 1 October 2013, Current to 26 November 2013, pp. 3-10; VAC, [“Vocational Rehabilitation and Vocational Assistance – Training Expenses - Transition Policy,”](#) 1 October 2013; VAC, [“Vocational Rehabilitation and Vocational Assistance – Training Expenses,”](#) 1 October 2013; OVO, [“Veterans Ombudsman Supports Changes to the Veterans Vocational Rehabilitation Program,”](#) 8 October 2013.

⁴⁵ OVO, [Improving the New Veterans Charter: The Report](#), p. 50.

programs, benefits and services available to them during their transition to civilian life.”⁴⁶ The Auditor General made several recommendations, all of which were accepted by DND and VAC.⁴⁷

It is the Subcommittee’s view that DND and VAC should both be striving for a more streamlined and effective transition system that meets the needs of ill and injured serving CAF members and veterans. The Subcommittee commends DND and VAC for moving forward on the fifteen recommendations made by the Auditor General of Canada in his report. The Subcommittee believes that these recommendations are crucial to streamlining and improving the current system. It should be noted that both DND and VAC have introduced a number of measures to streamline their transition programs, some of them partly in response to the Auditor General’s recommendations. This includes measures to enhance their service delivery standards, to strengthen how they measure and report performance, and to improve the way they manage and coordinate their programs.⁴⁸ VAC, for example, launched its Veterans Transition Action Plan in late October 2012, which introduced new measures to simplify and streamline internal policies and processes, to improve the delivery of services, to help connect veterans with civilian job opportunities, to undertake new research on transition to civilian life issues, to educate VAC employees on the CAF’s military culture and traditions, and to enhance collaboration efforts with DND.⁴⁹

Recommendation 6

That DND and VAC implement all fifteen recommendations made by the Auditor General of Canada in his October 2012 report on the transition of ill and injured military personnel to civilian life as soon as possible.

DND and VAC also need to engage with the private sector to change many civilian employers’ attitude towards hiring ill and injured military personnel and veterans. Private sector witnesses all told the Subcommittee that they treat ill and injured veterans the same as any of their employees with disabilities. “They will be treated exactly the same way as anyone else. If an injured veteran comes in with a disability, under the employment standards we do not discriminate against people with disabilities,” CP told the Subcommittee. But “they have to have the skill set to do the job.”⁵⁰ As CP explained

⁴⁶ OAG, “[Chapter 4: Transition of Ill and Injured Military Personnel to Civilian Life](#),” p. 2; OAG, “[Transition from Military to Civilian Life Hindered by a Complex Process](#),” 23 October 2012.

⁴⁷ OAG, “[Chapter 4: Transition of Ill and Injured Military Personnel to Civilian Life](#),” pp. 1-46.

⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 37-46.

⁴⁹ VAC, “Veterans Transition Action Plan”; VAC, “[Veterans Affairs Minister Steven Blaney Pledges Action on Auditor General’s Report on Transitioning Military Personnel](#),” 23 October 2012.

⁵⁰ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 7 March 2012 (Paul Wajda, General Manager of Human Resources, Planning and Development Canadian Pacific).

*We are going to treat the veteran the same way we are going to treat any employee who comes up for a medical and has a condition that comes to our understanding. We will go through our corporate physician for determination. It does not matter who the individual is. If there is a medical condition that prevents that employee from having that job, it does not matter if he is a veteran, or myself, or whoever. They will not get that job or they will be asked for further information to make an informed decision. It does not matter if it is a veteran or not. We are not discriminating against anyone. If they have a medical condition, it is reviewed by our medical facility and they will make the determination.*⁵¹

The problem, however, is that many employers do not necessarily understand the particular needs and requirements of veterans with disabilities, nor do they fully realize what these individuals can do for their organizations. PTSD, for example, is misunderstood by many civilian employers. As Melanie Mitra of Prospect Human Services told the Subcommittee:

In terms of employers and their attitudes toward military personnel, I think there are many of the same issues that we are dealing with in the attitudes of the general population toward mental health or disability. In our experience, we have been more successful when we can work with an employer to understand how they think about disability or mental health in the workplace and what makes them nervous about it.

*Most employers, in our experience, want to do a good job of this but they do not know how to do it yet. They need to have a conversation with someone where they can relax about this. It is mostly about understanding what they know how to do, what their experience has been, what help they need, where the resources exist to connect them to that, and whether there is a concrete solution. Employers hear a lot of talk all over the place about mental health and disability in the workplace, but they are looking for concrete solutions. That is where we have been more successful.*⁵²

The Subcommittee believes this could be addressed if DND and VAC reached out more to civilian employers on this subject and made information on service-related disabilities more accessible to them. The Subcommittee also believes there is a need for more direct employment placement and retention solutions for ill and injured transitioning CAF members and veterans, as Prospect Human Services suggested:

In [the current] context, employment placement and retention solutions that address physical and mental health limitations in the workplace are critical for both individuals and employers ... Some fundamental gaps ... exist within current transition services. First, there is an absence of direct hands-on placement and retention supports for both individuals and employers. Second, employers need help in understanding how to attract and retain this population, including attitudinal and cultural barriers. Finally, the current

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 May 2012 (Melanie Mitra).

*service offering is based on a pre-employment model and emphasizes employment preparation and vocational rehabilitation. These services are aimed at only the individual. Although well intentioned, these services elongate the employment intervention and address only half the equation in employment — the individual.*⁵³

The Subcommittee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 7

That DND and VAC develop partnerships with civilian employers with the goal of developing more direct employment placement and retention solutions to ensure meaningful job opportunities for ill and injured transitioning CAF members and veterans.

5. Private Sector and Other Non-Governmental Transition Initiatives

The Subcommittee salutes the assistance that the Royal Canadian Legion, the University of British Columbia, the Veterans Transition Network, the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), Helmets to Hardhats, Canada Company, Prospect Human Services, and Wounded Warriors provide transitioning military personnel and veterans. By helping transitioning military personnel and veterans develop their skills and connect with private sector employers and meaningful civilian job opportunities, these organizations are making a difference. The Subcommittee would like to take this opportunity to thank them for the valuable programs and services they are providing our men and women in uniform during their transition to civilian life and after they have become veterans.

The Subcommittee feels, however, that it would be beneficial to coordinate these efforts and that DND and VAC should take the lead in that regard. At the moment, no DND or VAC coordination of public and private sector transition programs and services exist. All of these programs are evolving independently from one another. The Subcommittee commends VAC for setting up the Veterans Transition Advisory Council and launching a number of new transition initiatives to reach out to the private sector in recent months. It also commends DND for its engagement with Canada Company and other non-government organizations providing assistance to transitioning military personnel. However, the Subcommittee believes that more needs to be done to coordinate public and private sector efforts to assist transitioning military personnel and veterans. As the Royal Canadian Legion told the Subcommittee, DND and VAC should lead transition to civilian life efforts in Canada:

We certainly believe that the Department of National Defence and Veterans Affairs Canada have a responsibility to ensure that policies, practices and programs, supported through a sustainable research program, are accessible and meet the unique needs of all

⁵³ Ibid.

*veterans, with the goal of enabling the healthy transition of all veterans and their families through this very changing and sometimes difficult life course.*⁵⁴

The United States could serve as a case in point in this regard. Several of the witnesses who appeared before the Subcommittee spoke about the transition to civilian life activities occurring in the United States. The Subcommittee was told that great efforts are being made in the public and private sectors to assist transitioning members of the U.S. armed forces and veterans into the American civilian workforce and, perhaps more importantly, that the American government was playing a key role in coordinating these activities.

In April 2011, the White House launched Joining Forces, a national initiative to support members of the armed forces and their families.⁵⁵ Since then, a number of programs have been set up under this initiative to help U.S. veterans and military families secure jobs in the private and public sectors. These include new electronic resources to help veterans translate their military skills into the civilian workforce, the creation of a national Veterans Job Bank, commitments from private sector employers to hire 80,000 veterans and 20,000 military spouses by 2014, specific private sector hiring targets, and legislation that aims to lower the level of unemployment among veterans by “expanding education and training,” “improving the Transition Assistance Program,” “facilitating seamless transition,” “translating military skills and training,” and providing tax credits for hiring veterans.⁵⁶

Other commitments made under the Joining Forces initiative have included, among other things, new programs to hire veterans as first responders and law enforcement officers, initiatives to support veterans entrepreneurship training, the creation of a Veteran Job Corps that will provide employment to about 20,000 veterans over the next five years for work on public lands (federal, state, local and tribal), and special programs to assist veterans obtain skilled jobs in the manufacturing sector.⁵⁷ In December 2012, the American government reported that more than 125,000 veterans and military spouses had been hired by over 2,000 companies under the Joining Forces initiative — exceeding the original target of 100,000 — and that these companies now pledged to recruit another 250,000 by 2014.⁵⁸

Canadian companies operating in the United States and active in the hiring of veterans there have benefited from the various programs initiated under the Joining Forces initiative. One such

⁵⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 November 2011 (Brad White).

⁵⁵ The White House, “[President Obama, Vice President Biden, First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden Launch National “Joining Forces” Initiative to Support America’s Military Families](#),” 12 April 2011; The White House, “[About Joining Forces](#).”

⁵⁶ The White House, “[Veterans](#),” “[President Obama Believes that No Veteran Should Have to Fight for a Job at Home After They Fight for our Nation Overseas](#),” “[100,000 New Jobs for Veterans and Military Families](#),” 10 November 2011, “[Remarks by the First Lady at a Joining Forces Announcement](#),” 10 November 2011, and “[President Obama: Hire a Veteran](#),” 21 November 2011; United States House Committee on Veterans Affairs, “[VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011: Comprehensive Legislation to End Veteran Unemployment](#).”

⁵⁷ The White House, “[President Obama’s Plan to Put Veterans Back to Work](#),” 3 February 2012. See also The White House, “[New Guide Highlights Best Practices and Innovations in Helping Veterans Thrive in the Private Sector](#),” 11 June 2012; The White House, “[Making it Easier for Veterans to Get Quality Advanced Manufacturing Jobs](#),” 5 June 2012.

⁵⁸ The White House, “[The Year in Review: Joining Forces to Hire American Heroes](#),” 30 December 2012. See also The White House, “[Joining Forces: Commitments](#).”

company is the Canadian National (CN) railway. The advantages of this American government coordinated approach to public and private sector transition programs and services were highlighted by CN representatives when they appeared before the Subcommittee. As Christine Joanis, CN's Senior Manager, Talent Acquisition, stated:

*In the U.S., since the introduction of the White House initiative called Joining Forces, outreach activities have been tremendously facilitated. Companies like CN can now easily access thousands of online résumés thanks to this concerted effort between veterans' organizations, the media and employers. A great example is the free online military job search engine created by Indeed. These sites assist U.S. veterans in translating their skills and knowledge into civilian jobs and help employers to better understand military experience and responsibilities.*⁵⁹

Nancy Villeneuve, Sourcing Manager at CN, added that under the Joining Forces initiative, the U.S. government had “been reaching out to employers but also media such as Indeed and Google, who have then created environments where both employers and veterans can connect and find jobs.” As an example, she said that “if one goes to the Indeed.com/military website, there are hundreds of thousands of résumés online, free for the veteran to post and the employers to find.” And as she added, “they are seeking new and more innovative ways of connecting employers and veterans.”⁶⁰

The situation is somewhat different in Canada, CN told the Subcommittee. “While some job and social media environments promoting Canadian veterans have been introduced in Canada,” Ms. Joanis noted, “they do not appear to have the same reach as those currently available in the United States.”⁶¹ The Subcommittee agrees with CN that “increasing the visibility of existing services that help employers and veterans better understand and connect with each other” should be a priority and that “there is tremendous value for both the military and private business in the creation of official tools and events, as well as an effective liaison service.”⁶²

Among the various private sector and non-governmental transition programs the Subcommittee heard about as part of its study, the services provided by the Royal Canadian Legion, the University of British Columbia, the Veterans Transition Network, and BCIT were particularly impressive.

The Subcommittee is pleased to note that VAC is investing in the Royal Canadian Legion and University of British Columbia's Veterans Transition Program and helping it expand nationally through the Veterans Transition Network. Transitioning military personnel and veterans will benefit from this program being offered across Canada. However, while the Subcommittee

⁵⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 7 March 2012 (Christine Joanis, Senior Manager, Talent Acquisition, Canadian National).

⁶⁰ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 7 March 2012 (Nancy Villeneuve, Sourcing Manager, Canadian National).

⁶¹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 7 March 2012 (Christine Joanis).

⁶² Ibid.

applauds VAC for its investment in this program, it believes that DND should also provide support to this program. Since early intervention is an important factor in the long-term well-being of those affected by Operational Stress Injuries (OSIs), it is essential that military personnel get access to this kind of treatment as soon as possible. DND support for this program would allow serving CAF members suffering from PTSD to access this important and worthwhile treatment option before they are medically released. The Subcommittee was pleased to learn recently that DND has been in discussion with the Veterans Transition Network and is currently investigating the possibility of developing a working relationship with that organization.⁶³

Additionally, the Subcommittee believes that the Royal Canadian Legion and BCIT's Legion Military Skills Conversion Program should also be expanded nationally and that it, too, should be appropriately supported by VAC to achieve that end.

The Subcommittee was also impressed with the Forces@WORK program of Prospect Human Services. As far as it knows, no other programs exist in Canada that have been specifically developed to help connect ill and injured transitioning military personnel and veterans with civilian employers. The Subcommittee was pleased to learn from Prospect Human Services that communication between Forces@WORK and DND was "open, frank and honest ... since the start of the project" and that both organizations had "collaborated effectively on developing a service that meet the needs of individuals and employers."⁶⁴ However, the Subcommittee was somewhat surprised to learn that VAC has not been engaged in this project. The Subcommittee believes that the Forces@WORK program should be expanded across Canada and that VAC should be involved.

There is a need to coordinate public and private sector transition efforts. The advantage of doing so was noted by Kevin Schmiegel, Vice-President and Executive Officer of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Hiring Our Heroes initiative. "We must coordinate the efforts and resources of both the public and private sectors," he told the Subcommittee. "In many cases they [public and private sector programs] are duplicative, they compete with one another, and they cause unnecessary confusion for veterans and their families."⁶⁵ That is why the Subcommittee believes that DND and VAC should coordinate these efforts. The Subcommittee therefore recommends

⁶³ House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence, [Evidence](#), Unedited Copy, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 1 April 2014 (Colonel Gerry Blais, Director of Casualty Support Management and Joint Personnel Support Unit, Department of National Defence).

⁶⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 May 2012 (Melanie Mitra).

⁶⁵ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 3 October 2012 (Kevin Schmiegel, Vice-President and Executive Officer, Hiring our Heroes, U.S. Chamber of Commerce).

Recommendation 8

That DND and VAC coordinate public sector, private sector and non-governmental efforts to assist transitioning military personnel and veterans. As top priorities in this regard, the Subcommittee additionally recommends:

(a) That DND support the expansion of the Veterans Transition Program nationally, and ensure that serving CAF members affected by PTSD have access to the program;

(b) That Veterans Affairs Canada support the expansion of the Royal Canadian Legion and BCIT's Legion Military Skills Conversion Program nationally; and

(c) That DND and VAC assist Prospect Human Services in expanding the Forces@WORK program nationally and provide appropriate funding to achieve that end.

6. Enhancing Private Sector Employment Opportunities for Veterans

The Subcommittee applauds the numerous initiatives taken by various Canadian private sector companies to employ transitioning military personnel and veterans. Organizations such as the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires, CN, CP, Home Depot Canada and Irving Shipbuilding are examples of civilian employers that offer interesting job opportunities to former members of the CAF. The Subcommittee would like to take this opportunity to recognize these companies' support for our men and women in uniform and to applaud their ongoing efforts to provide valuable employment opportunities for transitioning military personnel and veterans. It is clear from the testimony that these companies' representatives gave the Subcommittee that they value veterans and see many benefits from hiring them. The Subcommittee encourages them to continue their veterans' recruitment efforts in the future. They are true ambassadors and leaders in this regard, and the Subcommittee would encourage other Canadian companies to follow their lead.

The Subcommittee would like to acknowledge at this stage the important veterans' recruitment efforts of the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires, the largest employer of veterans in Canada. This organization plays an important role in the transition process by providing meaningful job opportunities in the security industry to thousands of veterans. We therefore believe that Commissionaires' right of first refusal on federal government guard contracts should be renewed and updated in 2016. The Subcommittee therefore recommends that:

Recommendation 9

That the Canadian government recognizes renewing Commissionaires' right of first refusal on federal government guard contracts and that it also considers ways of encouraging the employment of veterans on federal government contracts with other security companies.

However, the Subcommittee believes that there is room for improvement. There are still private sector employers who lack understanding of the military and the potential value and benefits that veterans could bring to their organizations. Much could be gained by reaching out to them systematically. For example, the Subcommittee learned in the course of this study that the U.S. government has entered into partnerships with a number of private sector organizations to deliver transition to civilian life programs and services to veterans across the United States, such as Helmets to Hardhats and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Hiring Our Heroes initiative. The latter has attracted the attention of the Subcommittee, for, unlike Helmets to Hardhats, this initiative has not yet been imported into Canada. Launched in 2011, Hiring Our Heroes is described by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as a "nationwide and sustained grassroots campaign" to "help veterans and their spouses find meaningful employment, careers in hundreds of cities across America."⁶⁶ According to Kevin Schmiegel, Vice-President and Executive Officer of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Hiring Our Heroes initiative, the program was started in partnership with the U.S. government "to improve public-private sector coordination in local communities, where veterans and their families return every day."⁶⁷ Hiring Our Heroes uses the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's network of approximately 1,600 local chambers of commerce and 600 trade associations, which represent more than 3 million businesses across the United States, to assist U.S. veterans and military spouses in finding work on the civilian market. It does so by offering them various networking, mentoring and training opportunities.⁶⁸ As Mr. Schmiegel told the Subcommittee:

Local communities must be the cornerstone of any national program to reduce veterans' unemployment. The reason is simple: When veterans and their families transition from the military, an overriding consideration for them is to get back to a local community where they can be close to family and friends. By targeting resources and leveraging partnerships where we know veterans are — and where they want to be — we can be that much more effective.⁶⁹

To date, Hiring Our Heroes has hosted over 650 hiring fairs in 50 U.S. states as well as the District of Columbia and the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico. These fairs have thus far helped over 21,600 veterans and military spouses find jobs.⁷⁰ More than 1,200 businesses have hired

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid; U.S. Chamber of Commerce, [Hiring Our Heroes Quarterly Report – June 30, 2013](#), pp. 1-37; U.S. Chamber of Commerce, "[Hiring Our Heroes: About.](#)"

⁶⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 3 October 2012 (Kevin Schmiegel).

⁷⁰ U.S. Chamber of Commerce, "[Hiring Our Heroes: About.](#)"

veterans and military spouses at these fairs.⁷¹ Moreover, Hiring Our Heroes teamed up with Capital One and the National Chamber Foundation to launch the Hiring 500,000 Heroes initiative in March 2012, which encourages the U.S. private sector to hire half a million veterans and military spouses before the end of 2014. As of June 2013, over 1,050 different businesses had pledged to hire under the Hiring 500,000 Heroes initiative and more than 119,000 veterans and military spouses had found employment as a result.⁷²

The Subcommittee is particularly impressed with the activities of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and its successful Hiring Our Heroes campaign. It agrees with Mr. Schmiegel that local communities must be the cornerstone of any national program to provide civilian employment to transitioning military personnel and veterans. By reaching out to community businesses and employers, Hiring Our Heroes is broadening the number of job opportunities available to transitioning military personnel and veterans. The Subcommittee believes that the Hiring Our Heroes model could be imported to Canada, in much the same way as the Helmets to Hardhats initiative was not long ago. Such initiative could help connect employers in communities across the country with transitioning CAF members and veterans. Perhaps the Government of Canada and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce could partner together and launch a similar program in Canada. The Canadian program could use the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's network of some 450 chambers of commerce and boards of trade, which represent about 200,000 businesses across Canada, to promote the hiring of transitioning military personnel and veterans in communities across Canada.⁷³ The Subcommittee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 10

That the Government of Canada and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, while recognizing the many differences between the Canadian and American veteran support systems, explore the possibility of establishing a program similar to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Hiring Our Heroes initiative in Canada to help connect transitioning CAF members and veterans with employers in communities across Canada.

Unfortunately, as the Subcommittee learned in the course of this study, little outreach efforts have been made on the part of DND and VAC to promote private sector employment of veterans. In fact, minimal direct contact appears to exist between DND and VAC transition programs and individual civilian employers. This was confirmed by all of the private sector witnesses appearing before the Subcommittee, who indicated that their organizations maintained minimal contacts with DND or VAC with regards to the employability of former CAF members. Asked if Irving Shipbuilding had any direct contracts with DND and VAC "at the level

⁷¹ U.S. Chamber of Commerce, [Hiring Our Heroes Quarterly Report – June 30, 2013](#), pp. 2, 11-25.

⁷² U.S. Chamber of Commerce, [Hiring Our Heroes Quarterly Report – June 30, 2013](#), pp. 2, 26-37.

⁷³ Canadian Chamber of Commerce, ["About Us."](#)

of potential employees for the shipyard,” Brian McCarthy responded that “there is no formal contact from an employability point of view.” He emphasized, however, that his company was “open to working with the military and attempting to engage them and ease the transition for soldiers into civilian life.”⁷⁴ This was echoed by Home Depot Canada, which told the Subcommittee that it does “not have any formal partnerships at this point” with DND or VAC. Asked if representatives of DND and VAC transition programs had tried to establish any formal communications with Home Depot Canada or with industry at large in regard to hiring veterans, Karen Ritchie answered that she had “not seen anything in particular. We belong to the Retail Council of Canada. To me, that would be the main contact that should be made, and I have not come across it myself.”⁷⁵ Similar statements were made by the CN and CP representatives who appeared before the Subcommittee. Both companies were unaware of the existence of the DND programs which assist transitioning CAF members. They had never heard about DND’s Second Career Assistance Network (SCAN), for example, or the Military Civilian Training Accreditation Program.⁷⁶ As CP’s Paul Wajda explained:

*We are having difficulty finding out where to go within the Armed Forces to find these individuals [transitioning military personnel] ... we have not been able to navigate within the Armed Forces to say here is a source of individuals. I do not necessarily want a source, but I want to be able to put my positions out there somehow so people can look at them, understand what our jobs are and then apply for them. Right now we are having difficulty.*⁷⁷

However, it should be noted that the two railway companies have been in contact with VAC and its Career Transition Services Program.⁷⁸ In fact, CN is a member of VAC’s new Veterans Transition Advisory Council (VTAC).⁷⁹ CN has also been an employer partner in VAC’s Hire a Veteran program since December 2012.⁸⁰ It appears from the above statements that communication between DND and VAC transition programs and the private sector is inconsistent. Whereas some companies had contacts with VAC transition programs, but not with DND ones, others did not even know about the existence of these programs. Some seem surprised to learn about the existence of DND and VAC transition programs. All companies that appeared before the Subcommittee said that they would welcome opportunities to develop ties with VAC and DND in relation to the employment of transitioning military personnel and veterans. As an example, Christine Joanis of CN told the Subcommittee that her company “would look forward to the opportunity to build strong relationships with key military partners,

⁷⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 28 November 2012 (Brian McCarthy, Vice-President, Human Resources, Irving Shipbuilding).

⁷⁵ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 20 June 2012 (Karen Ritchie, Director of Human Resources and Talent Acquisition, Home Depot Canada).

⁷⁶ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 7 March 2012 (Paul Wajda and Christine Joanis).

⁷⁷ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 7 March 2012 (Paul Wajda,).

⁷⁸ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 7 March 2012 (Paul Wajda and Christine Joanis).

⁷⁹ VAC, “[Harper Government and Corporate Canada Partnering to Offer Job Opportunities to Veterans.](#)”

⁸⁰ VAC, “[Hire a Veteran.](#)”

from whom we can obtain first-hand information on recruitment opportunities, and to continually improve and sustain our outreach activities.”⁸¹

It is clear that much work remains to be done to connect DND and VAC transition programs with private sector employers interested in hiring transitioning military personnel and veterans. As a VTAC-sponsored study conducted by the communications firm Navigator in August 2013 found out “Canadian employers have little interest in hiring military veterans” and have “little to no understanding of the skillset veterans have.”⁸² Although around 45% of the 850 employers surveyed across Canada agreed that hiring veterans reflected well on their business, the study revealed that 35% did not think that their organization needed to make any special efforts to recruit veterans and another 49% had no opinion on the subject. Just 16% of employers believed their organization should make special efforts to recruit veterans. Moreover, around 73% of employers admitted that their organization did not possess a veteran specific hiring initiative and, of these, only 4% expressed an interest in developing and implementing one.⁸³

According to Jaime Watt, executive chairman of Navigator and a VTAC member, “there are two possible explanations for these results. Either Canadian employers aren’t interested in supporting Canada’s veterans, or they aren’t aware of the support that’s needed. The research tells us that employers agree that hiring a veteran would be good for their business. That disqualifies the first option.”⁸⁴

In response to the Navigator study, VTAC recommends “a series of initiatives to address these challenges,” which include launching “a public campaign that clearly articulates the value of hiring veterans,” finding “a champion, or champions, who will make Canada’s veterans more visible to the public,” setting up a “website that assists both veterans and corporate Canada with skill translation,” and creating “an annual award — perhaps handed out by the Governor-General or the Chief of the Defence Staff — for companies that set examples in assisting veterans with the transition to civilian employment.”⁸⁵

While it is understood that communication is a two way street, the Subcommittee believes that DND and VAC transition programs have a responsibility to reach out to the private sector and help connect transitioning military personnel and veterans with civilian job opportunities. Right now, companies that hire veterans do so at their own initiative and essentially without support

⁸¹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 7 March 2012 (Christine Joanis).

⁸² Shaun Francis (Chairman of True Patriot Love Foundation and VTAC) and Jaime Watt (Executive Chairman of Navigator and member of VTAC), “[Francis & Watt: Putting Veterans to Work](#),” *National Post*, 23 September 2013; True Patriot Love Foundation, “[Putting Veterans to Work](#),” 23 September 2013.

⁸³ Navigator, “[Ground-Breaking Survey: Military Veterans Face Significant Barriers Finding Meaningful Employment](#),” 13 September 2013; Navigator, “[Data Tables](#).”

⁸⁴ Navigator, “[Ground-Breaking Survey: Military Veterans Face Significant Barriers Finding Meaningful Employment](#),” 13 September 2013.

⁸⁵ Shaun Francis (Chairman of True Patriot Love Foundation and VTAC) and Jaime Watt (Executive Chairman of Navigator and member of VTAC), “[Francis & Watt: Putting Veterans to Work](#),” *National Post*, 23 September 2013; True Patriot Love Foundation, “[Putting Veterans to Work](#),” 23 September 2013.

from DND or VAC. This should change. DND and VAC should reach out to these companies and provide a certain degree of coordination. Moreover, they should reach out to other private sector employers. Many companies do not fully grasp the potential value and benefit these individuals could bring to their organizations. As a case in point, only 13% of the 850 Canadian employers surveyed by Navigator on behalf of VTAC in August 2013 indicated that their human resources departments were trained to read military résumés and only 3% knew where to receive training to do so. Moreover, just 30% of employers said they possessed some knowledge of military rankings and occupations and, perhaps more importantly, over 76% did not know how military training and certifications related to civilian work.⁸⁶ According to VTAC chairman Shaun Francis and Navigator executive chairman Jaime Watt, the survey “depicts a corporate Canada that has difficulty understanding the transferability of the veteran skill set. Employers aren’t recognizing veterans’ skills, nor do they understand how military experience is transferable to civilian work, resulting in underemployment. This represents a waste of Canadian resources and a disservice to former military men and women.”⁸⁷

DND and VAC should educate employers in this regard. Numerous new job opportunities for transitioning military personnel and veterans could result from such actions. In particular, the Subcommittee believes that much could be gained if DND and VAC increased their outreach efforts to private sector employers. DND’s strategic partnership with Canada Company and VAC’s establishment of VTAC and launch of its Jobs-Emplois and Hire a Veteran initiatives all point in the right direction. But these efforts need to be enhanced. .

Such efforts need not be costly. For example, one way of increasing outreach efforts and connecting transitioning CAF members and veterans with job opportunities in the private sector could be through a centralized website jointly operated by DND and VAC. Many of the private sector witnesses told the Subcommittee that such a website would be helpful to them. CN and CP, for example, both argued in favor of a centralized job placement website that would enable employers and veterans to connect by posting job opportunities and résumés online.⁸⁸ Similarly, Karen Ritchie of Home Depot Canada suggested a partnership between VAC and civilian employers interested in hiring veterans. Under this arrangement, she said, links to the career pages of companies could be posted on the VAC website in order to present veterans with various civilian career options.⁸⁹

It should be noted that since the witnesses appeared before the Subcommittee, DND and VAC have both overhauled their transition to civilian life websites. But the information displayed on these portals remains of a limited nature and tends to only summarize the programs each

⁸⁶ Navigator, “[Ground-Breaking Survey: Military Veterans Face Significant Barriers Finding Meaningful Employment](#),” 13 September 2013; Navigator, “[Data Tables](#).”

⁸⁷ Francis and Watt, “[Francis & Watt: Putting Veterans to Work](#).”

⁸⁸ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 7 March 2012 (Paul Wajda and Christine Joanis).

⁸⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 20 June 2012 (Karen Ritchie).

department offers. In most cases, interested military personnel and veterans are encouraged to contact the departments directly by email or telephone to obtain more information.⁹⁰

DND and VAC have also launched new web initiatives of their own to assist transitioning military personnel and veterans connect with civilian employment opportunities. DND, for example, now posts some private sector job opportunities on its “Transition Assistance Program” website while VAC’s “Hire a Veteran” website encourages veterans to “contact” the department via email or telephone “to learn about available job opportunities ... in [their] community.”⁹¹ Moreover, as mentioned earlier, DND’s Transition Assistance Program has entered into “strategic partnership” with the Canada Company, which provides eligible transitioning CAF members access to its Military Employment Transition program website, on which various public and private sector job opportunities and web links to military-friendly civilian employers are posted. Likewise, VAC has launched its Jobs-Emplois initiative, under which a special VAC email address has been created to let civilian employers interested in hiring veterans notify VAC of new employment opportunities. VAC’s “Hire a Veteran” website also provides a channel for interested private sector employers to let VAC know about job opportunities for veterans.⁹² As Mary Chaput, Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs, told the Subcommittee on 26 March 2014, it serves as “a one-stop shop, which is an electronic shopping spot, where employers who are interested in recruiting veterans can self-identify and veterans can also go and post their availability for certain types of jobs.” However, as Ms. Chaput explained, it is still “in its very early stages” and “can work better than it is working right now.”⁹³

The Subcommittee commends DND and VAC for their efforts in using the web to help connect transitioning military personnel and veterans with civilian employers. However, we would encourage them to take a more proactive approach. Relying on an external strategic partner in the private sector to do the job in the case of DND and waiting for civilian employers to make contact in the case of VAC is not likely to offer transitioning CAF personnel and veterans, as well as potential employers, a resource that is comprehensive enough and reflects a degree of coordination and outreach necessary for their needs to be met. Moreover, cooperation between DND and Canada Company does not seem to have been formalized, for instance through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining precisely what the respective roles and responsibilities are.

We believe that DND and VAC should provide more leadership and coordination in this area, and not leave it to the private sector to connect transitioning CAF members and veterans with civilian job opportunities. For maximum efficiency and effectiveness, these efforts should be

⁹⁰ For example, see DND, “[Canadian Armed Forces Transition Services](#),” and “[Backgrounder: Canadian Armed Forces Transition Program](#),” 25 November 2013; VAC, “[Transition to Civilian Life](#)” and “[Hire a Veteran](#).”

⁹¹ DND, “[Canadian Armed Forces Transition Services](#)”; VAC, “[Hire a Veteran: Information for Veterans Seeking Employment](#).”

⁹² VAC, “[Hire a Veteran: Information for Employers Hiring Veterans](#).”

⁹³ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 26 March 2014 (Mary Chaput, Deputy Minister, Veterans Affairs Canada).

coordinated by DND and VAC, which have a mandate to provide transition to civilian life programs and services. The Subcommittee therefore believes that the establishment of an official DND and VAC transition to civilian life website would be a more useful information-dissemination and outreach tool. Not only could it help former CAF members connect with potential private sector employers and civilian job opportunities, it could also provide valuable information on the transition programs and services offered by DND, VAC and the private sector. The website could also be used to provide information on the various skills and experiences veterans can bring to civilian employers, and what military trades and qualifications would correspond to in the private sector.

Some witnesses also spoke of a lack of understanding of military-civilian job equivalencies in the private sector. “It is difficult to access resources to translate the Canadian Forces trade, skills and course equivalencies into civilian equivalencies,” Melanie Mitra of Prospect Human Services told the Subcommittee.⁹⁴ Similarly, Canada Company’s Peter Hart noted that the issues of military-civilian job equivalencies and the conversion of military skills and trades to the civilian environment need to be addressed by government, military and industry officials.

*We need to be able to explain to a private sector HR person that a corporal in the infantry with this specialization means this in the private sector. This is what he or she makes and this is what they can make here. This is as much for the Canadian Forces member as well so they can determine where they fit in out there and what they will make. Especially on the lower ranks, they will drop down a bit on income initially, so we have to work with them on that and explain they might, but with their skills and training, if they take advantage of the training programs within that company — all the big companies and even the medium-sized ones have that — they will not only get back to where they were quickly but go well beyond that. There is expectation management on both sides.*⁹⁵

Some military-civilian job equivalency tools can be found on the websites of some private sector organizations, such as CP. And other private sector organizations are thinking about developing military-civilian skills translators of their own, such as Helmets to Hardhats Canada.⁹⁶ But these efforts are not widespread and appear to be done on an ad hoc basis. Nor are they officially recognized by DND or VAC. At the same time, the private sector appears to be largely unaware of the work done by DND in the field of military-civilian skills and trades conversion. Few witnesses were aware of the existence of the Military Civilian Training Accreditation Program or even the Canadian Defence Academy’s Canadian Forces Equivalency Database, which shows CAF members how their military trades and skills could translate into civilian qualifications.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 May 2012 (Melanie Mitra).

⁹⁵ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 28 November 2012 (Peter Hart).

⁹⁶ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 4 April 2012 (Christopher Smillie, Senior Advisor, Government Relations and Public Affairs, Building Construction Trades Department, Helmets to Hardhats).

⁹⁷ DND, “[Canadian Forces Equivalency Database \(CFED\)](#),” accessed 25 March 2013.

However, it should be noted that the Canadian Forces Liaison Council (CFLC), an organization that actively supports the CAF reserve and that promotes the employment of reservists in the private sector, provides a listing of CAF Reserve Force occupations with related civilian occupations on its website. As the organization explains on the website, while “combat arms occupations are unique to the military and do not have civilian equivalents ... certain elements of the [occupation] may be transferable” and the “leadership, time management, organizational skills (to name a few) that are common to these trades are also pertinent skills that can be used in the civilian work world.”⁹⁸ The fact that some of the witnesses who appeared before the Subcommittee were unaware of the existence of the CFLC and, as such, did not know about the CFLC’s online military-civilian job equivalency tool, suggests that this resource is not widely known.

So, while information about military-civilian job equivalencies is available, there has been no coordinated effort to compile it centrally and communicate it to both, transitioning CAF members and veterans, and private and public sector employers. It should be noted, however, that basic information on eleven of the “the most common positions in the Canadian Armed Forces” have been posted on VAC’s Hire a Veteran website to help civilian employers learn more about military trades, skills and expertise.⁹⁹ But the information appearing in those “job summaries” is general in nature and provides little in terms of military-civilian job equivalencies. As Mary Chaput, Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs told the Subcommittee on 26 March 2014, “one of the missing ingredients [from the website] is what we call a skills translator where the perhaps complex and hard to understand skills of the military specialist are translated into a more civilian applications.” She then stated that VAC is working closely with the Department of Employment and Skills Development, which is in the throes of developing this translator that will then allow us to really begin to market this one-stop shop and veterans themselves as highly employable resources.”¹⁰⁰

It is clear from the testimony we heard and the results of the August 2013 VTAC-sponsored survey of Canadian employers conducted by Navigator that civilian employers would benefit from a better understanding of military-civilian job equivalencies. They need to know what military personnel can offer their organizations and how the trades and skills these individuals learned in the service of their country can translate to the civilian context. The Subcommittee believes that DND should share some of that information with the private sector. This would help civilian employers gain a better understanding of how military and civilian trades and skills relate to one another. It would eliminate some of the confusion that currently exists within the public sector and would incite more civilian employers to hire former military personnel. The Subcommittee also believes that much knowledge could be gained by the military in the field of

⁹⁸ Canadian Forces Liaison Council (CFLC), “[Military Occupations and Related Civilian Occupations](#).”

⁹⁹ The following eleven CAF job summaries appeared on the Hire a Veteran website when consulted on 14 March 2014: “infantry soldier, armoured soldier, vehicle technician, supply technician, rescue management support clerk, aviation systems technician, combat engineer, mobile support equipment operator, artillery soldier, pilot [and] military police.” VAC, “[Hire a Veteran: Information for Employers Hiring Veterans](#).”

¹⁰⁰ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 26 March 2014 (Mary Chaput, Deputy Minister, Veterans Affairs Canada).

military-civilian job equivalencies through an open dialogue with the private sector. It would allow the military to obtain the views and input of the private sector and get a better understanding of what civilian employers are looking for.

While the improved and better coordinated resources described above are an essential part of supporting transitioning CAF personnel and veterans in finding post-release employment, more can also be done to give them the ability needed to communicate and sell the experience, training, trades and skills they have learned in the military to civilian employers. As Natalie Condrashoff of BCIT told the Subcommittee:

Some of the challenges we noticed that military members have is a difficulty distinguishing between "me "versus "we "statements. Teamwork is an important part of being in the Canadian Forces and we recognize that, but civilian employers want to know what they have done as an individual. It is part of our job to identify what you specifically did in that team.

... We have also noticed that the skill set of military members is a lot greater than what their Military Personal Record Résumé — or MPRR — states, and they have difficulty verbalizing that, because they have been doing the same job for years and it seems like no big deal to them. However, when you dig down to the nitty-gritty and explore what they actually did, they are working with multi-million-dollar budgets and massive supply chains that extend halfway across the globe. They are useful and important to civilian employers, but they need the help to say, "I did that. It is a big deal and it is worthwhile."¹⁰¹

The Subcommittee believes that DND and VAC transition programs should include enhanced efforts to train transitioning military personnel and veterans in recognizing and communicating how the skills and trades they have learned in the CAF can translate into civilian skills and qualifications. The Subcommittee recommends:

¹⁰¹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 May 2012 (Natalie Condrashoff, Project Manager, British Columbia Institute of Technology, Legion Military Skills Conversion Program).

Recommendation 11

That DND and VAC increase their outreach efforts with the private sector and encourage civilian employers to hire transitioning military personnel and veterans. As top priorities in this regard, the Subcommittee additionally recommends:

(a) That an official and centralized transition to civilian life website jointly operated by DND and VAC be created to coordinate public and private sector transition programs and services and help connect transitioning military personnel and veterans with civilian employers.

(b) That DND take a lead role in providing civilian employers with a better understanding of military-civilian job equivalencies.

(c) That DND and VAC transition programs enhance efforts to assist transitioning military personnel and veterans promote their military experiences, training, trades and skills to the civilian marketplace.

Several witnesses made suggestions as to actions that DND and VAC could take to encourage the private sector to hire veterans. Karen Ritchie of Home Depot Canada, for example, suggested developing an awards system that would publicly recognize companies that hire veterans:

Many large organizations do participate in the Top 100 Employers competition sponsored through Mediacorp, and, within that competition, there are sub-categories where organizations are recognized as being the best employer for new Canadians or the best employer for employees over age 50 or for students and that kind of thing. There may be an opportunity to include a best employer for hiring people from the military. That is one possibility.¹⁰²

This was echoed by VTAC in September 2013 when it recommended the establishment of an award system recognizing Canadian employers who hire veterans.¹⁰³ It should be noted in this regard that the CFLC has an awards and public recognition program which recognizes employers and educational institutions that have been supportive in granting time off to reservists for training and operations. The CFLC's Employer Support Awards, for example, recognize companies, government organizations, academic institutions and other organizations for their support to Canada's Reserve Force personnel. The award ceremony is held almost

¹⁰² Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 20 June 2012 (Karen Ritchie).

¹⁰³ Francis and Watt, "[Francis & Watt: Putting Veterans to Work](#)"; True Patriot Love Foundation, "[Putting Veterans to Work](#)."

every year.¹⁰⁴ In 2013, 19 organizations from across Canada received CFLC awards.¹⁰⁵ A similar award system could be extended to the entire CAF to recognize military-friendly civilian employers that actively hire former military personnel. This award system could be jointly managed by DND and VAC. The Subcommittee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 12

That DND and VAC develop and jointly manage an awards system similar to that of the CFLC, which would annually recognize private sector organizations that hire transitioning military personnel and veterans.

Another way of promoting the hiring of veterans to civilian employers could be reaching out to relevant public and private sector employers and educating them about those aspects of military culture, training and experience that are most relevant to them as prospective employers. One way of doing so, Canada Company explained, is by getting civilian employers on military bases and talking to CAF members, such as through the CFLC's ExecuTrek program. ExecuTrek was originally developed to provide "employers, supervisors and human resources professionals a first-hand view of the quality of military training and the benefits that employers can gain from that training – trade skills, general work and management skills, values, work ethics and much more."¹⁰⁶ Canada Company's Peter Hart noted that his organization is an active participant in the ExecuTrek and that, in 2011, it took between 80 and 100 people to CFB Petawawa on the ExecuTrek program.¹⁰⁷ In fiscal year 2011-2012, for example, 13 ExecuTreks were held across Canada and 269 guests participated.¹⁰⁸

The Subcommittee agrees that much could be gained by strengthening efforts in this area. Having civilian employers visit military bases so that they have an opportunity to meet CAF members and see first-hand what they can bring to their organization is a sound course of action. The Subcommittee believes the ExecuTrek program offers such an opportunity and would encourage the CFLC and DND to expand it in coming years so that as many civilian employers as possible can benefit from it. The Subcommittee recommends:

Recommendation 13

That the CFLC and DND consider expanding the ExecuTrek program in coming years and use it as an outreach tool to promote public and private sector hiring of transitioning military personnel and veterans.

¹⁰⁴ CFLC, "[Recognize your Employer.](#)"

¹⁰⁵ DND, "[News Release: Canadian Forces Liaison Council Honours 2013 National Employer Support Award Recipients.](#)" 7 June 2013.

¹⁰⁶ CFLC, "[ExecuTrek.](#)"

¹⁰⁷ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 28 November 2012 (Peter Hart).

¹⁰⁸ CFLC, [Canadian Forces Liaison Council \(CFLC\) Annual Report 2011-2012](#), p. 1.

Another way to help civilian employers connect with transitioning military personnel and veterans could be through military career fairs. Some of the witnesses heard by the Subcommittee spoke about the success of military career fairs in the United States and encouraged the organization of similar events in Canada.¹⁰⁹ The Subcommittee recommends:

Recommendation 14

That DND and VAC sponsor the organization of military career fairs to help employers and veterans connect with one another.

¹⁰⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 7 March 2012 (Christine Joanis).

CONCLUSION

In 1944, a Department of Pensions and National Health booklet entitled *Back to Civil Life*, which was developed to inform Canadian military personnel who were about to be released from the armed forces about Canadian government plans for the rehabilitation of those in uniform, stated that “the objective of Canada’s plan for the rehabilitation of her armed forces is that every man or woman discharged from the forces shall be in a position to earn a living.”¹¹⁰ The overall approach to reintegrating military personnel was explained as follows:

*Canada’s rehabilitation belief is that the answer to civil re-establishment is a job, and the answer to a job is fitness and training for that job. Our ambition is that these men and women who have taken up arms in defence of their country and their ideals of freedom shall not be penalized for the time they have spent in the services and our desire is that they shall be fitted in every possible way to take their place in Canada’s civil and economic life.*¹¹¹

Today, nearly seventy years after the end of the Second World War, the reintegration of transitioning military personnel and veterans into the civilian workforce and economy continues to attract the attention of government and military officials, veterans’ organizations and employers. After more than ten years of participation in the international mission in Afghanistan and the deployment of over 40,000 CAF members to that country, some of whom came back home with physical and/or psychological disabilities, the successful reintegration of this new generation of war veterans into Canadian society is and will remain an important issue.

Canada’s military mission in Afghanistan came to an end in March 2014,¹¹² but the men and women who served in that operational theatre will continue to require care and support for years to come, particularly those ill and injured as a result of combat operations. Many of these individuals are still serving in the CAF and will be transitioning to civilian life in coming years. It is imperative that Canada be ready to reintegrate those men and women into Canadian society and provide them with the necessary assistance to make their transition from military to civilian life as smooth and problem-free as possible.

The men and women of our armed forces devote their lives to Canada. They agree to pay the ultimate sacrifice to defend us, our interests and our way of life. After years in uniform in the service of their country, they deserve a positive return to civilian life, and this includes access to meaningful employment opportunities in Canadian society. No veteran should have to face unemployment post-service. The least Canada can do is help them plan and prepare for post-service civilian employment and assist them in their search for good, well-paid public and

¹¹⁰ Government of Canada, *Back to Civil Life*, Second Edition, Department of Pensions and National Health, Ottawa, 25 August 1944, p. 3.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Government of Canada, [“Canadian Armed Forces Completes Mission in Afghanistan,”](#) 12 March 2014.

private sector jobs. The skills and experiences that veterans have learned throughout their military careers should not be wasted after they leave the military. The Subcommittee believes that these experiences and skills can be of high value to the public and private sectors. Veterans can and should be given the opportunities to make valuable contributions to the Canadian economy.

Fortunately, as this study demonstrates, there is no shortage of public and private organizations committed to assisting releasing CAF members and veterans make a successful transition from the military to the civilian workplace. DND and VAC both offer a range of transition programs and services, and a number of non-government organizations are now providing similar assistance. In addition, more and more public and private sector employers are recognizing the value veterans can bring to their organizations and are hiring them in ever greater numbers. The Subcommittee is pleased with these activities and initiatives and extends its sincerest appreciation to all of these public and private sector organizations. Transitioning military personnel and veterans can only benefit from such efforts.

It is encouraging to see so many organizations devote time and resources to assist transitioning military personnel and veterans find meaningful civilian jobs. The Subcommittee feels that this is a step in the right direction and should continue. It notes that most transition programs and services offered by both the private and public sectors are relatively new and some are still in an embryonic stage. Indeed, many of these programs have only been created in the past decade.

The Subcommittee would like to encourage all public and private sector organizations that provide transition programs to former CAF members to continue to review and improve their services in years to come.

That being said, the Subcommittee believes that more could be done to enhance existing transition programs and services and further assist former CAF members with their quests for meaningful post-release job opportunities in civilian society. It is clear that more research is needed on the transition process and how it affects veterans. More outreach and education is also required. DND and VAC should strive to enhance communication with civilian employers and provide them with a better understanding of military-civilian job equivalencies. They should be more proactive in reaching out to the private sector and connecting veterans with employers and job opportunities on the civilian market. There is also a need for enhanced coordination. More work is needed on DND and VAC to streamline and coordinate the various public and private sector transition programs and services. The departments should provide leadership in that regard and serve as the central hub for information about all public and private sector transition programs and services. DND and VAC also have a responsibility to assist transitioning CAF members and veterans with their return to civil life, and this includes providing them with the training and tools they need to start new civilian careers, helping them find meaningful employment in the public and private sectors, and training them to recognize and communicate their military experiences, skills and qualifications effectively to civilian employers.

The Subcommittee hopes that the recommendations made in this report will help the Government of Canada improve the transition process. We are confident that with a more streamlined and effective system in place, public and private sector transition programs and services will continue to serve releasing CAF members and veterans into the future.

ANNEX 1: LIST OF SOME KEY TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

A) FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

1. Department of National Defence
 - Career Transition Assistance Programs (CTAP)
 - Second Career Assistance Network Program (SCAN)
 - Transition Assistance Program (TAP)
 - Vocational Rehabilitation Program for Serving Members.
 - Federal Public Service Employment – Priority Appointment for Eligible Released Canadian Armed Forces Members
 - Military Civilian Training Accreditation Program
 - Canadian Forces Continuing Education Program
 - SISIP Financial Services' Vocational Rehabilitation Program

2. Veterans Affairs Canada
 - Career Transition Services Program
 - Vocational Rehabilitation Program
 - Veterans Transition Advisory Council (with True Patriot Love Foundation)
 - Hire a Veteran / Jobs-Emplois Initiatives

B) NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

1. Canada Company
 - Military Employment Transition Program

2. Helmets to Hardhats Canada

3. Prince's Charities
 - Operation Entrepreneur

4. Prospect Human Services
 - Forces@WORK Program

5. Royal Canadian Legion / University of British Columbia / Veterans Transition Network
 - Veterans Transition Program

6. Royal Canadian Legion / British Columbia Institute of Technology
 - Legion Military Skills Conversion Program

7. Treble Victor Group

8. True Patriot Love Foundation
 - Veterans Transition Advisory Council (with Veterans Affairs Canada)
9. Veterans Emergency Transition Services (VETS)
10. Wounded Warriors

C) EXAMPLES OF PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS WHICH HIRE VETERANS

1. Canadian Corps of Commissionaires
2. Canadian National
3. Canadian Pacific
4. Home Depot Canada
5. Irving Shipbuilding

ANNEX 2: OVERVIEW OF SOME KEY TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE TRANSITION PROGRAMS

DND provides several programs and services to assist CAF members with their transition from military to civilian life. The management and delivery of these transition programs used to be split among different organizations within the CAF. As an example, the Directorate Casualty Support and Management used to be responsible only for those programs aimed specifically at ill and injured military personnel whereas the Canadian Defence Academy looked after those available to all CAF members. However, a more centralized approach has been adopted recently.¹¹³

Transition programs have now been regrouped and are referred to as the Career Transition Assistance Programs (CTAP). While many of these programs are offered to all CAF members, some are aimed specifically at individuals who have been or will be released for medical reasons. CTAP programs include, among others, the Second Career Assistance Network, the Transition Assistance Program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program for Serving Members. Responsibility for the CTAP suite of programs lies with the Directorate Casualty Support and Management, which reports to the Chief of Military Personnel.¹¹⁴

Aside from the CTAP programs, a number of additional DND programs are available to assist transitioning CAF members. These include the Military Civilian Training Accreditation Program and the Canadian Forces Continuing Education Program.

All of the above-mentioned programs are offered to CAF members while they are still serving. In addition, Service Income Security Insurance Plan (SISIP) Financial Services operates a Long Term Disability Vocational Rehabilitation Program, which provides support to ill and injured CAF members in the two years following their release from the CAF.

Individuals who continue to require transition assistance after their release from the CAF must then turn to VAC and its transition programs. The VAC programs will be explained in the next section of this report.

1) Transition Programs for All CAF Members

A number of transition programs are available to CAF members. These programs help military personnel plan and prepare for release and offer them opportunities in the areas of career transition services, job placement in the private sector, civilian recognition of military training

¹¹³ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 25 April 2012 (Colonel Gérard Blais).

¹¹⁴ DND, *The Guide to Benefits, Programs, and Services for Serving and Former Canadian Forces Members and their Families*, 28 November 2013, p. 8. See also DND, "[Backgrounder: Canadian Armed Forces Transition Program](#)," 25 November 2013.

and continuing education. The main CTAP programs are the Second Career Assistance Network (SCAN) and the Transition Assistance Program. Other DND programs available to assist CAF members with their transition to civilian life include the Military Civilian Training Accreditation Program and the Canadian Forces Continuing Education Program.

A. Second Career Assistance Network Program

Operational since 2002, the SCAN program was developed to provide assistance to military personnel in planning and preparing for retirement from the CAF and their transition to civilian life. SCAN services are available to all CAF members and include long-term planning and transition seminars, counselling, career transition workshops and access to job and talent banks as well as a reference material library that holds current information on such subjects as personal interest and skills, résumé writing, job searching and interview techniques, and job market trends.¹¹⁵ According to DND, the purpose of the program is to provide “individual transition assistance as well as counselling services to each CF member.”¹¹⁶ This includes members of the Regular Force and the Reserve Force. Moreover, depending on availability, the spouse or common-law partners of CAF members can participate in the seminars.¹¹⁷

B. Transition Assistance Program

The purpose of the Transition Assistance Program is to assist CAF members “who have been or will be released in making the transition to the civilian workforce.”¹¹⁸ The program also “encourages” civilian employers in the private and public sectors “to consider providing employment opportunities to releasing CAF members.”¹¹⁹ DND notes that “all serving or former members who have been honourably released and qualified in their occupation are eligible” to participate in the Transition Assistance Program.¹²⁰ The Transition Assistance Program has entered into a “strategic partnership” with the Canada Company. Under this arrangement, Canada Company provides eligible serving and former members of the CAF with access to its Military Employment Transition Program website, on which is posted a list of military-friendly employer partners from the private and public sectors with direct links to job opportunities on their websites. The Canada Company website also provides additional resources for transitioning CAF members, which includes career assessments, market analyses, information on résumé writing, job search tools, job coaching and mentoring, and lists of national and regional employment opportunities in the private and public sectors.¹²¹ In addition, Canada

¹¹⁵ DND, “[Defence Administrative Orders and Directives \(DAOD\) – DAOD 5031-4: Second Career Assistance Network Programme](#)”; DND, *The Guide to Benefits, Programs, and Services*, pp. 8-9; DND, “[Backgrounder: Canadian Armed Forces Transition Program](#),” 25 November 2013.

¹¹⁶ DND, “[DAOD 5031-4, Second Career Assistance Network Programme](#).”

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ DND, “[Transition Assistance Program](#).”

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ DND, “[Transition Assistance Program](#)”; DND, “[Backgrounder: Canadian Armed Forces Transition Program](#),” 25 November 2013; DND, *The Guide to Benefits, Programs, and Services*, p. 10; Canada Company, “[Military Employment Transition Program](#)”;

Company provides military-friendly employer partners with information on such things as CAF occupations, culture and skill sets.¹²²

The Transition Assistance Program also maintains partnerships with other non-profit organizations, such as the Prince's Charities (Operation Entrepreneur), Helmets to Hardhats Canada, the Canadian Franchise Association and Prospect Human Services' Forces@WORK program.¹²³

However, as Colonel Gerard Blais, Director Casualty Support Management and commanding officer of the Joint Personnel Support Unit, told the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence on 1 April 2014, "we [DND] are harnessing all those efforts under one umbrella ... program [Canada Company] so that when the individual goes to seek employment, everything is located in one area so that they don't have to go running around to find a job."¹²⁴

C. Military Civilian Training Accreditation Program

The Military Civilian Training Accreditation Program was created in 2003.¹²⁵ It seeks to obtain "accreditation of military training with provincial technical, academic and professional licensing bodies in an effort to obtain formal civilian recognition of military training and experience" in the form of full or partial credits of qualifications.¹²⁶

DND defines "accreditation" as "the formal evaluation by a competent civilian professional body of military education, training, experience, course documentation, instructional staff qualifications and facilities, for the purpose of establishing civilian academic, professional or occupational equivalencies." These "equivalencies can result in CF members obtaining advanced standing at academic institutions and assist CF members in some cases to take civilian certification exams and, once certification is obtained, to practice in a given civilian occupation." In sum, the Military Civilian Training Accreditation Program assists CAF members in career transition by identifying "all military education, training and experience that may be applied toward a civilian academic program, occupation or profession."¹²⁷

As part of the Military Civilian Training Accreditation Program process, the Canadian Defence Academy identifies military occupations requiring accreditation or re-accreditation. The accreditation is carried out by civilian accrediting organizations contracted by the Canadian

House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 4 March 2014 (Major-General David Millar, Chief of Military Personnel, DND).

¹²² Canada Company, "[Military Employment Transition Program: Employers.](#)"

¹²³ DND, "[Backgrounder: Canadian Armed Forces Transition Program.](#)" 25 November 2013.

¹²⁴ House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence, *Evidence*, Unedited Copy, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 1 April 2014 (Colonel Gerry Blais).

¹²⁵ DND, "[DAOD – DAOD 5031-6: Military Civilian Training Accreditation Program.](#)"

¹²⁶ Canadian Defence Academy (CDA), "Accreditation, Equivalencies and Prior Learning Assessment Recognition (PLAR)" <http://www.cda.forces.gc.ca/cfpds-sppfc/english/prof-dev-admin-responsibilities/accred-equiv-prior-learning-assess-recog.htm>, consulted 25 March 2013.

¹²⁷ DND, "[DAOD – DAOD 5031-6: Military Civilian Training Accreditation Program.](#)"

Defence Academy. This includes academic institutions (for example, universities, colleges, and technical schools) and occupational organizations (for example, government departments and agencies, professional associations, or international, federal and provincial bodies). The goal is to have a minimum of 20 accreditations completed every year. The equivalencies resulting from the accreditation process are then downloaded into the Canadian Forces Equivalencies Database.¹²⁸ As the Canadian Defence Academy explains, military personnel can use the Canadian Forces Equivalencies Database “to see if their military training/education is recognized by civilian institutions and what equivalencies they may be entitled to” and to “assist them in the planning of post-secondary education or in seeking gainful employment in their field of experience in the civilian sector.”¹²⁹

Information provided by DND to the Subcommittee in January 2012 indicated that activities relating to the Military Civilian Training Assistance Program had resulted in the following equivalencies being granted for 63 non-commissioned member occupations and 5 officer occupations within the CAF: 87 full or partial college credits, 44 full or partial university credits, and full or partial fulfilment of the requirements for 50 professional or trade certifications. Moreover, it was reported that 16 college and 22 university credit equivalencies had been granted for elements of CAF leadership training. DND also explained that the “current focus” of the Military Civilian Training Assistance Program was on “the accreditation of non-commissioned member occupations” and that CAF “policy relating to having an educated, degree officer corps and the closer alignment of officer employment with civilian employment has meant less effort is expended towards accrediting officer Canadian Forces training with that of civilian colleges and universities.”¹³⁰

D. Canadian Forces Continuing Education Program

Releasing military personnel can also benefit from the Canadian Forces Continuing Education Program. The aim of the program, which makes continuing education available to military personnel on a part time basis, is to facilitate CAF members’ access to post-secondary education at universities and community colleges in order to upgrade their academic or vocational qualifications. CAF members can also take courses or training towards obtaining a high school diploma or an equivalent degree. As DND explains, CAF “members may enhance educational level and skills under the CFCEP [Canadian Forces Continuing Education Program] while they serve and, if applicable, prepare for transition to civilian life.”¹³¹

¹²⁸ Ibid; DND, “Answer to Question Taken on Notice at the 14 December 2011 Meeting of the Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs,” 24 January 2012.

¹²⁹ CDA, “Canadian Forces Equivalencies Database (CFED),” <http://www.cda-acd.forces.gc.ca/dli-dai/acc/cfed-bdefc/app/introduction-eng.asp#1>, consulted 25 March 2013.

¹³⁰ DND, “Answer to Question Taken on Notice at the 14 December 2011 Meeting of the Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs,” 24 January 2012.

¹³¹ DND, “[DAOD – DAOD 5031-5: Canadian Forces Continuing Education Program.](#)”

E. Participation in Public Service Internally Advertised Appointment Processes

In 2006, the *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA) was amended to allow CAF members to participate in the internally advertised appointment processes (i.e., job postings) of federal public service organizations governed by the PSEA, provided that the staffing notice “entitles members of the Canadian Forces to be considered” and that “the member meets the other criteria [example: geographic, occupational or linguistic].”¹³² CAF members are defined as “members of the Regular Force” and “members of the Reserve Force who are serving on a period of Class B and Class C Reserve Service in excess of 180 consecutive days at the time of application.”¹³³

It is DND policy to include CAF members in all of its internal advertised appointment processes. As Rear-Admiral Andrew Smith, the Chief of Military Personnel, told to the Subcommittee in December 2011:

*The Canadian Forces and, by extension, the Department of National Defence, really is a family. When people take the uniform off, they often do so reluctantly. If they are going to do that and want to continue employment in the public service, their first interest really is to remain part of the family — if I can use that term — inside the department. I think it is an accurate comment. Veterans Affairs, as our cousins, are seen to be closely associated with that. People in the navy might see Fisheries and Oceans as a logical extension of that. However, to go and work in Revenue Canada or Industry Canada might not be so obvious.*¹³⁴

VAC has also implemented measures to enhance employment opportunities for veterans. According to VAC, changes have been introduced to eliminate the various “barriers which can make it difficult for still-serving Canadian Armed Force personnel to qualify for positions at Veterans Affairs Canada.”¹³⁵ Keith Hillier, VAC’s Assistant Deputy Minister, Service Delivery, summed up some of these efforts in his testimony:

At Veterans Affairs Canada within the last year, we have implemented our own process because I think we need to lead in this area. Without getting into the technicalities of the Public Service Employment Act, we have tried to open up our positions more so that Canadian Forces members would apply, and also use something called an “asset qualification.” That means when we create a pool of individuals — for example, it could be case workers or any number of positions at Veterans Affairs — if we feel experience as a former member of the Canadian Forces would be an asset to do the job, we can

¹³² Department of Justice, [Public Service Employment Act](#), Last Amended 29 June 2012, Current to 4 March 2014, pp. 15–16; Public Service Commission, [“Reference List – Organizations’ Statutory Links with the Public Service Commission and the Public Service Employment Act – Explanatory Notes.”](#)

¹³³ DND, [“DAOD – DAOD 5029-1: Area of Selection.”](#)

¹³⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 14 December 2011 (Rear-Admiral Andrew Smith).

¹³⁵ VAC, [“Veterans Transition Action Plan.”](#)

*invoke that as one of the reasons for taking that individual from a pool of qualified individuals.*¹³⁶

In March 2014, the federal government introduced Bill C-27 (*Veterans Hiring Act*), under which “qualified veterans who have at least three years of military service will be given preference in advertised, external hiring processes for five years after the date of release” and “veterans and CAF personnel with at least three years of military service will be allowed to participate in advertised internal hiring processes for a period expiring five years after their release date.”¹³⁷ It is expected that the proposed changes will come into force in fiscal year 2014-2015.¹³⁸

2) Transition Programs for Ill and Injured CAF Members

“The primary goal of the Canadian Forces is to return as many ill and injured serving personnel as possible to full duties,” said Rear-Admiral Andrew Smith, the Chief of Military Personnel, when he appeared before the Subcommittee. “When Canadian Forces members are seriously injured or suffer an illness to the extent that they will be away from their normal duties for a considerable period of time, their individual case management typically follows three phases, that being recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration, which I refer to as the 3Rs.”¹³⁹

The reintegration of ill and injured military personnel into the CAF is largely coordinated through the Canadian Forces Return to Work (RTW) program. The aim of the program is to help facilitate the “restoration of the physical and mental health of injured or ill CAF members by helping them reintegrate into the workplace as soon as medically possible.” According to DND, “extensive research demonstrates that the probability of returning to work decreases significantly with the length of time away from work.” It is estimated that “ill and injured individuals who are away for more than six months are 50% less likely to return to any type of work.” As such, the ultimate goal of the RTW program is “to return members to their regular duties as soon as possible via a transitional employment period of duties modified in duration and/or scope.”¹⁴⁰

However, not all ill and injured military personnel can be reintegrated into the CAF. Under the CAF principle of Universality of Service, military personnel must be capable at all times of performing a broad range of basic military tasks. This includes firing and maintaining a personal weapon, conducting nuclear, biological and chemical warfare drills, fighting fires, administering first aid, communicating on a radio set, and preparing written military correspondence.

¹³⁶ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 14 December 2011 (Keith Hillier).

¹³⁷ VAC, “[Harper Government Improves Veterans’ Access to Federal Public Service Jobs](#),” 4 March 2014. See also Government of Canada, *The Road to Balance: Creating Jobs and Opportunities*, 11 February 2014, pp. 223-224; Department of Justice, *Bill C-27, An Act to Amend the Public Service Employment Act (Enhancing Hiring Opportunities for Certain Serving and Former Members of the Canadian Forces)*, first reading: 4 March 2014.

¹³⁸ VAC, “[Harper Government Improves Veterans’ Access to Federal Public Service Jobs](#).”

¹³⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 14 December 2011 (Rear-Admiral Andrew Smith). For more information on the 3Rs approach, see DND, *Caring for Our Own: A Comprehensive Approach for the Care of CF Ill and Injured Members and their Families*.

¹⁴⁰ DND, *The Guide to Benefits, Programs, and Services*, p. 13.

Moreover, in order to be deployable, all CAF members must be able to deploy on short notice to any location around the world, work irregular or prolonged hours, work effectively on irregular or missed meals, travel as a passenger on any mode of transportation, and perform under physical and mental stresses and with minimal medical support.¹⁴¹

For ill and injured individuals who are no longer able to serve in the CAF, several programs are available to facilitate their transition to civilian life, which includes helping them find meaningful employment in the private sector or the public service. The CAF is also committed to transfer severely ill and injured personnel no longer able to serve in the Regular Force or the Primary Reserve Force, but who still wish to remain in the CAF, into to the Cadet Organizations Administration and Training Service or the Canadian Rangers, if they are willing and able to do so.¹⁴²

In accordance with the revised career transition support policy for medically releasing CAF personnel announced by the Minister of National Defence in March 2011, severely ill and injured personnel no longer able to serve in the CAF Regular Force or the Primary Reserve Force can remain in the military for up to three years before returning to civilian life. The CAF has committed to providing each of these individuals with a “tailored and flexible plan that features comprehensive health care, career transition assistance, and the social support of the military community during that transition period.”¹⁴³ “The care of the ill and injured, including their successful transition, remains my highest priority,” noted Rear-Admiral Smith, adding that the CAF “continue to examine opportunities to improve and to work in collaboration with public agencies and the private sector to assist those who ultimately leave the Canadian Forces.”¹⁴⁴

A. Vocational Rehabilitation Program for Serving Members

The main CTAP transition program for ill and injured military personnel is the Vocational Rehabilitation Program for Serving Members. According to DND, the purpose of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program for Serving Members is to assist medically releasing CAF members make a smooth transition from military to civilian employment by affording them an opportunity to commence vocational rehabilitation training, such as academic upgrading or retraining, prior to release. According to DND, the program “enables eligible [ill and injured] CAF members who have been notified of an impending ... release, with the approval of their Commanding Officer, to commence participation in vocational rehabilitation training for up to six months prior to the earlier date of either their start of retirement leave, of their final date of release from the

¹⁴¹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 14 December 2011 (Rear-Admiral Andrew Smith); DND, “Fit to Serve: Universality of Service and Related Support Programs,” 25 March 2011; DND, “DAOD – DAOD 5023-0: Universality of Service” and “DAOD – DAOD 5023-1: Minimum Operational Standards Related to Universality of Service.”

¹⁴² Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 14 December 2011 (Rear-Admiral Andrew Smith).

¹⁴³ DND, “[Minister MacKay Announces Career Transition Support Policy for Severely Ill and Injured Canadian Forces Personnel](#),” 25 March 2011.

¹⁴⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 14 December 2011 (Rear-Admiral Andrew Smith).

CAF.”¹⁴⁵ Regular Force members and members of the Primary Reserve Force who have completed two years of consecutive full-time services are eligible for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program for Serving Members.¹⁴⁶

B. Canadian Armed Forces Medically Released Priority Entitlement

Ill and injured military personnel can also benefit from priority hiring into the federal public service. The priority entitlement applies only to CAF members who are released or discharged for medical reasons. Under CAF Medically Released Priority Entitlement, which came into effect on 31 December 2005, these individuals may be eligible for priority job appointments in the federal public service. Simply put, if a job becomes available in the federal public service and persons who have been released or discharged from the CAF for medical reasons have the skills needed to fill that position, they will be given priority over other candidates.¹⁴⁷ Eligible persons include:

- *[A] member of the Regular Force of the Canadian Forces;*
- *A member of the Primary Reserve [Force] of the Canadian Forces on full-time Class B Reserve Service of more than 180 consecutive days;*
- *A member of the [Primary] Reserve Force of the Canadian Forces on Class C Reserve Service;*
- *A member of the Primary Reserve [Force] of the Canadian Forces on Class A or Class B Reserve Service of 180 days or less, if the medical reasons are attributable to service; and*
- *A member of the special force of the Canadian Forces.*¹⁴⁸

Also included are members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Reserve of the RCMP.¹⁴⁹

DND and VAC both encourage the hiring of ill and injured veterans into public service position within their organizations. However, apparently not all federal departments and agencies do. “With respect to priority hiring within the public service,” Rear-Admiral Smith stated, “it still

¹⁴⁵ DND, [The Guide to Benefits, Programs, and Services](#), p. 11.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 11; DND, [Caring for Our Own](#), p. 21.

¹⁴⁷ Public Service Commission of Canada, Guide on Priority Administration, Part II, Chapter 5: Canadian Forces / RCMP Members Released or Discharged for Medical Reasons; Elaine M. Coldwell (DND), “Questions and Answers — CF Eligibility to Apply and the CF Medically Released Priority Entitlement,” DCEP Bulletin, No. 10 (May 2006); DND, [The Guide to Benefits, Programs, and Services](#), pp. 11-12.

¹⁴⁸ Department of Justice, [Public Service Employment Regulations](#), Last Amended 23 September 2010, Current to 26 November 2013, p. 5.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

remains incumbent upon individual departments to be proactive in that regard.”¹⁵⁰ Keith Hillier of VAC concurred. “Certainly, there are occupations and trades in government that are compatible,” he said, “but many are not.”¹⁵¹

As the Public Service Commission reported in April 2013, 1,027 veterans entered the Federal Public Service through priority hiring between the launch of the program in 2005 and September 2012. More than 72% of them were hired by DND (741). The remaining 286 joined other federal government departments and agencies.¹⁵² The Public Service Commission also indicated at the time that “there has been a ... decline in the number of appointments of Canadian veterans who have been medically released” due to recent federal government cuts to the Public Service.¹⁵³ As a Public Service Commission spokesperson told the CBC, “only 30 veterans have been hired through the priority hiring program between April 2012 and March 2013.”¹⁵⁴

In November 2013, the federal government introduced Bill C-11 (*Priority Hiring for Injured Veterans Act*), which will amend the *Public Service Employment Act* to provide medically-released veterans “who were injured in service to Canada the top level of priority consideration for job openings in the public service.” Under this legislation, VAC announced in a press release, “Regular Force and Reserve Force members who are medically released from the Canadian Armed Forces for service-related reasons will receive a statutory priority for a period of five years. This will provide veterans with the highest level of priority consideration for public service positions, above all other groups, in recognition of their sacrifices and service to Canada.” The press release also indicated that “full-time Regular or Reserve Force veterans who release for non-service-related medical reasons will continue to receive their existing level of priority,” but that the “duration of their access will be increased from two to five years, allowing them a longer period of priority entitlement for positions.”¹⁵⁵ The legislation is expected to come into force in 2014.¹⁵⁶

It should be noted that the provisions of Bill C-11 appear to be included in Bill C-27 (*Veterans Hiring Act*), which the federal government introduced in March 2014.

3) SISIP Financial Services’ Vocational Rehabilitation Program

After their release from the CAF, ill and injured military personnel are eligible to participate in SISIP Financial Services’ Vocational Rehabilitation Program. SISIP Financial Services is a division

¹⁵⁰ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 14 December 2011 (Rear-Admiral Andrew Smith).

¹⁵¹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 14 December 2011 (Keith Hillier).

¹⁵² Kathleen Harris, “[Federal Government Pledges to Hire More Injured Vets](#),” *CBC News*, 27 April 2013.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ VAC, “[Government of Canada Announces Priority Hiring for Injured Veterans](#),” 7 November 2013. See also Department of Justice, [Bill C-11, An Act to Amend the Public Service Employment Act \(Priority Hiring for Injured Veterans\)](#), first reading: 7 November 2013.

¹⁵⁶ VAC, “[Government of Canada Announces Priority Hiring for Injured Veterans](#),”

of the Canadian Armed Forces Morale and Welfare Services that provides financial products and services to serving and former CAF members and their families. This includes, among others, Long Term Disability benefits, life insurance products, financial counselling, financial planning services, financial management education and vocational rehabilitation.¹⁵⁷ The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is a component of SISIP Financial Services' Long Term Disability benefits plan.

The SISIP Financial Services' Vocational Rehabilitation Program was created in December 1999 and was developed to prepare ill and injured CAF members obtain gainful civilian employment post-release. It does so by enhancing their education, skills, training and experience. According to SISIP Financial Services:

*The objective of the VRP [Vocational Rehabilitation Program] is not to provide training or education in a new career field, if, at the time of release, a former member already has transferable skills to the civilian workforce while in keeping with the former member's medical limitations. Any training provided will focus on the acquisition of a licence, certification or diploma from a recognized educational institution.*¹⁵⁸

All military personnel released from the CAF for medical reasons are eligible to participate in the SISIP Financial Services' Vocational Rehabilitation Program for two years post-release. "Benefits under the Vocational Rehabilitation Program can begin as early as six months prior to release and continue on for 24 months post-release, for a period of up to 30 months," explained Brigadier-General Fred Bigelow, Director General of Personnel and Family Support Services, when he appeared before the Subcommittee.¹⁵⁹ According to André Bouchard, President of SISIP Financial Services, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program assisted 3,217 people in 2011.¹⁶⁰ In 2012, it assisted more than 3,900.¹⁶¹ As he explained:

When we look at the complete book of business, we have roughly over 3,000 members ... [In] any given year about 1,000 new members come in and some leave the program. With respect to the 1,000 who leave on any given annual basis, the success rate is about 70 per cent. That would be people who would have the right skill sets to find gainful

¹⁵⁷ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 25 April 2012 (Brigadier-General Fred Bigelow, Director General of Personnel and Family Support Services, Department of National Defence). See also Service Income Security Insurance Plan (SISIP) Financial Services (FS), "About SISIP Financial Services"; DND, "Death & Disability Benefits, Programs & Services Guide Section 16: Service Income Security Insurance Plan Financial Services (SISIP FS)," <http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/cen/pub/ddb-pdi/guide-16-eng.asp>, consulted 25 March 2013 ; DND, [The Guide to Benefits, Programs, and Services](#), pp. 72-75.

¹⁵⁸ SISIP FS, "[SISIP LTD Vocational Rehabilitation Program](#)."

¹⁵⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 25 April 2012 (Brigadier-General Fred Bigelow). See also SISIP FS, "SISIP LTD Vocational Rehabilitation Program."

¹⁶⁰ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 25 April 2012 (André Bouchard, President, SISIP).

¹⁶¹ SISIP Financial Services, "[About SISIP Financial Services](#)."

*employment. The key words there are the tools and the skill sets to find gainful employment. That is about 70 per cent of that 1,000.*¹⁶²

But as Bouchard emphasized, not everybody who participates in the program completes it. About 30% “will fall off the program.” As he explained: “Once they start vocational rehabilitation if, for some reason, they have a medical condition that worsens and they can no longer take that program, they drop off, they will remain claimants but will not remain on the VRP itself.” Moreover, “there is another 15% that, for some reason, will quit the program for various reasons, such as personal reasons they may have.”¹⁶³

VETERANS AFFAIRS CANADA TRANSITION PROGRAMS

VAC offers two main programs to assist veterans in their transition to civilian life, the Career Transition Services Program and the Vocational Rehabilitation program. Both programs were created as part of the New Veterans Charter.¹⁶⁴ As Anne-Marie Pellerin, VAC’s Director of Rehabilitation and Case Management, explained in her testimony, the Career Transition Services Program assists veterans who are released from the CAF for non-medical reasons and who require assistance with their transition to the civilian labour force. The Vocational Rehabilitation program, on the other hand, “is targeted at those who medically release or those who have a service-related rehabilitation need, usually a health issue that has emerged that can reasonably be linked to service.”¹⁶⁵

1) Career Transition Services Program

The Career Transition Services Program was established in 2006 as part of the New Veterans Charter, and was originally designed to assist both serving CAF members and veterans in “planning and preparing for career transition, and to support them in finding suitable and satisfying post-military employment.”¹⁶⁶ The program offered workshops, individual career counselling, and job search assistance to CAF members preparing for release, as well as to veterans and their survivors.¹⁶⁷

The Career Transition Services Program was initially delivered through a single national contract provider, namely the career transition firm Right Management.¹⁶⁸ The partnership with Right Management started in October 2007.¹⁶⁹ According to Ms. Pellerin, Right Management operates worldwide and provides similar career transition services to veterans in Australia,

¹⁶² Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 25 April 2012 (André Bouchard).

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), [New Veterans Charter \(NVC\) Evaluation – Phase III](#), February 2011, p. 26.

¹⁶⁵ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 31 October 2012 (Anne-Marie Pellerin).

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ VAC, [New Veterans Charter \(NVC\) Evaluation – Phase III](#), p. 54.

¹⁶⁸ Right Management Manpower Group, “[Strategic Partnerships](#).”

¹⁶⁹ VAC, [New Veterans Charter \(NVC\) Evaluation – Phase III](#), p. 27.

Norway and the United Kingdom.¹⁷⁰ Under this arrangement, VAC referred participants to Right Management and monitored the delivery and effectiveness of the services.

Ms. Pellerin explained how the three main components of the programs were delivered by Right Management between 2007 and 2012 as follow:

The workshops ... were usually offered on or near CF bases. Participation in workshops was limited to a maximum of 12 participants, and the modules over the three-day period included topics such as career assessment, résumé basics, job search strategies and interview and negotiation strategies

... The second component of Career Transition Services is individual career counselling that is provided by a Right Management counsellor one on one with the veteran participant in the veteran's community. This aspect of the service is more in-depth in terms of extensive career assessment and testing, discussions on the veteran's education and training, and exploration of career possibilities.

The third component is job-finding assistance, which includes market research assistance, a talent profile bank and virtual job search teams. There are also "meet the employer" events that Right Management coordinates and ensures access to by veteran participants in the program.¹⁷¹

According to Ms. Pellerin, "there are approximately 200 registered employers across Canada" in the Career Transition Services job bank, "with over 2,000 job opportunities listed per fiscal year." The inventory of employers and job opportunities is maintained by Right Management. "It is proprietary, so it ... [belongs] to Right Management," not VAC, Ms. Pellerin told the Subcommittee.¹⁷²

According to a 2011 VAC report, the level of participation to the Career Transition Services Program was relatively low in the first three years of operations, but its performance has improved over the years. As Table 1 illustrates, between fiscal years 2007–2008 and 2009–2010, 2,217 people attended Career Transition Services workshops and 783 took part in the program's career counselling (649) and job search assistance (134) components. Moreover, a limited number of people had found employment through the Career Transition Services Program in that same period. For example, of the 783 people who were accepted into the Career Transition Services career counselling or job finding components, only 9% (77 individuals – 3 in 2007–2008, 23 in 2008–2009 and 51 in 2009–2010) officially completed and obtained employment through the program.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#) 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 31 October 2012 (Anne-Marie Pellerin).

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ VAC, [New Veterans Charter \(NVC\) Evaluation – Phase III](#), pp. 26–32, 53–54.

Table 1 – Career Transition Program Participation (2007-2010)

Fiscal Years	2007–2008	2008–2009	2009–2010	Total
Workshops				
Number of Workshops	61	129	106	296
Number of Participants	536	968	713	2,217
Career Counselling				783
Number of Participants	49	336	264	
Job Finding Assistance				
Number of Participants	9	56	69	134

Source: VAC, [New Veterans Charter \(NVC\) Evaluation – Phase III](#), p. 54.

According to a VAC document presented to the Subcommittee in October 2012, the number of Career Transition Services workshops and participants has grown since 2010. The VAC document reported that a total of 741 Career Transition Services workshops had been provided up to 30 September 2012, which involved a total of 5,475 participants. Taking into consideration data from the 2011 VAC report presented in Table 1, this suggests that 3,258 people participated in 445 workshops in fiscal years 2010–2011 and 2012–2013. This translates into about 148 workshops per fiscal year with a turnout of approximately 1,086 participants, an improvement over previous years.¹⁷⁴

The VAC document also reported that 682 people were participating in the career counselling and job search assistance components of the Career Transition Services Program as of 30 September 2012, which is higher than the numbers provided for each fiscal year between 2008 and 2010. 467 people had completed those components of the program, 350 of them had obtained civilian employment, and 78 had chosen to remain in the CAF. In other words, 273 participants found civilian employment in 2010-2011 and 2012-2013, about 90 per fiscal year. This represents a notable increase over the period of 2007-2008 to 2009-2010 when only 77 participants had found civilian employment through the program.¹⁷⁵

Since the Subcommittee held its hearings on this issue, significant changes to the Career Transition Services Program have been implemented. Effective 1 January 2013, serving CAF members are no longer eligible to participate in this program. DND is now fully responsible for offering similar career transition services to serving CAF members, who become eligible for the

¹⁷⁴ VAC, "Veterans Affairs Canada Career Transition Services Presentation to the Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs," 31 October 2012, p. 5.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

Career Transition Program only “the day after release.”¹⁷⁶ In other words, the Career Transition Services Program is now only offered to veterans and survivors, including the following categories of veterans:

- *A veteran [of the Regular Force] who has completed basic training and who applies no later than two years after the date of their release from the Canadian Armed Forces.*
- *A veteran of the Reserve Force with completion of at least 21 months of full-time service during 24 consecutive months and applies within two years of release; or a veteran of the Reserve Force with Special Duty Service, or Emergency Service and applies within two years of release.*
- *A CAF veteran who is eligible for the CFIS [Canadian Forces Income Support] benefit; in this case, there is no prescribed time limit in which to apply.¹⁷⁷*

Eligibility is also extended to surviving spouses or common-law partners:

- *A surviving spouse or common-law partner of a Regular Force or Reserve Force veteran who, at the time of death, was eligible to receive Career Transition Services but for the occurrence of death and applies no later than two years after the death of the Veteran;*
- *A surviving spouse or common-law partner of a Regular Force member who applies no later than two years after the death of the member;*
- *A surviving spouse or common-law partner of a Reserve Force member who, had committed in writing to at least 21 months of full-time service during 24 consecutive months, or served in a SDA/SDO [Special Duty Area / Special Duty Operation] or emergency service, and applies no later than two years after the death of the member.*
- *A survivor who is eligible for the CFIS benefit; in this case, there is no prescribed time limit in which to apply.¹⁷⁸*

VAC notes on its website that “veterans who are discharged” for misconduct or unsatisfactory service or that “do not complete basic training” are “not eligible” for VAC’s Career Transition Services Program.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ Government of Canada, “[Regulations Amending the Veterans Health Care Regulations and the Canadian Forces Members and Veterans Re-Establishment and Compensation Regulations](#)”; VAC, VAC, “Departmental Policies: Career Transition Services,” effective 1 January 2013.

¹⁷⁷ VAC, “[Career Transition Services](#).”

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

Also, with the expiry of the contractual arrangement between VAC and Right Management, a new delivery model has been effective since 1 January 2013. Instead of delivery by a national contractor, eligible veterans and survivors now receive “up to a \$1,000 lifetime maximum grant payment to support obtaining CTS [Career Transition Services].” The recipients “have the flexibility to choose their CTS provider(s) and the type(s) of CTS of their choice to better meet their needs.”¹⁸⁰ Certain entitlement criteria must be established before VAC issues any grant payments. For example, the career transition services “must fall within career counselling, job-search training and job-finding assistance,” the “provider(s) of the service(s) must be primarily engaged in the business of providing” career transition services, and the “proof of service (s) rendered (e.g. receipt or invoice) must be received no more than 12 months after the day of provision of service(s).”¹⁸¹

“The thrust behind this change,” explained Ms. Pellerin to the Subcommittee, “is to allow released members to access the services that best meet their needs and in their local community. It gives them more choice than does a standardized national program and contract.” As she also noted, “there are a number of companies across Canada that are involved in this type of service.”¹⁸² Janice Burke, VAC’s Senior Director of Strategic Policy Integration, further remarked that “local service providers tend to know the local employment situation better than you could at a national level.” She added that “it is a very much hassle-free service because there is no application to VAC; you [veteran] go to the service provider of your choice and have the provider bill Veterans Affairs Canada, or you can bill VAC directly. It gets out of this bureaucracy of applying and then waiting for Veterans Affairs Canada to get back ... It is more immediate for the veteran.”¹⁸³

According to Ms. Pellerin, the changes made to the Career Transition Service program are the result of measures announced in the 2012 Federal Budget to eliminate duplication of services offered by both DND and VAC for still-serving CAF members. As she explained in her testimony:

When we compared our operational methods to that of the Canadian Forces and National Defence, we realized that there was duplication with regard to the workshops that were provided to the members who were going to be voluntarily released in the near future.

In the armed forces, these members were already working with a personnel selection officer to prepare the game plan they would be following after they left the forces. We play a role after the member leaves, but also while he or she is still within the Canadian Forces. The idea of a national approach does not necessarily always meet the needs,

¹⁸⁰ Government of Canada, “[Regulations Amending the Veterans Health Care Regulations and the Canadian Forces Members and Veterans Re-Establishment and Compensation Regulations](#).” See also VAC, “[Career Transition Services](#).”

¹⁸¹ Government of Canada, “[Regulations Amending the Veterans Health Care Regulations and the Canadian Forces Members and Veterans Re-Establishment and Compensation Regulations](#).”

¹⁸² Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 31 October 2012 (Anne-Marie Pellerin).

¹⁸³ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 31 October 2012 (Janice Burke, Senior Director, Strategic Policy Integration, Veterans Affairs Canada).

especially the need to know the local market, and the opportunities that could open up for the veterans.

We adopted an approach aimed at eliminating the bureaucratic aspect and reducing the red tape around accessing these services, and also for practical reasons; when the individual knows where he wants to settle, whether he wants to stay in the same place once he has left the forces or go somewhere else, if he has contacted local suppliers, then we pay for the services of the supplier in the community where he or she wants to settle.

It is much more proactive, because the supplier knows the market much better than a company that works at the national level but does not have the necessary knowledge to help the member find work at the local level once he has left the forces.¹⁸⁴

Ms. Pellerin argued that the new service delivery model will be beneficial to both, veterans and the departments:

This change will ensure that the responsibilities of the Department of National Defence and Veterans Affairs are clearly distinguished. That will not only benefit our veterans and still-serving members, who have tended to experience some levels of confusion in terms of that duplication, but it will also benefit Canadians at large by streamlining and ensuring efficiency of services.

Specifically, the changes to VAC's Career Transition Services delivery model mean that veterans will have more flexibility to choose a service provider of their choice in their community. In other words, Veterans Affairs will no longer have a national contractor or a contract in place to provide career transition services.

In this way, career transition services will be obtained by the veteran in a way that best meets their individual needs.¹⁸⁵

4) Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Launched in 2006, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program helps ill and injured veterans transfer skills gained in the military to jobs in the civilian workplace and, when necessary, ensures that training is available to help them find suitable civilian employment.¹⁸⁶ According to VAC, “vocational rehabilitation is designed to identify and achieve an appropriate occupational goal for a person with a physical or a mental health problem, given their state of health and the

¹⁸⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 31 October 2012 (Anne-Marie Pellerin).

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ VAC, [“Rehabilitation Services and Vocational Assistance”](#); VAC, “Departmental Policies: Vocational Rehabilitation and Vocational Assistance — Rehabilitation Program,” effective 18 May 2012; VAC, “Departmental Policies: Rehabilitation Services and Vocational Assistance — Eligibility,” effective 18 May 2012; CanVet Vocational Rehabilitation Services [CVRS], “Veterans Affairs Canada Rehabilitation Program.”

extent of their education, skills and experience.”¹⁸⁷ Services offered under the Vocational Rehabilitation Program include “vocational evaluations and counselling; education and training; child care; work place ergonomic assessment and modification; and job finding/placement services.”¹⁸⁸

Since April 2009, CanVet Vocational Rehabilitation Services has been contracted by VAC to deliver its Vocational Rehabilitation Program.¹⁸⁹ CanVet is a joint venture comprised of three Canadian vocational rehabilitation providers: WCG International HR Solutions, Innovative Rehabilitation Consultants (IRC) and March of Dimes Canada.¹⁹⁰

In her appearance before the Subcommittee, Ms. Pellerin explained how the program assists ill and injured veterans:

*Once engaged in that program, we have vocational rehabilitation specialists on contract with VAC who do an assessment of the individual's education, experience, military experience, and look at the transferable skills from the military to a civilian occupation. In addition we look at the individual's health circumstances and career interests. If the military experience or employment is not easily transferred and/or the member participant does not wish to reengage in that type of employment, then our vocational rehabilitation program will provide training in order that the participant can get the skills in order to access a job that is more suitable to their interests in the civilian community. That career interest could be in the public service or in the private sector. All of our vocational programming is tailored to the individual's circumstances. Location, labour market factors and career interests will be taken into consideration.*¹⁹¹

It should be noted that the VAC Vocational Rehabilitation Program is complementary to the SISIP Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Veterans medically released from the CAF may be eligible to participate in the SISIP Vocational Rehabilitation Program for two years post-release. Following that period, they can access the VAC Vocational Rehabilitation Program regardless of whether they participated in the SISIP program. Veterans released from the CAF for non-medical reasons, but who have subsequently developed illness or other medical conditions as a result of their military service, can also access the VAC program if they require vocational rehabilitation. According to DND and VAC, there is no duplication of work between the SISIP and VAC programs. Where one ends the other begins. “They are complementary and not competing programs,” Rear-Admiral Andrew Smith, the Chief of Military Personnel, told the Subcommittee:

¹⁸⁷ VAC, [New Veterans Charter \(NVC\) Evaluation – Phase III](#), p. 27.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 27. For more information on resources available, see CVRS, “[Resources](#).”

¹⁸⁹ According to VAC, “various interim vocational rehabilitation specialists have been providing services, until a single national provider could be put in place to ensure a more consistent service delivery.” A national contractor was selected in April 2009 to deliver vocational services for VAC. VAC, [New Veterans Charter \(NVC\) Evaluation – Phase III](#), p. 27.

¹⁹⁰ CVRS, “[Vocational Rehabilitation Services: Helping You Make the Transition to Civilian Life](#)” and “CanVet Partners.”

¹⁹¹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 14 December 2011 (Anne-Marie Pellerin).

The SISIP piece is consistent with an insurance vocational rehab program, with a duration of 30 months. It can start six months prior to release and go for a period of 30 months. All medically releasing personnel have access to that program.

The Veterans Affairs vocational rehabilitation program is for people who release voluntarily and subsequently present with the service-related vocational rehabilitation need. Or it is for those who complete the SISIP program, ultimately return to work and it is not successful. It is a wonderful safety net that the government has put in place that recognizes service to the country for veterans to have a second approach to vocational rehabilitation. One is an insurance program; the other is a social program that is complementary. Increasingly, we are having Veterans Affairs case managers have a look early on in the SISIP piece to better understand what the vocational rehabilitation goals are for the transitioning member. When they have completed their SISIP piece, and if there is an issue or something else VAC can do, they are well aware of that in advance instead of picking it up after the fact.¹⁹²

Although the Vocational Rehabilitation Program is aimed specifically at ill and injured veterans, in certain cases, spouses and common-law partners are able to access the program. As Keith Hillier, VAC's Assistant Deputy Minister, Service Delivery, told the Subcommittee:

If a veteran is too ill to actually participate in vocational training as a result of their injury or illness, that training opportunity can be made available to the partner ... If the soldier is injured and cannot be retrained, sometimes we find there may be a spouse who perhaps did not attend college or technical school or what have you for any number of reasons, so we would support her in obtaining upgrading or training in a technical school or university, depending on the assessment.¹⁹³

About 4,100 people accessed the Vocational Rehabilitation Program between 2006 and 2012.¹⁹⁴ This represented about 50% of the more than 8,000 CAF members who were released for medical reasons between 2006 and 2011.¹⁹⁵ Of this total, almost 3,000 were served by CanVet, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program's national contractor since April 2009.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#) 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 14 December 2011 (Rear-Admiral Andrew Smith).

¹⁹³ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 14 December 2011 (Keith Hillier).

¹⁹⁴ According to a 2011 VAC report, 661 people accessed the Vocational Rehabilitation Program from fiscal years 2006-2007 to 2008-2009 (115 in 2006-2007, 263 in 2007-2008, and 283 in 2008-2009). They were served by various vocational rehabilitation providers. Another 3,440 people accessed the Vocational Rehabilitation Program between 2009-2010 and 2011-2012, as noted in a 2013 Veterans Ombudsman report (912 in 2009-2010, 1,201 in 2010-2011 and 1,327 in 2011-2012). Of this total, 2,991 were served by CanVet, which had been selected as the national contractor in April 2009 (616 in 2009-2010, 1,089 in 2010-2011 and 1,286 in 2011-2012). The remaining 449 were served by various "interim" vocational rehabilitation providers (296 in 2009-2010, 112 in 2010-2011 and 41 in 2011-2012). VAC, [New Veterans Charter \(NVC\) Evaluation – Phase III](#), p. 55; Veterans Ombudsman, [Investing in Veterans' Vocational Training](#), June 2013, p. 28.

¹⁹⁵ OAG, "[Chapter 4: Transition of Ill and Injured Military Personnel to Civilian Life](#)," p. 5.

¹⁹⁶ Veterans Ombudsman, [Investing in Veterans' Vocational Training](#), p. 28.

According to CanVet, approximately 90% of those it served showed signs of PTSD, “often in combination with other physical impairments.”¹⁹⁷

5) The Veterans Transition Action Plan and Other Transition Initiatives

Over the past two years, VAC has launched new transition initiatives aimed at enhancing programs and services provided to veterans in their transition to civilian life. Several of these were announced as part of the Veterans Transition Action Plan released on 30 October 2012, partly in response to the Auditor General’s “audit of supports for ill and injured military personnel transitioning to civilian life.”¹⁹⁸ According to VAC, the Veterans Transition Action Plan consists of:

- *New measures from Minister [of Veterans Affairs Steven] Blaney’s Cutting Red Tape initiative;*
- *Enhancements to the Department’s delivery of services;*
- *New opportunities for Veterans beginning post-military careers;*
- *Ground-breaking research into the real-life experiences and needs of releasing Canadian Armed Forces personnel, and*
- *Building cultural awareness.*¹⁹⁹

In December 2012, the federal government announced two new initiatives to support veterans with their transition to civilian life, namely the establishment of a Veterans Transition Advisory Council (VTAC) and the launch of a “Jobs-Emplois” initiative.²⁰⁰

VTAC will bring together government and leading private sector companies “with the goal of helping veterans transition into meaningful jobs in the private sector.”²⁰¹ According to VAC, VTAC “will work to raise awareness of the skill sets veterans have to offer to the private sector” and “will provide strategic recommendations to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and to the broader private sector to improve the transition from military to civilian employment.” VAC also noted in a press release that VTAC will be led by the True Patriot Love Foundation.²⁰² True Patriot Love hosted the inaugural meeting of VTAC at its first Battlefield to Boardroom

¹⁹⁷ House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, Evidence, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 9 February 2012 (Tricia Gueulette, National Contract Manager, CanVet Vocational Rehabilitation Services, WCG International HR Consultants).

¹⁹⁸ VAC, “[Minister Steven Blaney Unveils Veterans Transition Action Plan and Groundbreaking Partnership with the Veterans Transition Program](#),” News Release, 30 October 2012; VAC, “[Veterans Transition Action Plan](#).”

¹⁹⁹ VAC, “[Minister Steven Blaney Unveils Veterans Transition Action Plan and Groundbreaking Partnership with the Veterans Transition Program](#)”

²⁰⁰ VAC, “[Harper Government and Corporate Canada Partnering to Offer Job Opportunities to Veterans](#),” News Release, 12 December 2012.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.; True Patriot Love Foundation, “[True Patriot Love Leads Veterans Transition Initiative](#)”; True Patriot Love Foundation, “[True Patriot Love Announces Veterans Transition Advisory Council](#),” 12 December 2012.

Conference in Toronto in January 2013, which brought government, military and industry officials together with the objective of promoting the private sector hiring of veterans and showcasing the value veterans can bring to civilian corporate organizations. More than 40 different private sector companies were represented at the conference.²⁰³ VTAC states on its website that it “will focus its efforts on exploring ways in which private sector firms can effectively attract, recruit, and access military talent” and that, in light of “a critical need for skilled employees ... across our nation,” it “will work to address how this demand for talent can be met by retired and reserve military personnel.”²⁰⁴

Over the past year, VTAC undertook two surveys on military transition to civilian life, one of employers across Canada and another of veterans who had recently released from the CAF.²⁰⁵ VTAC also assisted the True Patriot Love Foundation with the organization of its Multinational Symposium on Veteran Transition, a two-day conference held at Canada House in London, United Kingdom, in late September 2013. The event was attended by public and private sector officials from Australia, Canada, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States.²⁰⁶

The Jobs-Emplois initiative seeks to connect transitioning veterans with private sector job opportunities. According to VAC, under this initiative, “a specially designated VAC e-mail address has been created to let corporations and organizations alert the department about new employment opportunities. Private sector organizations interested in hiring veterans are encouraged to e-mail job opportunities to VAC (jobs-emplois@vac-acc.gc.ca). VAC, in turn, has committed to promote these opportunities to CAF members transitioning to civilian life and veterans.”²⁰⁷

Linked to the Jobs-Emplois initiative is VAC’s Hire a Veteran initiative. Hire a Veteran is a “partnership between Veterans Affairs Canada and corporate Canada, which helps to connect veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces with job opportunities in the private sector.”²⁰⁸ Under this initiative, corporate “partners are encouraged to give hiring priority to veterans when they are equally qualified for job openings, and to provide Veterans Affairs Canada with information on their job openings and hiring targets so that Veterans can be made aware of new opportunities.”²⁰⁹ VAC reported in its *Departmental Performance Report 2012-13*, which was released in the fall of 2013, that 76 employers are “actively supporting this initiative” and that

²⁰³ True Patriot Love Foundation, “[True Patriot Love Hosts First-Ever From Battlefield to Boardroom](#),” 29 January 2013; True Patriot Love Foundation, “[Battlefield to Boardroom Conference 2013](#)”; VAC, “[Minister Blaney Meets with Corporate Canada](#),” 29 January 2013.

²⁰⁴ True Patriot Love Foundation, “[Veteran Transition Advisory Council](#).”

²⁰⁵ True Patriot Love Foundation, “[Putting Veterans to Work](#),” 23 September 2013.

²⁰⁶ True Patriot Love Foundation, “[Multinational Symposium on Veteran Transition / Canada House / London, UK](#)” and “[Background: Multinational Symposium on Veteran Transition](#),” 24-25 September 2013.

²⁰⁷ VAC, “[Harper Government and Corporate Canada Partnering to Offer Job Opportunities to Veterans](#),” “[Veterans Transition Action Plan](#),” and “[Jobs-Emplois](#).”

²⁰⁸ VAC, “[Minister Fantino Focusing on Veterans’ Transition to Civilian Life](#),” 20 September 2013. See also VAC, “[Hire a Veteran](#).”

²⁰⁹ VAC, *Departmental Performance Report 2012-13*, p. 8.

“more than 2,400 jobs in Canada have been brought to the attention of job-seeking Veterans.”²¹⁰ Hire a Veteran employer partners include, among others, Bell Canada, Cabela’s Canada, Cenovus Energy, CN, Intuit Canada, Mount Allison University, Queen’s University, the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children, and Walmart Canada.²¹¹

TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED BY NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Aside from the transition programs and services provided by DND and VAC, a number of non-government organizations deliver assistance of their own to transitioning military personnel and veterans searching for civilian job opportunities. These includes veterans’ organizations such as the Royal Canadian Legion, educational facilities such as the University of British Columbia and the British Columbia Institute of Technology, military-civilian liaison and job placement organizations such as Canada Company, Helmets to Hardhats Canada, and Prospect Human Services, and military-friendly non-profit organizations such as Wounded Warriors.

These organizations offer a range of different transition programs and services discussed in detail below, including: helping transitioning military personnel develop new skills and trade sets and obtain educational degrees to facilitate their integration into the civilian workforce; connecting former CAF members with civilian employers and private sector job opportunities; or assisting transitioning military personnel and veterans with special needs, such as those with service-related disabilities who wish to enter the civilian workforce.

In addition to the organizations and programs discussed in greater detail below, a number of others deliver similar programs and services to Canadian veterans across Canada, such as The Treble Victor Group, which provides resources to support the transition of military leaders to civilian careers,²¹² the Veterans Emergency Transition Services (VETS), which provides assistance to homeless veterans,²¹³ the Prince’s Charities (Operation Entrepreneur), which provides transitioning military personnel with some of the “education, financing and mentoring” they need to start and sustain their own businesses,²¹⁴ including an opportunity to participate in a “free of charge, week-long entrepreneurial boot camp” known as Based in Business,²¹⁵ or the True Patriot Love Foundation, which lead’s VAC’s new Veterans Transition Advisory Council.²¹⁶ The Canadian Franchise Association is also working with DND to “launch a veterans program assisting military personnel transitioning out of the military who are interested in becoming franchise owners.”²¹⁷

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ VAC, “[Hire a Veteran.](#)”

²¹² Treble Victor Group, “[About Treble Victor Group.](#)”

²¹³ Veterans Emergency Transition Services (VETS), “[About.](#)”

²¹⁴ Canadian Youth Business Foundation (CYBF), “[Programs: The Prince’s Operation Entrepreneur.](#)”

²¹⁵ SIFE Memorial University, “[Based in Business](#)”; DND, “Veterans Transition Program.”

²¹⁶ True Patriot Love Foundation, “[Our Mission.](#)”

²¹⁷ DND, “[Backgrounder: Canadian Armed Forces Transition Program.](#)” 25 November 2013.

1) The Royal Canadian Legion

Established in the 1920s, the Royal Canadian Legion is the largest veterans' organization in Canada, with more than 320,000 members and over 1,460 branches located across Canada, the United States and Europe. It is a volunteer organization that is open to all Canadian citizens and Commonwealth subjects.²¹⁸

An important part of the Royal Canadian Legion's work consists of easing the return of veterans to civilian life. This is done in a variety of ways, such as through the Royal Canadian Legion's Service Bureau, which provides free assistance to serving Canadian Armed Forces and RCMP members, veterans and their dependants and helps them secure their pensions and benefits,²¹⁹ or the Poppy Campaign, whose funds are used to assist needy veterans, ex-service members and their families, including those transitioning to civilian life.²²⁰ Moreover, since 2009, Royal Canadian Legion representatives work with the Canadian Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Canada in the Joint Personnel Support Unit (JPSU)/Integrated Personnel Support Centres (IPSC).²²¹ The Royal Canadian Legion also reaches out to modern veterans, military members and their families through partnerships with the Military Family Resource Centres (MFRC).²²² The Royal Canadian Legion has also been engaged in assisting homeless veterans.

The Royal Canadian Legion also funds several service programs specifically designed to assist veterans in their transition to civilian life, such as the Cockrell House shelter in Victoria, British Columbia, which provides food and housing to homeless veterans as well as "addiction counselling, education and skills training to transition back into the community."²²³ Other transition programs funded by the organization include the Veterans Transition Program and the Legion Military Skills Conversion Program.

A. The Veterans Transition Program

One of the most important transition programs funded by the Royal Canadian Legion is the Veterans Transition Program at the University of British Columbia, which was established in the late 1990's with funding from the BC/Yukon Command of the Royal Canadian Legion "to address the invisible wounds of our soldiers so that they can function and have healthy relationships with their families, friends, at work and with themselves."²²⁴ Under this group-therapy program, "veterans are helped by other vets and specially trained psychologists to work through their experiences and re-orient themselves towards a fulfilling future," which

²¹⁸ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 November 2011 (Brad White); Royal Canadian Legion (RCL), "[About the Legion](#)," "[Our History](#)," and "[The Facts](#)."

²¹⁹ RCL, "[What We Do](#)."

²²⁰ RCL, "[The Poppy Campaign](#)" and RCL, *Poppy Manual*, July 2013, pp. 1-54.

²²¹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 November 2011 (Andrea Siew). See also "[Serving You: Legion Working with Joint Personnel Support Unit](#)," *Legion Magazine*, 5 November 2009.

²²² "[Legion Teams Up with Military Family Services](#)," *Legion Magazine*, 18 September 2009 "[Partnership Strengthens Outreach to Military Families](#)," *Legion Magazine*, 12 July 2009.

²²³ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 November 2011 (Andrea Siew).

²²⁴ Ibid. See also University of British Columbia (UBC), "[Media Release: UBC's Veterans Transition Program Receives \\$1.37 Million from the BC/Yukon Command of The Royal Canadian Legion](#)," 26 October 2010.

includes re-integration “with their families and communities” and transfer of their “career strengths from military to civilian.”²²⁵ According to the Royal Canadian Legion, the Veterans Transition Program is “the only program of its kind in Canada,” where former service personnel can receive support for trauma-related stress, career transitions and family relationships.²²⁶ Below are some of the program’s key objectives:

- *Provide a professionally facilitated, confidential environment that will enable participants to understand the impact their experiences have had on their lives.*
- *Offer group-based learning experiences focused on communication and coping skills.*
- *Teach coping skills for dealing with trauma and to reverse cultural shock.*
- *Encourage peer interaction.*
- *Provide tools and techniques to process past events, optimize career transition and enhance family and social interactions.*²²⁷

Participation in the program occurs over a three month period and involves about “80 hours over 3 weekends.”²²⁸ During that period, participants live together and help each other recover from their respective operational stress injuries and trauma experiences. Therapeutic sessions are led by doctors, psychologists and other clinicians, who, among other things, help program participants cope with the transition to civilian life process, manage trauma symptoms, develop communications skills, set out “self-goal” strategies, and rebuild relationships with families and friends. A key feature of the program is known as Therapeutic Enactment (TE), a process whereby participants re-enact traumatic incidents with the assistance of clinicians and the peer support of other participants. The TE process is popularly referred to as “dropping the baggage.” The Veterans Transition Network says TE allows participants “to release the heavy emotional burden of their past and begin moving forward.”²²⁹

Andrea Siew, Director of the Royal Canadian Legion’s Dominion Command Service Bureau, told the Subcommittee that this “is a valuable transition program” which “has incredible success stories.”²³⁰ According to the University of British Columbia, the Veterans Transition Program “has been shown to reduce trauma symptoms, decrease depression and increase self-esteem – three barriers to making a successful transition to civilian life.”²³¹ The university also indicated that “follow-up research has shown that participants in the [Veterans Transition Program]

²²⁵ Veterans Transition Network, “[Our Mission](#).”

²²⁶ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 November 2011 (Andrea Siew).

²²⁷ RCL, “[Veterans Transition Programs](#).”

²²⁸ Veterans Transition Network, “[Overview](#).”

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 November 2011 (Andrea Siew). See also UBC, “[Success Stories: Veterans Transition Program](#).”

²³¹ UBC, “[Canadian Veterans Benefit from UBC Expansion of Transition Program](#),” 2 November 2012.

...have improved relationships with their spouses, partners, children, and families.”It also stated that the program has helped “many participants access new work environments and careers.”²³²

Up to 2012, the Veterans Transition Program has been only offered in British Columbia and the bulk of its funding has been provided by the Royal Canadian Legion (approximately \$3.5 million between 1999 and 2012), most of it coming from the organization’s B.C./Yukon Command.²³³

However, in 2011, the University of British Columbia and the Royal Canadian Legion both started expressing interest in expanding the Veterans Transition Program across Canada.²³⁴ In November 2011, for example, the Royal Canadian Legion told the Subcommittee that the Veterans Transition Program was beyond the pilot project stage and was mature enough to be expanded across the country.²³⁵ As Andrea Siew explained:

*We want to expand it nationally. We have been seeking additional support for the particular program through Veterans Affairs Canada, and we need to expand it nationally to increase the number of courses that are available. It needs additional support from other government organizations, such as the Department of National Defence and Veterans Affairs Canada ... The Legion is funding the program, but the costs will continue to grow as a national program. We believe the need nationally will increase because of the number of veterans we see facing challenges in the UBC transition program.*²³⁶

The Royal Canadian Legion told the Subcommittee that, in order to expand the program nationally, it requires additional funding. At the time, the Royal Canadian Legion said it was reaching out to the federal government and private sector for financial partners. As Brad White explained:

At this stage, we are looking at it from our own national perspective as to how we want to transition this program and how much funding we are able to provide from the Legion to the program. We have also made the Minister of Veterans Affairs aware of the Veterans Transition Program by introducing it to Veterans Affairs. The program has also been introduced at the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research, who have made a few presentations; so they will work within that network ... The program is trying to bring together other universities to join this program. We are looking for a wide range of partnering to get this program in position so we can transition it across the country. It is a mobile program in that the individuals can be sent from B.C. to run

²³² UBC, “[Media Release: UBC’s Veterans Transition Program Receives \\$1.37 Million from the BC/Yukon Command of The Royal Canadian Legion.](#)”

²³³ Sharon Adams, “[Legion Makes Major Donation to Veterans Transition Program.](#)” *Legion Magazine*, 2 February 2013.

²³⁴ Arshy Mann, “UBC Veterans Transition Program Set to Expand Nationally,” *Canadian University Press*, 23 November 2011; Senate, Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 November 2011 (Andrea Siew and Brad White, Royal Canadian Legion).

²³⁵ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 November 2011 (Andrea Siew).

²³⁶ Ibid.

*seminars in local areas. That is what the overall aim will be as it spreads across the country and more people get involved. It will have that kind of transportability with partners to support and sponsor it.*²³⁷

These efforts have paid off. Several new developments have occurred with regards to funding and expanding the Veterans Transition Program nationally since the Royal Canadian Legion witnesses appeared before the Subcommittee in late 2011. In October 2012, for example, VAC announced that under its new Veterans Transition Action Plan it will partner with the Veterans Transition Program and will provide financial assistance for veterans across Canada to participate in the program.²³⁸ In November 2012, the University of British Columbia stated in a press release that the Veterans Transition Program was “expanding into a non-profit organization that will provide services across Canada” and that “the new organization – called the Veterans Transition Network – [had] been established with \$1.45 million in donations from the Royal Canadian Legion, Veterans Affairs Canada and other organizations” to “deliver the Veterans Transition Program” nationally.²³⁹ Veterans Affairs Canada committed up to \$600,000 over four years to expand the Veterans Transition Program across Canada.²⁴⁰ The Royal Canadian Legion also announced it would provide \$500,000 over two years to expand the Veterans Transition Program nationally. This raises to about \$4 million the total amount of money the Royal Canadian Legion has invested in the program since 1999. The True Patriot Love Foundation and Wounded Warriors have also donated \$250,000 and \$100,000 respectively.²⁴¹

Over the past 15 years, about 400 veterans have participated in the Veterans Transition Program.²⁴² According to the Veterans Transition Network, more than 90% of these “400 graduates are now on new career or education paths.”²⁴³ However, with the national expansion of the Veterans Transition Program underway, the number of participants is expected to grow in coming years. “The 400 number is back-ended,” Tim Laidler, Executive Director of the Veterans Transition Network, told the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence in December 2013. “For the first 12 years or so, we were only running this as a research project. It was very small scale. We’ve been ramping this up. We want to get it to 150

²³⁷ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 November 2011 (Brad White).

²³⁸ VAC, “[Minister Steven Blaney Unveils Veterans Transition Action Plan and Groundbreaking Partnership with the Veterans Transition Program.](#)”

²³⁹ UBC, “[Canadian Veterans Benefit from UBC Expansion of Transition Program.](#)”

²⁴⁰ VAC, “[Minister Steven Blaney Unveils Veterans Transition Action Plan and Groundbreaking Partnership with the Veterans Transition Program.](#)”

²⁴¹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 5 December 2012 (Philip Ralph); Adams, “[Legion Makes Major Donation to Veterans Transition Program](#)”; RCL, “[Unique Program Helping Veterans Transition to Civilian Life Expands Nationally with \\$500,000 from the Royal Canadian Legion](#),” 2 November 2012; True Patriot Love Foundation, “[True Patriot Love Foundation Presents Funding for East Coast Canadian Military Families](#),” 28 September 2012; Wounded Warriors, “[Wounded Warriors Canada Provides \\$100,000 Grant Supporting Ontario’s First Veterans Transition Program](#),” 22 February 2013.

²⁴² Veterans Transition Network, “[Our Mission.](#)”

²⁴³ Ibid.

military and veteran personnel per year in 2015.”²⁴⁴ The Veterans Transition Network’s ultimate goal is to eventually provide assistance to some 5,000 veterans nationally.²⁴⁵

According to the Royal Canadian Legion, veterans’ organizations in other Commonwealth countries have expressed interest in the Veterans Transition Program. When the Royal Canadian Legion appeared before the Subcommittee in November 2011, it noted that the “Veterans Transition Program is trying to get into ... Australia,” where “it could be used to assist Australian veterans.”²⁴⁶ These efforts have since culminated into a partnership with Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia, in 2012.²⁴⁷

B. The Legion Military Skills Conversion Program

The Legion Military Skills Conversion Program of the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) was initially established in 2009 as the Reservists Re-Entry Program. It was renamed in September 2011 when the Royal Canadian Legion’s BC/Yukon Command agreed to become a “major sponsor of the program” as part of a 4 year agreement.²⁴⁸ Funding is now provided by both the Royal Canadian Legion and BCIT. The Royal Canada Legion provided \$240,000 over four years. According to the program’s head Kevin Wainwright, BCIT “has pretty much matched 50/50 with what the Legion gave us.”²⁴⁹

According to BCIT, the “program is designed to help accelerate and advance the civilian careers of former and current Reserve Forces and Regular Forces Canadian military members.”²⁵⁰ As Andrea Siew told the Subcommittee, the “program offers fast-track education, with accreditation at BCIT, through credits for military experience and assistance with developing your own business and finding a job.”²⁵¹

The program enables service personnel to successfully transition from military to civilian life, using a three pronged approach: academic, entrepreneurial and employment. The academic path allows participants to receive academic recognition for their military experiences and to fast track their post-secondary education by attending BCIT. The entrepreneurial path allows

²⁴⁴ House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 10 December 2013 (Tim Laidler, Executive Director, Veterans Transition Network).

²⁴⁵ VAC, “[Minister Steven Blaney Unveils Veterans Transition Action Plan and Groundbreaking Partnership with the Veterans Transition Program.](#)”

²⁴⁶ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 November 2011 (Brad White).

²⁴⁷ UBC, “[Veterans Transition Program: Partners](#)”; Riverglenn, “[The Veterans Transition Program – Huge Success!](#),” 28 November 2012; Michael Balfour (Griffith University), “[The Art of Return: Researching Arts-Based Practices that Seek to Support Military Personnel and their Families in the Transition from Military to Civilian Life After Recent Conflicts.](#)”

²⁴⁸ BCIT, “[Legion Military Skills Conversion Program: About and History](#),” “[Legion Military Skills Conversion Program: Our Sponsor](#),” and “[Legion Military Skills Conversion Program: Frequently Asked Questions.](#)” See also BCIT, “[Legion Military Skills Conversion Program News: Royal Canadian Legion BC/Yukon Command Sponsors the Legion Military Skills Conversion Program at BCIT.](#)” 8 September 2011.

²⁴⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 May 2012 (Kevin Wainwright, Program Head, British Columbia Institute of Technology, Legion Military Skills Conversion Program).

²⁵⁰ BCIT, “[Legion Military Skills Conversion Program: Overview.](#)”

²⁵¹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 November 2011 (Andrea Siew).

participants to become entrepreneurs and start a business. BCIT provides individual assistance and training for that purpose through a project called Students in Free Enterprise, or SIFE. The employment path helps participants find a job. BCIT assists participants through a series of workshops or individual consultations to update resumes and cover letters, improve interview and networking skills, and learn tips and tricks about job searching. BCIT also provides the *Essential Guide to the Civilian Work Force*, a workbook designed to help military personnel translate their military skills into civilian equivalencies, in addition to teaching them about various interviewing and professional skills.²⁵²

In September 2013, the Legion Military Skills Conversion Program entered into partnership with TPD — a “global HR solutions organization that specializes in staff placement, recruitment and HR consultancy” — to establish an “Education to Career Pipeline” to facilitate the job placement of program participants. According to BCIT, this partnership will allow CAF members participating in the Legion Military Skills Conversion Program “gain the skills and tools necessary to put them on the right track to a successful [civilian] career.”²⁵³

Participants in the Legion Military Skills Conversion Program include current and former members of the Regular and Reserve Forces of the CAF. The average age is about 33 years. The youngest is 20 years old and the oldest is 55. According to BCIT, 73% of them have “high school or some post-secondary education, but they do not have a credential” and 63% of them “have deployment experience in Afghanistan, Bosnia or other places in the world.”²⁵⁴ Witnesses told the Subcommittee that many students were currently enrolled in the academic, entrepreneurial and employment components of the Legion Military Skills Conversion, which graduated its first bachelor degree recipients in June 2012, two years after they had started at BCIT.²⁵⁵

Mr. Wainwright told the Subcommittee that there is much interest in the program outside of British Columbia. BCIT, for example, is collaborating with universities in the United States. As a case in point, the University of Washington has expressed interest in adopting the BCIT model and offering it to serving military personnel and veterans in the United States.²⁵⁶

In a written submission to the Subcommittee, Mr. Wainwright explained that BCIT is also collaborating with the military in the United States:

²⁵² Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 May 2012 (Kevin Wainwright). See also BCIT and RCL, Legion Military Skills Conversion Program; BCIT, “[Legion Military Skills Conversion Program: How It Works](#)” and “[Legion Military Skills Conversion Program: The Three Paths](#)”; RCL, “[Veterans & Seniors: Legion Military Skills Conversion Program at BCIT](#).”

²⁵³ BCIT, “[BCIT Partners with The Personnel Department to Create ‘Education to Career Pipeline,’](#)” 25 September 2013. See also TPD, “[Our Partners](#).”

²⁵⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 May 2012 (Natalie Condrashoff).

²⁵⁵ BCIT, “[Legion Military Skills Conversion Program Celebrates its First Fast-Tracked Bachelor Degree Graduates](#),” 21 June 2012.

²⁵⁶ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 May 2012 (Kevin Wainwright).

*BCIT has been invited to join a national steering committee, established by the U.S. Department of Defense, comprised of military representatives and six major American universities. This committee has been mandated to develop programs that will engage U.S. Reservists, National Guard and Gulf War veterans in post-military service career enhancing education. The steering committee has determined that their best approach would be to emulate the BCIT model across the United States, and towards this end they seek BCIT's participation.*²⁵⁷

There is also interest in the program across Canada, not only from military personnel and veterans but also from civilian first responders (fire fighters, police officers and paramedics). Indeed, BCIT told the Subcommittee that it has received expressions of interest from several first response groups to expand the current program so that it could also accommodate first responders.²⁵⁸

While BCIT has expressed its interest in expanding the Legion Military Skills Conversion Program nationally,²⁵⁹ these efforts have encountered difficulties at the provincial level. According to Mr. Wainwright:

*The University of Lethbridge was the first school we had conversations with, and they said that they would like to do what we were doing in Alberta. We ... said that we would send them the blueprint. We ran into problems with legislation. Every institution has a mandate from its provincial ministry of education that allows them to do certain things and disallows them from doing other things. Alberta was running into a problem in setting up our program. BCIT has a unique provincial mandate. We have revisited our model and decided to partner with local institutes in Alberta. The students can be registered online through BCIT but stay in Alberta. Because we are allowed to do what we do, we can do it for people in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. We can give them recognition and advanced placement. The local schools will deliver the courses and we will transfer them back into BCIT.*²⁶⁰

There are also funding issues. At the moment, only the Royal Canadian Legion and BCIT fund the program in British Columbia.²⁶¹ As with the national expansion of the Veterans Transition Program, any expansion of the Legion Military Skills Conversion Program nationally will require additional funds. "The growth in demand for the program has taxed the current resources," BCIT explained in its written submission to the Subcommittee. "As the program grows and the

²⁵⁷ BCIT, "The BCIT Military Skills Conversion Program Sponsored by the Royal Canadian Legion Prepared for the Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs by K. Wainwright," 24 May 2012.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 May 2012 (Natalie Condrashoff).

²⁶⁰ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 May 2012 (Kevin Wainwright).

²⁶¹ BCIT, "[Legion Military Skills Conversion Program: Frequently Asked Questions.](#)"

number of participants increases, there will be a growing need for financial aid for many of the program participants.”²⁶²

2) Canada Company

Established in May 2006, Canada Company is a non-profit organization that serves to connect business and community leaders to the Canadian military. Its goal is “to ensure that the men and women in [the] Canadian Armed Forces receive the widest support, care and recognition that they deserve.”²⁶³ According to Peter Hart, Managing Director of Canada Company, the organization “is comprised of about 450 of the top business and community leaders across Canada [and] has chapters in all but a few provinces,” but is “working to rectify that. The chapters are led by a volunteer president with approximately 30 to 100 members per province.”²⁶⁴

In June 2012, Canada Company officially launched its Military Employment Transition (MET) program to assist CAF members transitioning out of the military find employment on the civilian market.²⁶⁵ The MET program’s mandate is “to establish, foster, and drive the connection and relationship between Canadian Armed Forces members who want to transition to work outside the Forces and the leaders in the public and private sector who will offer employment.”²⁶⁶ In other words, it “assist[s] Canadian Armed Forces members who are transitioning out of the military obtain employment in the civilian workforce” and “serve[s] as a bridge between the Canadian Armed Forces and ... CAF friendly employer partners.”²⁶⁷ More specifically, Canada Company notes on its website that the MET program has the following “objectives”:

- *Provide career transition resources & networking opportunities [to transitioning CAF personnel].*
- *Educate transferable military skill sets to military friendly employers.*
- *Build and maintain strong relationships between military friendly employers and retiring and former members of the CAF.*²⁶⁸

A secure password protected MET resource centre has been set up on the Canada Company website. It can only be accessed by registered CAF members and military friendly employers. The online portal provides transitioning CAF members with resources, such as information on

²⁶² BCIT, “The BCIT Military Skills Conversion Program Sponsored by the Royal Canadian Legion Prepared for the Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs by K. Wainwright,” 24 May 2012.

²⁶³ Canada Company, “[Canada Company at a Glance.](#)”

²⁶⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 28 November 2012 (Peter Hart). See also Canada Company, “[Chapters.](#)”

²⁶⁵ Canada Company, “[Canada Company Announced National Program to Assist Canadian Forces Personnel into Civilian Employment.](#)” 15 June 2012.

²⁶⁶ Canada Company, “[Military Employment Transition Program: What We Do.](#)”

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Canada Company, “[Military Employment Transition Program: About Us.](#)”

employer partners with web links to the career opportunities they offer and franchise opportunities. They also have access to a “transition toolbox” that provides resources to help transitioning CAF members “showcase [their] talents to employers.” This includes “tools, support and guidance on resumes, interview preparation [and] self-assessment.” Moreover, the online resource centre provides participating employers with information on the MET program, how they can benefit from it, and how they can become CAF friendly employer partners. It also provides them with information on the Canadian military, including how the CAF function, how the military ranks structure works, cultural differences between the military and civilian work environments, how to translate military trades and skills into civilian job qualifications, and how to develop strategies to effectively recruit and retain former members of the CAF.²⁶⁹

More than 100 employers across Canada are currently participating in the MET program as military-friendly employer partners. This includes: Allen Vanguard, Amazon, Calgary Police Service, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC), Canadian National (CN), Coca-Cola, Garda, General Electric Canada, Home Depot, Investors Group, Loblaw, McDonald’s, Rockwell Collins, Royal Bank of Canada, Suncor Energy, Sun Life Financial, Walmart, and United Rentals.²⁷⁰ Peter Hart told the Subcommittee that Canada Company’s goal is to attract 300 or more companies into the MET program within the next three years and to “have our organization be coast to coast.”²⁷¹ The Canada Company recently organized a Military Employment Transition (MET) Program Employer Coalition conference to help attract new military-friendly employer partners, reinforce relations between existing ones, and facilitate the sharing of best practices. The first conference was held in Toronto in November 2013.²⁷²

Reaching out to industry and selling the experience and skills of veterans to potential civilian employers is “the biggest challenge” Canada Company faces. Many company officials have limited or no understanding of the military culture. They do not know what veterans can bring to their organizations. An important part of Canada Company’s work is thus to educate the private sector about the value of hiring former military members through outreach initiatives and education. As Peter Hart explained in his testimony:

We go in and do a seminar, for lack of a better word, sort of a Canadian Forces certification seminar. They usually assign someone on the HR [Human Resources] team or a group of people to deal with the intake. If there is an understanding ahead of time

²⁶⁹ Canada Company, “[Military Employment Transition Program: About the Program](http://www.canadacompany.ca/en/index.php/military-transition-program/about-the-program),” <http://www.canadacompany.ca/en/index.php/military-transition-program/about-the-program>, consulted 25 March 2013. See also Canada Company, “[Military Transition Program: Transitioning CF Members](http://www.canadacompany.ca/en/index.php/military-transition-program/about-the-program/55-met-program/information/110-transitioning-cf-members),” <http://www.canadacompany.ca/en/index.php/military-transition-program/about-the-program/55-met-program/information/110-transitioning-cf-members>, consulted 25 March 2013; Canada Company, “[Military Transition Program: For Employers](http://www.canadacompany.ca/en/index.php/military-transition-program/for-employers),” <http://www.canadacompany.ca/en/index.php/military-transition-program/for-employers>, consulted 25 March 2013.

²⁷⁰ Canada Company, “[Military Employment Transition Program: About Us](#)” and “[Military Employment Transition Program: Employers](#).”

²⁷¹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 28 November 2012 (Peter Hart). See also Canada Company, “[Canada Company Announced National Program to Assist Canadian Forces Personnel into Civilian Employment](#),” 15 June 2012.

²⁷² Canada Company, “[MET Inaugural Conference](#),” November 2013.

of the differences in that the résumés will look a little different or the interview will be a little different, but most importantly the incredible calibre, high quality and the amount of training these folks have, you will not find better prospective employees in Canada. That is what we do ahead of time so there is more of a high-touch approach when Canadian Forces applications come in.

... You have to educate. They [civilian employers] have to understand that even an entry-level Canadian Forces personnel gets ... something like \$100,000 or \$200,000 worth of training in their career. It is a big number. Everyone gets some basic level of really solid training. You do not always see that in the private sector. We always talk about how you are getting discipline, integrity, character, leadership. You look at what even the lower ranks do in battle. It is phenomenal. They lead. They are leaders, and what we look for in the private sector is leadership, logistical ability, common sense, analysis. All of the tools that Canadian Forces members have are exactly what we are looking for.²⁷³

Canada Company is now supported in its efforts by DND. As noted earlier in this report, DND's Transition Assistance Program has recently entered into partnership with the Canada Company, which has agreed to provide all eligible serving CAF members with access to its MET website.²⁷⁴ As of November 2013, the Canada Company had over 500 registered members.²⁷⁵ "Currently, there are more jobs than applicants, but this is because we are at the leading edge of the program," Major-General David Millar, Chief of Military Personnel, told the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence on 4 March 2014.²⁷⁶ However, membership is expected to significantly increase in coming years.²⁷⁷ In the fall of 2013, the Canada Company launched its 10,000 Jobs Challenge, which encourages the Canadian private sector to find "jobs for 10,000 [transitioning] CAF members over the next 10 years," so by 2023.²⁷⁸ This initiative is modelled on the success of a similar initiative launched in the U.S. in 2011 known as the 100,000 Jobs Mission, which originally challenged U.S. private sector employers to hire 100,000 U.S. veterans before 2020. More than 123 companies have since joined the 100,000 Jobs Mission and have provided work to almost 93,000 veterans. With the original target almost reached, the 100,000 Jobs Mission doubled its challenge to the private sector in 2013, encouraging them to hire 200,000 instead of 100,000 U.S. veterans by 2020.²⁷⁹

²⁷³ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 28 November 2012 (Peter Hart).

²⁷⁴ DND, "[Transition Assistance Program](#)"; DND, "[Backgrounder: Canadian Armed Forces Transition Program](#)," 25 November 2013; DND, *The Guide to Benefits, Programs, and Services*, p. 10.

²⁷⁵ Blake Goldring (Chairman of Canada Company), "[Blake Goldring: Looking after the Veterans of Today](#)," *National Post*, 11 November 2013. See also Canada Company, "[What is Canada Company?](#)"

²⁷⁶ House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 4 March 2014 (Major-General David Millar)

²⁷⁷ Blake Goldring (Chairman of Canada Company), "[Blake Goldring: Looking after the Veterans of Today](#)," *National Post*, 11 November 2013. See also Canada Company, "[What is Canada Company?](#)"

²⁷⁸ Canada Company, "[Canada Company Challenges Private Sector to Hire 10,000 Veterans over the Next 10 Years](#)," 20 September 2013.

²⁷⁹ 100,000 Jobs Mission, "[About the Mission](#)."

3) Helmets to Hardhats Canada

Another organization that helps connect transitioning military personnel and civilian employers is Helmets to Hardhats Canada. Unlike Canada Company — which provides military-civilian liaison and job placement services to all Canadian industries — Helmets to Hardhats Canada focuses only on the construction sector.

The decision to establish Helmets to Hardhats Canada was announced in the federal budget of 2011, when the Canadian government expressed a commitment “to supporting all Canadian Forces members as they transition from military to civilian life, through workshops, individual career counselling and job search assistance.” “[To] further support this transition,” the government stated that it would “partner with the Building and Construction Trades Department, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, to support the Helmets to Hardhats program in Canada.”²⁸⁰

Modelled on the United States’ Helmets to Hardhats program, which originated in 2003, Helmets to Hardhats Canada was officially created on 6 January 2012 and operates as a non-profit organization. According to the Canadian government, Helmets to Hardhats Canada is “a partnership with Canada’s Building Trades Unions” and brings “union, private and public sector resources together to help provide Veterans, Canadian Armed Forces members and Reservists access to a range of careers within the construction industry including apprenticeships in various building trades.”²⁸¹ Christopher Smillie of the Building and Construction Trades Department (BCTD) told the Subcommittee that his organization is well placed to lead the Helmets to Hardhats Canada program and connect veterans with job opportunities in the construction industry, for it “represent[s] about 500,000 skilled tradesmen in every province and territory through 14 international construction [trades] unions.”²⁸²

According to Mr. Smillie, there are plenty of job opportunities for transitioning military personnel and veterans in the construction industry. There is a high demand for people, particularly skilled individuals, in that industry he explained. And construction industry demand for personnel is expected to grow significantly in years to come, which should provide job opportunities to transitioning CAF members and veterans.

The construction sector council predicts that by 2017 somewhere in the vicinity of 320,000 people will be required to fill the aging demographic shift and retirements. With only a relatively small number of Canadian Forces personnel transitioning — from my

²⁸⁰ Government of Canada, [Budget 2011 – The Next Phase of Canada’s Economic Action Plan: A Low-Tax Plan for Jobs and Growth](#), 6 June 2011, p. 130.

²⁸¹ Government of Canada, “[Canada News Centre: Helmets to Hardhats](#),” 6 January 2012. See also Helmets to Hardhats Canada, “[About Helmets to Hardhats](#).”

²⁸² Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 4 April 2012 (Christopher Smillie). See also Helmets to Hardhats Canada, “Building and Construction Trades Department.”

*initial research about 5,000 a year — it means we really have an opportunity to get it right for these men and women.*²⁸³

“Our goal with the Helmets to Hardhats is to place as many [people] as possible into good, high-paying jobs,” Mr. Smillie told the Subcommittee. “There is a need for supervisors, engineers and other management roles ... We will endeavour to place these folks. We also hope to attract serving reservists — a lot of them are currently in school — into the industry. Through the bargaining process, we have agreed with our employer partners across Canada to generous military leave policy to accommodate their service.”²⁸⁴

Mr. Smillie told the Subcommittee that veterans are well suited for work in the construction industry:

Most of the military construction trades line up quite nicely with the civilian trades. If you are steamfitter in the military, your qualifications are very similar to what is required in industry in Canada. In other military occupations, your qualifications in the Canadian Forces may get you part of the way or most of the way to journey person status in the industrial setting.

For example, an engineer who has operated heavy equipment can operate that equipment for us. An armoured corps soldier can operate armoured vehicles and, with just a little help, can transition to heavy equipment with us.

*The navy's engineering trades are also closely related to construction skills ... For a number of the officer and senior non-commissioned people, their skills are transferable as well to a civilian occupation. An engineer is an engineer and a logistical officer is able to deal with supply chain management issues, whether it is with fuel and ammunition or with pipe and fittings for a project. We hope not to just transition skilled trades from the military, but also senior level people into management positions with our contractors.*²⁸⁵

As the Helmets to Hardhats Canada business plan explains, the program’s goals and objectives are:

- *To act as a transition vehicle for Canadian Forces veterans who are transitioning into civilian employment;*
- *To increase the number of building trades apprenticeships in Canada;*
- *To find appropriate matching of the skills of Canadian Forces veterans into construction industry occupations;*

²⁸³ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 4 April 2012 (Christopher Smillie).

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

- *To enhance the services provided to Canadian veterans through the [New] Veteran’s Charter;*
- *Finally, to reinforce value that the Canadian Forces, the Building Trades, fair employers and Veterans Affairs Canada bring to Canadians who have served in the Canadian military.*²⁸⁶

The business plan further notes that the program “will employ the expertise of the Building and Construction Trades affiliate organizations and their contractor partners to assist in placing members of the Canadian Forces in construction industry apprenticeship and construction industry occupations” and that “these services will be delivered in a variety of ways,” which will include, among others, “an interactive website,” “a Secretariat that will employ a small staff in order to assist members of the military who are transitioning to civilian life,” and “print and other media advisories.”²⁸⁷ As Mr. Smillie told the Subcommittee:

*The Helmets to Hardhats program in Canada is an important complimentary human resource tool for the building trades and also for our contractor partners in industry. It is an undertaking that is a partnership between industry, government and the Canadian Forces. It is the kind of private-public partnership that makes a difference to the construction industry and, hopefully, to transitioning Canadian Forces members, serving reservists and disabled veterans.*²⁸⁸

The Helmets to Hardhats Canada website has been operational since September 2012. The site provides information on the program and helps connect veterans with civilian employers and job opportunities in the construction industry.²⁸⁹ On its website, Helmets to Hardhats Canada explains the type of services it can offer transitioning military personnel and veterans who desire to join Canada’s construction industry.

The program offers the required apprenticeship training to achieve journey person status in any of the applicable trades within the building and construction industry. Depending on existing qualifications and experience, the apprenticeship training process may be shortened or by-passed so as to enable a fast-tracked achievement of journey person status.

Regardless of an individual's military occupation, they may choose to pursue any of the 14 applicable trade fields with full apprenticeship training being provided as required. A full apprenticeship program can be 3-4 years long, during which time much of the apprenticeship will be on job training (OJT), with anywhere from 8-20 weeks of classroom instruction provided during this 3-4 year period. Apprentices will be paid

²⁸⁶ Helmets to Hardhats Canada, [Helmets to Hardhats Canada Business Plan](#), p. 3

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 4 April 2012 (Christopher Smillie).

²⁸⁹ VAC, [“Veterans Can Now Apply for Jobs Through Helmets to Hardhats Canada,”](#) News Release, 21 September 2012, and [“Veterans Can Now Apply for Jobs Through Helmets to Hardhats Canada,”](#) News Release, 18 September 2012.

*during their OJT, but at a reduced rate from what they will earn as a qualified journey person. Apprenticeship training is offered across Canada, so it will be up to the individual to decide where in Canada they would like to undertake this training. For a number of trades, the journey person is given "Red Seal" certification which permits them to work in any Province or Territory across Canada.*²⁹⁰

In a January 2012 news release, the Government of Canada stated that the Helmets to Hardhats Canada program will benefit veterans and Canadians by:

- *Providing transitioning veterans with exclusive access to jobs and training opportunities in the construction industry, where they can apply the skills they developed in the Canadian Armed Forces;*
- *Helping them provide for their families and to contribute to their communities in a new way;*
- *Helping to meet labour needs in the construction sector; and*
- *Helping to generate employment that continues to fuel Canada's long-term economic growth.*²⁹¹

The Canadian government has contributed \$150,000 to support to the Helmets to Hardhats Canada initiative through Veterans Affairs Canada's Community Engagement Partnership Fund. The money has been used "to assist with start-up costs including website development and promotional materials."²⁹² The Alberta and Ontario governments have matched the federal government's contribution with \$150,000 each.²⁹³ The New Brunswick government is also investing \$50,000 in Helmets to Hardhats Canada.²⁹⁴ The private sector is also an important partner. For example, the TransCanada Corporation – a major North American natural gas, oil and energy company headquartered in Calgary, Alberta – has committed \$1 million over 5 years in support of the program.²⁹⁵ PCL Constructors Canada Inc. also committed \$150,000.²⁹⁶

As of November 2013, more than 1,600 veterans had registered with Helmets to Hardhats Canada and the organization had developed partnerships with about 70 employers across Canada.²⁹⁷ At the time, Helmets to Hardhats Canada reported "more than 100 successful [job]

²⁹⁰ Helmets to Hardhats Canada, "[About Helmets to Hardhats.](#)"

²⁹¹ Government of Canada, "[Canada News Centre: Helmets to Hardhats.](#)" News Release, 6 January 2012.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Helmets to Hardhats Canada, "[Government Partners.](#)"

²⁹⁴ New Brunswick Government, "[News Release: Provincial Government Investing \\$50,000 in Helmets to Hardhats Canada.](#)" 9 October 2013.

²⁹⁵ TransCanada Corporation, "[TransCanada Donates \\$1 Million to Support Canadian Veterans Returning to Work.](#)" 6 January 2012.

²⁹⁶ VAC, "[Harper Government and Corporate Canada Partnering to Support Veterans.](#)" 18 April 2013.

²⁹⁷ Trans Canada, "[Remembering and Supporting our Veterans.](#)" 7 November 2013.

placements” since its creation. The organization expects the number of “successful placements” to double or triple over the next few years.²⁹⁸

4) Prospect Human Services

Prospect Human Services is a private non-profit social service organization based in Calgary, Alberta. It traces its roots to the 1950s and the establishment of the Rehabilitation Society of Calgary, an organization that provided a “social outlet” to veterans injured during the Second World War and Korean War and people affected by the polio epidemic. The mandate and clientele of the organization has expanded considerably over the years. Today, over 90% of its services are employment related, and it maintains contact with more than 500 employers, 300 education and skill training providers, 17 industry associations and over 20 secondary associations engaged in hiring unemployed and underemployed people in Alberta.²⁹⁹

Prospect Human Services’ Forces@WORK program has been developed to assist medically-released CAF members in obtaining meaningful civilian careers upon their release from the military. The idea for the program originated in the fall of 2010 from meetings between representatives of Prospect Human Services and DND’s Joint Personnel Support Unit (JPSU) / Integrated Personnel Support Centre (IPSC) in Calgary, which led to an agreement “to collaborate on solving the issue of employment placement / retention for ill and injured personnel exiting the military and returning to civilian life.”³⁰⁰ Prospect Human Services developed the Forces@WORK program and a set of operating procedures for the project in 2011 in concert with the JPSU.³⁰¹ According to Prospect Human Services:

The primary objective of Forces@WORK will be to increase the participation of ill and injured personnel, who are exiting the military, in the workforce It will demonstrate that an intensive approach focused on industry / employer engagement coupled with rapid placement and stabilization supports for individuals will ultimately result in more ill and injured military personnel successfully transitioning to the civilian workforce.

Objectives with Employers

Forces@WORK will market and communicate the potential of this untapped labour pool to industry and employers by:

- *Educating employers to shift employers’ perceptions about hiring ill / injured / military personnel.*

²⁹⁸ Sheryl Smolkin, “[Apprenticeship Program Helps Ex-Military Find Jobs](#),” *The Star*, 29 October 2013.

²⁹⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 May 2012 (Melanie Mitra); Prospect Human Services, Forces@WORK: A New Perspective on Career Transition Services for Canadian Veterans, Fall 2011, pp. 5-7. For more background information on the activities of Prospect Human Services, consult the organization’s website.

³⁰⁰ Prospect Human Services, Forces@WORK, p. 9.

³⁰¹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 May 2012 (Melanie Mitra).

- *Encouraging engagement on the part of employers such that, as a direct result of the efforts of Forces@WORK, we begin to see more soldiers / veterans actively employed in permanent, lateral and suitable positions.*
- *Generating awareness about the availability and potential of veterans in the workforce – specifically with employers but also, to a lesser degree, with the general public.*

Specific tactics will include: relationship-building; marketing; creating linkages between employers, IPSC / JPSU resources, Forces@WORK and veterans; providing access to a variety of military, disability and employment-related resources and information; and effective strategy forums for employers. Finally, Forces@WORK will develop workforce inclusion plans tailored specifically to industry, employers seeking to attract and retain military personnel.

Objectives with Ill and Injured Military Personnel (Exiting the Military)

Forces@WORK will support the aforementioned population in successfully managing their transition to a “second career” by:

- *Providing a comprehensive range of fully accessible career, employment and information services that will assist individuals with understanding the labour market, and making informed career decisions.*
- *Directly connecting individuals to employers with rapid placement and stabilization supports.*
- *Utilizing a client-centred approach to support individuals in simultaneously managing a cultural and career transition.³⁰²*

According to Prospect Human Services, over 100 employers and 15 industry associations have been engaged in Forces@WORK services.³⁰³ “Services are offered at no cost to the individuals or the employer,” emphasized Ms. Melanie Mitra, Chief Executive Officer of Prospect Human Services.³⁰⁴

Prospect Human Services commenced providing Forces@WORK services to the Calgary IPSC in July 2011.³⁰⁵ Up to May 2012, 23 people had been referred to the Forces@WORK program in Calgary.³⁰⁶

³⁰² Prospect Human Services, Forces@WORK, pp. 9–10.

³⁰³ Prospect Human Services, “Forces@WORK Outcomes Summary,” 10 May 2012, p. 5.

³⁰⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 May 2012 (Melanie Mitra).

³⁰⁵ Prospect Human Services, Forces@WORK, pp. 2 and 9.

³⁰⁶ Statistics provided by Melanie Mitra (Prospect Human Services) on 25 May 2012; Prospect Human Services, “Forces@WORK Outcomes Summary,” pp. 1-2.

In 2011, Prospect Human Services proposed to extend Forces@WORK services to the IPSC in Edmonton, Alberta.³⁰⁷ A pilot project endorsed by the JPSU Alberta and Northern Canada Region Commander was launched in Edmonton in April 2012. It aims to place 60 individuals in civilian employment.³⁰⁸ 11 people had been referred to the Forces@WORK program in Edmonton up to May 2012. Prospect Human Services told the Subcommittee that it had accepted 91% of these referrals into the program and that it had placed 30% of these individuals in competitive employment.³⁰⁹

In her testimony, Ms. Mitra summarized the combined activities of the Calgary and Edmonton pilot projects as follow:

*Our combined outcomes in Calgary and Edmonton are as follows: We have received 34 referrals; 50 per cent are from the IPSC, 12 per cent are from SISIP and 38 per cent are from other sources. Forty-one per cent are regular forces; 15 per cent are reserve forces and 44 per cent are veterans. Again, 100 per cent are medical releases. Thirty-eight per cent have been placed in competitive employment and 20 per cent of these individuals are accessing the retention supports. The average time to placement overall is 40 business days.*³¹⁰

At the time, the program remained at the pilot project stage and was focused only on medically-releasing CAF personnel and veterans. However, Ms. Mitra told the Subcommittee that DND has “requested” that Prospect Human Services “also include a number of non-medically releasing personnel and veterans.”³¹¹ Prospect Human Services now notes on its website that “any transitioning member of the Canadian Forces is eligible” to participate in the Forces@WORK program.³¹²

The Forces@WORK program is currently only offered in Alberta.³¹³ However, Prospect Human Services believes that its program “model may be a solution that the JPSU could use in other regions of Canada.”³¹⁴ According to its Chief Executive Officer:

Early indications from the pilot suggest that the program design is well suited to individuals transitioning to employment. All current service partners and the Department of National Defence deem the program to be of value and meeting the mandate of JPSU and the Department of National Defence to provide transition services for releasing soldiers. We are confident that the outcomes will demonstrate that the pilot project

³⁰⁷ Prospect Human Services, “Proposal to Provide Career and Employment Services to JPSU / IPSC Alberta and Northern Canada,” 8 August 2011, pp. 1–4; Prospect Human Services, Forces@WORK, pp. 1–18.

³⁰⁸ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 May 2012 (Melanie Mitra); Prospect Human Services, “Forces@WORK Outcomes Summary,” pp. 2–3.

³⁰⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 May 2012 (Melanie Mitra); Statistics provided by Melanie Mitra (Prospect Human Services) on 25 May 2012.

³¹⁰ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 May 2012 (Melanie Mitra).

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Prospect Human Services, “[Introducing Forces@WORK](#).” See also

³¹³ Prospect Human Services, “[Forces@WORK: About Us](#).”

³¹⁴ Prospect Human Services, Forces@WORK, p. 1.

*between Forces@WORK, the JPSU and the Department of National Defence is the best way to fill a critical gap in employment transition services.*³¹⁵

Prospect Human Services is currently planning to establish a Multi-Region Forces@Work Pilot Program in 2014, which will be conducted at IPSCs in Edmonton, Petawawa, Valcartier, Halifax and Gagetown over a period of one or two years. Prospect Human Services' expects this pilot project to serve up to 1,080 releasing CAF members per year. Based on lessons learned with this Multi-Region Forces@Work Pilot Program, Prospect Human Services hopes to eventually launch a National Forces@Work Program, which would include all of the IPSCs.³¹⁶

5) Wounded Warriors

Established in 2006, Wounded Warriors is a non-profit organization "that helps Canadian Forces members – be they full time or reservists – who have been wounded or injured in their service to Canada since 1990."³¹⁷ Wounded Warriors defines its mission as follows:

We help find solutions for current and former members of the Canadian Forces where gaps have left them in need. While providing programs to all members of the Canadian Forces who have been wounded or injured, our primary focus is on reservist mental health. Our secondary focus is on physical health support, and tertiary focus is on life skills development for all members of the Canadian Forces who have been wounded or injured.³¹⁸

Through partnerships with DND and VAC, as well as support from various donors and corporate sponsors, Wounded Warriors offers a range of individual support projects to assist wounded military personnel and their families. This includes, among other things, financial support for CF members who have been wounded on operations and their families, outreach programs to help homeless veterans, and initiatives to assist individuals suffering from Operational Stress Injuries. It also includes a "Hand Up" program to "augment the services provided to wounded CF Members" in order "to enhance their quality of Life and to partner with them in their recovery." The Wounded Warriors website explains that this is a "onetime only assistance to the member with the maximum allotment under this program being \$10,000."³¹⁹ As an example, in September 2010, the Hand Up program was used to buy tools for a young wounded soldier transitioning to civilian life who had just been trained to be a carpenter and wood worker. As Wounded Warriors explains, the "training was covered by Veterans Affairs Canada, the cost of tools were not."³²⁰

³¹⁵ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 30 May 2012 (Melanie Mitra).

³¹⁶ Information provided to the Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs by Prospect Human Service on 25 March 2013.

³¹⁷ Wounded Warriors, "Mission" See also Wounded Warriors, "Historical Backdrop," Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 5 December 2012 (Philip Ralph).

³¹⁸ Wounded Warriors, "Mission." See also Wounded Warriors, "[Historical Backdrop](#)."

³¹⁹ Wounded Warriors, "[Historical Backdrop](#)" and "[How We Help](#)."

³²⁰ Wounded Warriors, "[Wounded Warriors.ca Announces Hand Up!, a New Support Program](#)," September 2010. See also Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 5 December 2012 (Philip Ralph).

Moreover, in February 2013, Wounded Warriors announced it would provide \$100,000 to assist with the national expansion of the University of British Columbia's Veterans Transition Program. The money is used to support "program delivery in Ontario."³²¹

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

There are many employers across Canada who provide employment opportunities to veterans. They represent a wide range of private sector industries, including aerospace and defence; shipbuilding; manufacturing; security services; construction; mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction; transportation and warehousing; retail and wholesale trade; accommodation and food services; finance and insurance; and information technology, to name a few. There are also job opportunities for veterans in the public sector, in particular in law enforcement, education and health care.³²²

In the course of this study, the Subcommittee heard testimony from representatives of several private sector companies that are actively engaged in hiring veterans in a range of sectors: security services (Canadian Corps of Commissionaires), retail and wholesale trade (Home Depot Canada), rail transportation (Canadian National and Canadian Pacific), and shipbuilding (Irving Shipbuilding). The Subcommittee learned much about private sector job opportunities for veterans from this testimony. These companies and others making similar efforts to hire veterans are to be commended for helping releasing CAF members and veterans, and their families, make a successful transition to civilian life.

One of the encouraging findings of the Subcommittee's study is that there clearly is interest across the private sector in hiring veterans. As Rear-Admiral Smith stated:

My experience with dealing with corporate Canada is that corporate Canada, be it the bank industry, food distribution, cartage companies, financial institutions, among others, are looking hungrily at the types of skill sets that Canadian Forces members have, whether it be communication skills, leadership skills, or organizational skills that we would tend to take for granted inside the Canadian Forces and that, based on what I am told, are not as readily apparent outside. The corporal "infantreeer" that may be [in] transition may not necessarily have all the knowledge related to distribution inside a food distribution warehouse. They can give that. What they cannot give them is the

³²¹ Wounded Warriors, "Transition Assistance Program."; Wounded Warriors, "[Wounded Warriors Canada Provides \\$100,000 Grant Supporting Ontario's First Veterans Transition Program.](#)" 22 February 2013.

³²² The job bank maintained by Right Management for the VAC Career Transition Services Program contained about 200 different Canadian companies (Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 31 October 2012, Anne-Marie Pellerin). The Canada Company website lists over 100 Canadian companies as military-friendly employer partners, which come from a wide range of different employment sectors (Canada Company, "[Military Employment Transition Program: Employers](#)").

*leadership, communication and organizational skills that he comes to the table with. They are interested in plugging in and tapping into that resource base.*³²³

The Honourable Julian Fantino, Minister of Veterans Affairs, echoed such views: “I’ve talked to quite a number of employers, major employers, who are actually actively recruiting veterans now because of their experience, the type of work they do and the kinds of services they provide, as value-added employees to be recruited into their services and employee cadre.”³²⁴

All representatives of the Canadian private sector companies who appeared before the Subcommittee spoke of the value veterans bring to their organizations with their experience and skills, and the need to develop new and innovative ways of channelling veterans into the private sector.

However, in many cases, the interest companies show in hiring veterans goes beyond simply seeking people with the skills and experiences they need and that a military background provides. They believe that the private sector has a responsibility to support veterans as they transition to civilian life. As Kevin Schmiegel, Vice-President and Executive Officer of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Hiring our Heroes program, told the Subcommittee: “hiring veterans ... is a national security imperative.” Veterans have devoted their lives to their country and some of them return to civilian life with service-related disabilities, he explained. Their service should “not only be appreciated but valued” and one way of doing this is “by helping them find meaningful careers in the private sector.” In his view, no veteran should have to face unemployment after serving their nation, especially considering that they possess a wide range of experiences, trade sets, and skills that have been provided to them at government expense throughout their military careers, which could be highly beneficial and valuable to the private sector.³²⁵

1) The Canadian Corps of Commissionaires

Formed in 1925, The Canadian Corps of Commissionaires is currently Canada’s single most prolific employer of veterans.³²⁶ The organization advertises itself as “Canada’s premier security company,” protecting “people and property for public and private sector clients” across Canada.³²⁷ Its mandate is “to promote the cause of Commissionaires by the creation of meaningful employment opportunities for former members of the Canadian Forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police [RCMP] and others who wish to contribute to the security and well-

³²³ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 14 December 2011 (Rear-Admiral Andrew Smith).

³²⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), Unedited Copy, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 26 March 2014 (The Honourable Julian Fantino, Minister of Veterans Affairs).

³²⁵ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 3 October 2012 (Kevin Schmiegel).

³²⁶ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 26 October 2011 (Colonel (Retired) W.G.S. Bill Sutherland, Chairman, National Board of Directors, Commissionaires). On the history of Commissionaires, see John Gardam, ed., *The Commissionaires: An Organization with a Proud History, 1925–1998* (Burnstown: General Store Publishing House, 1998), pp. 1–345.

³²⁷ Commissionaires, [“About Commissionaires.”](#)

being of Canadians.”³²⁸ Commissionaires employs over 20,000 men and women across Canada, of which approximately 16,500 work full-time. Nearly 50% of the organization’s full-time workforce is veterans.³²⁹

Commissionaires is “a private, non-profit, self-supporting organization whose sole purpose is to provide services of many kind using former members of the Canadian Armed Forces and from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.”³³⁰ The “not-for-profit” nature of Commissionaires was emphasized to the Subcommittee by Bill Sutherland:

*We have no agenda other than serving veterans ... We are not a profit-driven organization. We turn 95 per cent of what we make back to veterans [in the form of wages, training and benefits], 70 per cent of whom do not have pensions and require that assistance; and we are primarily focused on employment so that we can provide that kind of meaningful lifestyle and dignity to veterans coming out of the forces. We provide good value and valuable service.*³³¹

Eligibility criteria for employment with Commissionaires have evolved over the years. When it was first established in 1925, the organization essentially served as an employment agency for First World War (1914–1918) veterans. After the Second World War, employment with Commissionaires was extended to veterans of that conflict and, later, to those of the Korean War (1950–1953). Over the years, new eligible categories were added, such as war veterans of allied governments, British, Canadian and other allied merchant seamen who served in wartime, retired CAF personnel, reservists, and former members of the RCMP, other police forces, the Canadian Coast Guard and Correctional Service Canada.³³² More recently, Commissionaires extended its membership to Canadian civilians.³³³ In sum, one no longer needs to be a veteran to become a commissionaire.

In order to be eligible to join Commissionaires in 2014, an individual must have “a clean criminal record,” “be able to speak, read and write in English or French in Quebec (bilingualism is an asset),” “be physically capable of standing or walking for long periods of time,” “have lived in Canada for five years,” and “be legally entitled to work in Canada.”³³⁴ The recruitment of civilians is important to Commissionaires: “It is [the] distinctive blend of veterans and non-

³²⁸ Commissionaires, “[Mandate and History](#).”

³²⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 26 October 2011 (Captain (Navy) (Retired) Paul A. Guindon, Chairman, National Business Management Committee, Commissionaires). See also Commissionaires, “[About Commissionaires](#).”

³³⁰ Gardam, *The Commissionaires*, p. 4.

³³¹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 26 October 2011 (Colonel (Retired) W.G.S. Bill Sutherland).

³³² Gardam, *The Commissionaires*, pp. 7, 340. See also Canada, *Letters Patent Incorporating Canadian Corps of Commissionaires*, amendments September 1989; Commissionaires, “[Careers for Veterans](#).”

³³³ Commissionaires, “[Careers for General Public](#),”

³³⁴ Commissionaires, [Rewarding Employment, Diverse Opportunities, Competitive Pay](#), p. 2..

veteran, youthful energy and seasoned judgement from all walks of life that helps sets Commissionaires apart as leaders in our industry.”³³⁵

Still, despite ongoing efforts to attract non-veterans into its ranks, Commissionaires very much considers itself “managed by veterans for veterans.”³³⁶ Indeed, with few exceptions, almost all of the senior leadership of the organization consist of former CAF or RCMP members.³³⁷ This includes the three Commissionaires witnesses who appeared before the Subcommittee, all of whom had served in the CAF.³³⁸ The organization hires more than 1,000 former CAF and RCMP members into its ranks every year.³³⁹

In November 2010, Commissionaires signed a Return to Work (RTW) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the CAF and DND, under which it agreed to provide CAF members “injured in the line of duty” with employment opportunities “tailored to their individual situations.” The RTW MOU is designed to lead to one of two results: the “reintegration” of the injured back into the CAF or the person’s “successful transition to a post-military career.” The program is also extended to the spouses of injured or deceased CAF members of both the regular and reserve forces.³⁴⁰ When Commissionaires appeared before the Subcommittee on 26 October 2011, it reported that over the previous 12 months approximately 30 CAF members came to them through the RTW program. The witnesses also noted that “just a couple have remained with [Commissionaires], and the others have transitioned.”³⁴¹

Over the past decade and a half, the strength of Commissionaires has doubled, rising from 11,194 members in 1997 to more than 20,000 by 2014. This increase in personnel is largely attributable to the fact that the organization took on greater security responsibilities and contracts; its annual revenues grew from over \$200 million in 1996 to more than \$530 million by 2014.³⁴²

Commissionaires perform a wide range of duties and have moved well beyond the traditional perception of retired military personnel providing simple security services at government

³³⁵ Commissionaires, “[Commissionaires and DND Join Forces to Support Injured Veterans – Memorandum of Understanding on New Return to Work Program Signed](#),” News release, 2 November 2010.

³³⁶ Commissionaires, “[Commissionaires at a Glance](#).”

³³⁷ Commissionaires, “[Divisions](#)” and “[Our Team](#).”

³³⁸ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 26 October 2011 (Colonel (Retired) W.G.S. Bill Sutherland).

³³⁹ Commissionaires, “[Commissionaires at a Glance](#).” Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 26 October 2011 (Colonel (Retired) J. Douglas Briscoe, Executive Director, Commissionaires).

³⁴⁰ Commissionaires, “[Commissionaires and DND Join Forces to Support Injured Veterans – Memorandum of Understanding on New Return to Work Program Signed](#),” 2 November 2010. See also Commissionaires, “[DND-Commissionaires Return to Work Memorandum of Understanding](#),” November 2010.

³⁴¹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 26 October 2011 (Captain (Navy) (Retired) Paul A. Guindon).

³⁴² On 1996 and 1997 statistics, see Gardam, *The Commissionaires*, p. 3. On 2014 statistic, see Commissionaires, “[Commissionaires at a Glance](#).”

building entrances. Commissionaires currently provides services in more than 1,200 communities across Canada.³⁴³ Services are subdivided into four main categories:

- *Security Solutions: Providing reliable, highly qualified and professional security guards for every situation across the nation.*
- *Enforcement Services: Providing professional services such a bylaw, parking and jail custodial services to municipalities, police detachments and provincial governments.*
- *Identification Services: Delivering full identification services, including police clearances, digital fingerprinting, complete background checks and pardon application services from coast to coast.*
- *Training: Meeting client needs with superior security training programs in every province.*³⁴⁴

The organization's clients include:

- *Private and public organizations (for example: hospitals; banks; museums; art galleries; and international and regional airports, seaports and harbours);*
- *Educational institutions (for example: schools, colleges and universities);*
- *Businesses (for example: commercial offices; factories and manufacturing facilities; oil and gas refineries; heavy industry; mining; and laboratories);*
- *Governments (federal, provincial and municipal);*
- *The military, police forces and law enforcement organizations (CAF / DND, Canada Border Services Agency, RCMP; provincial and municipal police detachments, and courts);*
- *Detention centres and halfway houses;*
- *Residential developments (for example: condominiums; apartment buildings; private homes; and construction sites); and*
- *Individual citizens.*³⁴⁵

In addition, Commissionaires has supported relief efforts in times of emergency. As an example, in June 2011 several commissionaires were deployed to provide support to provincial

³⁴³ Commissionaires, "[Commissionaires at a Glance.](#)"

³⁴⁴ Commissionaires, "[Media Fact Sheet.](#)" See also Commissionaires, "[Business Security](#)" and "[Individual Security.](#)"

³⁴⁵ Commissionaires, "[Commissionaires at a Glance.](#)" "[Our Clients.](#)" and "[Case Studies.](#)"

emergency authorities in the wake of severe flooding and forest fires in Alberta and Saskatchewan.³⁴⁶ Commissionaires has also provided support to military operations overseas, including in Afghanistan where they worked at Kandahar, screening NATO military personnel arriving in theatre and dealing with Afghan citizens who were given access to the base and airfield.³⁴⁷

About 40% of Commissionaires' business is with the Government of Canada. Non-federal government contracts with the private sector and other clients account for approximately 60% of Commissionaires' workload.³⁴⁸

A. Commissionaires' Right of First Refusal on Federal Guard Contracts

Since 1945, Commissionaires has had a special contractual arrangement with the Government of Canada granting Commissionaires the right of first refusal on *all* federal guard contracts. Under this arrangement, Commissionaires do not need to compete for these contracts. "The purpose of the right of first refusal was to provide job opportunities to veterans," Marc O'Sullivan of the Treasury Board Secretariat told the Subcommittee, "and this continues to be its primary objective."

*This goal, the employment of veterans, provides a justification, under government contract regulations, for awarding these contracts without competition. These regulations normally require the soliciting of bids before entering into contracts. However, an exception is allowed when the nature of the work is such that it would not be in the public interest to solicit bids. The right of first refusal accorded to the Corps of Commissionaires is deemed to be in the public interest insofar as it can be directly linked to the employment of veterans.*³⁴⁹

The arrangement has since been renewed on average about every five years. In December 2004, the Treasury Board issued a Contracting Policy Notice that amended the policy and that established conditions that Commissionaires must meet to retain its right of first refusal, namely that 70% of working hours must be filled by veterans. This percentage requirement was to be met by each of Commissionaires' regional divisions, with the exception of the Ottawa and Montreal divisions, where the percentage was set at 60% due to "challenges in responding to Official Languages requirements in these two centres and the diminishing number of qualified veterans."³⁵⁰ The 2004 Treasury Board review was "triggered by concerns that the right of first

³⁴⁶ Commissionaires, "[Commissionaires Contributing to Emergency Effort at Slave Lake](#)," 15 June 2011; "[Commissionaires Contributing to Flooding and Forest Fires Emergency Efforts in Saskatchewan](#)," 29 June 2011.

³⁴⁷ Commissionaires, "[Commissionaires Now Stand on Guard in Afghanistan](#)," 15 January 2008.

³⁴⁸ Commissionaires, "Canadian Corps of Commissionaires," submitted to the Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs on 26 October 2011; Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 26 October 2011 (Captain (Navy) (Retired) Paul A. Guindon).

³⁴⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 23 November 2011 (Marc O'Sullivan, Assistant Comptroller General, Acquired Services and Assets, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat).

³⁵⁰ Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS), "[Contracting Policy Notice 2004-2 – Commissionaires Services \(Corps\) – Right of First Refusal for Guard Services](#)," 2 December 2004.

refusal was unfair to security companies, particularly as it was not clear how many veterans were actually employed under these contracts,” explained Mr. O’Sullivan. The requirement for a 70% minimum veteran participation rate on contracts awarded to Commissionaires was “deemed necessary to establish the direct employment benefits to veterans from the right of first refusal contracts.”³⁵¹ However, Commissionaires faced challenges in meeting these conditions nationally. According to the Treasury Board, this was due to “increases in demand for security services and declining numbers of veterans.”³⁵² As a result, in 2006, the Treasury Board reviewed the issue and approved some amendments. The Treasury Board issued a new Contracting Policy Notice in December 2006, which reduced the percentage of working hours to be filled by veterans to a minimum of 60% nationally, extended Commissionaires’ right of first refusal for guard services at federal sites until 2016, and extended the definition of a veteran to former members of the RCMP.³⁵³

Marc O’Sullivan of the Treasury Board Secretariat told the Subcommittee that starting in July 2009 Commissionaires “engaged the President of the Treasury Board with a proposal to remove the 60 per cent veteran quota and replace it with a new accountability framework recognizing the Corps of Commissionaires as providing services on behalf of all veterans and not just those who work under contract with the federal government,” but “after lengthy consideration,” Treasury Board informed Commissionaires in June 2010 that this proposal “could not be accepted” as it would not comply with federal government contract regulations.³⁵⁴ As he explained:

*These regulations require a direct public-interest justification for awarding the contract without competition. The direct employment of veterans constitutes that public-interest exception. This was the purpose of instituting the 60 per cent threshold for veterans. Removing the threshold would no longer support a public-interest rationale for the exception to the rule that you must bid for contracts. It would, thus, be contrary to government contract regulations.*³⁵⁵

Commissionaires’ services under the right of first refusal arrangement are currently provided under the Treasury Board’s Common Services Policy.³⁵⁶ “Departments are required by the Common Services Policy to use Canadian Corps of Commissionaires’ guard services on a mandatory basis,” explained Marc O’Sullivan. “The contracting mechanism is the National Master Standing Offer, which was created and is managed by Public Works and Government

³⁵¹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 23 November 2011 (Marc O’Sullivan).

³⁵² Government of Canada, “[Government of Canada Affirms the Role of the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires](#),” 20 December 2006.

³⁵³ TBS, “[Contracting Policy Notice 2006-5 – Canadian Corps of Commissionaires Services \(Corps\) – Right of First Refusal for Guard Services](#),” 8 December 2006.

³⁵⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 23 November 2011 (Marc O’Sullivan).

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ TBS, [Common Services Policy](#), Appendix E Mandatory Services, Section 6.5.3. Guard Services, modified 26 October 2006.

Services Canada. Departments are required to hire commissionaires under this contract before being allowed to consider other contracting options.”³⁵⁷ According to Pablo Sobrino of PWGSC,

*The National Master Standing Offer is an umbrella agreement that any department needing security guard services must use to enter into a contract. This umbrella agreement provides the corps with a right of first refusal and identifies a minimum threshold for veteran participation. To comply with the policy, veterans must perform an average of 60 per cent of the hours worked under the National Master Standing Offer on a national basis. We ensure compliance with this requirement by obtaining a formal annual audit from the corps' third-party financial auditor. According to these audits, veteran participation has decreased from 73 per cent in 2006-07 to 62 per cent in 2009-10. Public Works and Government Services Canada has also established secondary competitive regional master standing offers. The purpose behind them is to allow departments to enter into contracts if the corps cannot meet the terms and conditions under the National Master Standing Offer. The corps is permitted to compete for the secondary standing offers and, in fact, holds regional master standing offers in all regions of Canada.*³⁵⁸

The current National Master Standing Offer was renewed in 2011 for another five years, until 2015-2016. “The estimated value of this contract is \$1.35 billion over a five year period,” Mr. O’Sullivan told the Subcommittee.³⁵⁹ Commissionaires provide approximately 97% of Government of Canada security guard services under the National Master Standing Offer.³⁶⁰

Commissionaires hope that the government will support them when the right of first refusal comes up for renewal in 2016. As Colonel (Retired) W.G.S Bill Sutherland, Chairman of Commissionaires’ National Board of Directors, told the Subcommittee:

*We [Commissionaires] provide for the Canadian taxpayer a valuable cost-effective option for delivering security services to government, and at the same time we provide a cost-effective and valuable service to veterans. It certainly is a win-win situation. We, at no cost to government, look after veterans by providing meaningful employment, which means that those veterans do not fall through the cracks or need to be looked after in other ways.*³⁶¹

Commissionaires, however, would like the right of first refusal to be updated during the renewal process, which they expect will start in 2014. “It will be important for us, when going

³⁵⁷ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 23 November 2011 (Marc O’Sullivan).

³⁵⁸ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 23 November 2011 (Pablo Sobrino, Assistant Deputy Minister, Acquisitions Branch, Public Works and Government Services Canada).

³⁵⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 23 November 2011 (Marc O’Sullivan). See also Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC), “[Commissionaire Services: S.O. EN578-132867/001ZL - Fiscal Year 2013–2014](#),” modified 25 April 2013.

³⁶⁰ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 23 November 2011 (Pablo Sobrino).

³⁶¹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 26 October 2011 (Colonel (Retired) W.G.S. Bill Sutherland).

through the negotiations, to look at an expansion of what is in the National Master Standing Offer in order to find opportunities to move from strictly security guarding to security solutions,” Colonel (Retired) J. Douglas Briscoe, Executive Director of Commissionaires, told the Subcommittee.³⁶² As Colonel (Retired) Sutherland further explained:

We must ensure that the opportunities that we generate for the veterans of today and tomorrow are tailored to their shifting demographics. That likely means adjusting the RFR [right of first refusal] and the provision of services policy to reflect the skills, capabilities and aspirations of modern veterans, as well as the areas in which they live.

... Modern veterans are coming out with different skills, different expectations, different aspirations and technical abilities that, perhaps, did not exist. At the same time, the security industry has changed markedly. It is becoming a far more technical industry. The traditional guarding services that were originally written into the RFR in 1945 have remained largely unchanged since 1945. When we come to renew the RFR in 2016, we need to be able to update it.³⁶³

2) Canadian National

Canadian National (CN) operates a transcontinental railway system covering more than 20,600 miles across Canada and the United States and has a history of hiring veterans. CN’s workforce consists of over 22,000 people in Canada and the United States. The company maintains that many of them are veterans.³⁶⁴

CN has long hired veterans in the United States and Canada because, as Christine Joanis, the company’s Senior Manager for Talent Acquisition, told the Subcommittee, “Veterans’ skills, acquired through training and hands-on military experience, are valuable to us.”³⁶⁵

Many of our veterans occupy different roles throughout the organization. We have former captains, sergeants, corporals and privates, who were once in Kuwait, Bosnia, Afghanistan, now working in IT or operations with positions ranging from communications manager, police officer, assistant signal technician, conductors, track maintainers, heavy-duty mechanics, car apprentices, yard coordinators and first-line supervisors. We attribute our recruitment and retention success to the similarity of lifestyle and working conditions with the military. The railroad is a 24-7, 365-days-a-year

³⁶² Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 26 October 2011 (Colonel (retired) J. Douglas Briscoe).

³⁶³ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 26 October 2011 (Colonel (Retired) W.G.S. Bill Sutherland).

³⁶⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 7 March 2012 (Christine Joanis, Senior Manager, Talent Acquisition, Canadian National); Canadian National (CN), “[Quick Facts and Figures](#).”

³⁶⁵ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 7 March 2012 (Christine Joanis, Senior Manager, Talent Acquisition, Canadian National).

*operation. There is also a unique sense of passion, pride and teamwork at CN, similar to the feeling of camaraderie that is so characteristic of the military.*³⁶⁶

She also said that veterans' experience with heavy machinery facilitates their training and integration into the CN workforce:

*To become a conductor, you can come in with a high school diploma, and we will train you to become a conductor. In terms of the skills we require for doing that job, there is a lot of safety consciousness. That is why, in terms of recruiting veterans, the training is made that much easier because they go by railcars and locomotives and are not impressed by these kinds of assets, whereas some people, like you and me, could be.*³⁶⁷

In the United States, CN's hiring of veterans has been recognized for some time. For example, *G.I. Jobs* magazine has ranked CN one of the "Top 100 Military Friendly Employers" in the United States for several years in a row. In 2014, the company ranked 98th.³⁶⁸ CN has also been recognized for its veterans' hiring efforts by the Association of American Railroads.³⁶⁹ It should be noted, that CN does not keep track of the number of veterans it employs in Canada.³⁷⁰

CN told the Subcommittee that it was interested in hiring veterans to fill its ranks and that part of its sourcing strategy was to reach out to that group.³⁷¹ VAC reported in December 2012 that CN expected to have about 2,000 jobs available to veterans in 2013.³⁷²

CN told the Subcommittee that it was developing new and innovative ways of attracting veterans into its workforce. As Ms. Joanis explained, although CN has been "recruiting veterans in the past, a more targeted approach [has been] launched" in recent years. She then provided a summary of some of the veterans' recruitment initiatives that CN introduced in both Canada and the United States since 2011:

As a first step, we wanted to reach out to veterans already working at CN. This was done through a cross-border recognition program on November 11. Through this initiative, we distributed 440 specially designed pins to our veterans that self-identified to recognize and connect with them ... These men and women will shortly be called to action to act as CN ambassadors by either being profiled on social media, promoting jobs through their own network, acting as subject matter experts or attending military career events.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ *G.I. Jobs* Magazine, "[2014 Top 100 Military Friendly Employers](#)"; *G.I. Jobs* Magazine, "[2014 Top 100 Military Friendly Employers: Rank 98 – CN](#)."

³⁶⁹ Association of American Railroads, "Railroads Recognized for their Commitment to Military Veterans," 15 November 2011, <https://www.aar.org/newsandevents/Press-Releases/Pages/2011-11-15-Railroads-Military-Friendly-Employers.aspx>.

³⁷⁰ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 7 March 2012 (Christine Joanis).

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² VAC, "[Harper Government and Corporate Canada Partnering to Offer Job Opportunities to Veterans](#)" and "[Hire a Veteran](#)."

CN has also implemented targeted outreach and media activities. In the U.S., we have participated in four military base visits and three major military career fairs, and we have established partnerships with 11 military bases identified as being aligned with our recruitment needs. These partnerships were facilitated by the army transition coordinators as well as our own internal recruiters who are ex-military. Tailored recruitment communication tools were created to promote the fit between military skills and jobs at CN. I invite you to look at the signal profile that I distributed as an example.

Social media is an essential tool to promote CN and advertise jobs in order to recruit the best possible candidates. To further increase our reach, CN recently launched a new social and mobile-friendly job-search platform, including an app available through iTunes stores. In addition, we have invested in online advertisement sites such as vetsuccess.gov and other websites sponsored by Direct Employers, a well-known U.S. job board service. Finally, CN continues to participate in the top employer survey organized by G.I. Jobs and will continue to post jobs on our corporate website and on our newly launched Facebook page.³⁷³

Since December 2012, CN has been a member of the Veterans Transition Advisory Council (VTAC) and a partner in VAC's Hire a Veteran initiative.³⁷⁴ The company is also registered as a military friendly employer partner in Canada Company's MET program.³⁷⁵

3) Canadian Pacific

Like CN, the Canadian Pacific (CP) operates a transcontinental railway in Canada and the United States. Its transportation network covers over 15,300 miles. It has a workforce of more than 15,000 employees in Canada and the United States. The company reported to the Subcommittee that it has "considerable hiring requirements" due to the "core growth in our franchise" and "significant attrition due to retirements." CP is planning to "hire approximately 2,000 employees across Canada", including veterans:

We are currently looking for conductors, who work on the trains and in train yards; diesel mechanics, who fix the locomotives; railcar mechanics, who fix the railcars; signal and communication personnel; seasonal labourers; equipment maintainers; rail traffic controllers; and various management positions.³⁷⁶

The company has made arrangements and partnerships with a number of organizations to facilitate the recruitment of veterans (for example, Canada Company, Civiside, Forces@WORK, Lord Strathcona's Horse Regimental Society, and the Treble Victor Group), and it has devoted an entire section of its website to the hiring of transitioning military personnel and veterans,

³⁷³ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 7 March 2012 (Christine Joanis).

³⁷⁴ VAC, "[Harper Government and Corporate Canada Partnering to Offer Job Opportunities to Veterans](#)" and "[Hire a Veteran](#)."

³⁷⁵ Canada Company, "[Military Employment Transition Program: Employers](#)."

³⁷⁶ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 7 March 2012 (Paul Wajda).

which provides information on employment opportunities and a list of CP jobs and how these align with certain military trades.³⁷⁷ CP notes on this website that it is committed “to find ways to facilitate the transition of troops to civilian life,” that it recognizes “the incredible skills and experience that [veterans] have gained from serving for our country,” and that it understands “how this can relate to a challenging and rewarding career at Canadian Pacific.”³⁷⁸ Paul Wajda, CP’s General Manager of Human Resources, Planning and Development, summarized some of the measures CP implemented in recent years to attract veterans into its workforce.

*Currently we have signed agreements with [Civiside] and Forces@WORK, where we post a link to our job website, where veterans can apply for those positions. The commitment we made was that veterans would get an interview if they are qualified for the position. Recently, we announced our ongoing commitment with the Lord Strathcona's Horse Regimental Society, which includes providing technical exchanges to showcase work skills in both workforces — the Canadian Armed Forces and Canadian Pacific — and working with the Regimental Society to find ways to career transition once they decide to leave the Canadian Armed Forces. We provide scholarships for soldiers' transitional training as well as post-secondary scholarships for children of soldiers who wish to further their education. We also provide funding for programs and services to support various society and military family needs.*³⁷⁹

Veterans bring skills and experience to railways, noted Mr. Wajda, which, in turn, facilitates their training and their integration into the workforce. His views on this echoed those of Ms. Joanis of CN. As Mr. Wajda explained:

A lot of our positions basically require high school diplomas, college, or whatever. When they [veterans] come through [Civiside] or Forces@WORK and they have the credentials, we guarantee that they will get an interview. Then they are put in with the regular mix. Obviously, when people just have high school, we look at all of their previous work experience and how it relates to heavy industry. We are heavy industry. We work around moving equipment. There are a lot of manual tasks involved. Obviously, the military has a lot of that. If it is an individual from signals and communications, they would be more suited for signals and communication. We are always looking, as a company, for whoever has the skills. If the skills match, we would rather have that than prolong the training. If we have a mechanic who comes in from the military and has already worked on diesel equipment, the only training we have to do is how it works on a diesel locomotive. There are some subtle differences versus a diesel truck.

That kind of training speeds up our process, and, obviously, those people would get preferential treatment to someone who is an auto mechanic, for example. We look at that. We look at their skill sets and match them to the positions we have. If a veteran has

³⁷⁷ Canadian Pacific (CP), “[Careers: Canadian Military Partnerships](#),” “[Careers: United States Military Partnerships](#),” “[Careers: Military](#)” and “[Career: Military Experience](#).”

³⁷⁸ Canadian Pacific, “[Careers: Military](#).”

³⁷⁹ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 7 March 2012 (Paul Wajda).

*the skills, they will probably float to the top because their skills apply more to the work we are looking at.*³⁸⁰

Like CN, CP does not track the number of veterans it employs in Canada. However, it assured the Subcommittee that it has many veterans in its workforce. CP also employs a number of veterans in the United States, and has been recognized for its efforts by *G.I. Jobs* magazine, which ranked the company one of the “Top 100 Military Friendly Employers” in the United States in 2014. CP ranked 100th.³⁸¹ The company has also been recognized for its veteran hiring efforts by the Association of American Railroads.³⁸²

4) Home Depot Canada

Home Depot is “the world’s largest home improvement retailer.”³⁸³ Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, the company was founded in 1978 and now operates 2,260 retail stores worldwide, including 180 in Canada. Home Depot employs over 300,000 people worldwide, including some 27,000 in Canada.³⁸⁴

Home Depot has been a renowned employer of veterans for many years. In fact, the company currently stands as one of the largest employer of veterans in the United States and maintains regular ties with the U.S. military. In 2004, the company launched “Operation Career Front,” an initiative with the U.S. Departments of Defence, Labor and Veterans Affairs to “provide rewarding and challenging career opportunities in [its] stores and distribution centres across the nation [United States] for current and former members of America’s military.”³⁸⁵ The purpose of the program is to recruit transitioning military personnel, veterans, reservists, members of the National Guard and military spouses. More than 60,000 American veterans have been hired since 2004.³⁸⁶ And Home Depot recently made a commitment to hire another 55,000 American veterans over the next five years.³⁸⁷ In 2012, Home Depot launched its “Mission: Transition” program, which provides civilian career workshops to transitioning military personnel and veterans in the United States. It also launched an online military skills translator tool, which helps former service members translate their military skills and

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ *G.I. Jobs* Magazine, “[2014 Top 100 Military Friendly Employers](#)”; *G.I. Jobs* Magazine, “[2014 Top 100 Military Friendly Employers: Rank 100 – Canadian Pacific Railroad](#).”

³⁸² Association of American Railroads, “Railroads Recognized for their Commitment to Military Veterans,” 15 November 2011, <https://www.aar.org/newsandevents/Press-Releases/Pages/2011-11-15-Railroads-Military-Friendly-Employers.aspx>.

³⁸³ Home Depot, “[Did You Know?](#)”

³⁸⁴ Home Depot, “[Fact Sheet: Corporate and Financial Overview](#),” “[Stores, Products, and Services](#),” “[Our Company](#),” and “[Our Company: History](#)”; Home Depot Canada, “[Company Information: History](#)” and “[Company Information: Our Company](#).”

³⁸⁵ Home Depot, “[Military Commitment](#).” See also U.S. Department of Defense, “[News: Home Depot, Government Launch Military Veterans Jobs Initiative](#),” 21 September 2004; Home Depot, *Operation Career Front User Guide: Instructions for the Launch and Implementation*, 10 September 2004, pp. 1-18.

³⁸⁶ Home Depot, “[Military Commitment](#).”

³⁸⁷ Home Depot, “[Partnerships: The Home Depot and the Military](#)” and “[Military: Ongoing Support](#).”

experiences into civilian equivalencies and find Home Depot job postings that best meet their qualifications.³⁸⁸

G.I. Jobs magazine has ranked Home Depot one of the “Top 100 Military Friendly Employers” in the United States for several consecutive years. In 2014, Home Depot ranked 31st on the list. *G.I. Jobs* noted that Home Depot currently employs more than 35,000 veterans in the United States.³⁸⁹ Asked by *G.I. Jobs* “what advantages do military personnel have over their peers of the same age and education level,” Home Depot explained:

*Military personnel tend to be very mature and responsible. They are accustomed to working in an organization that expects them to set high individual standards and objectives – and meet them. They are also accustomed to working in an environment that depends on exceptional levels of teamwork to succeed. They are confident, self-reliant, resourceful and disciplined. In addition, many military personnel have specialized experience in areas such as plumbing, electrical or carpentry that is transferable to positions in our stores.*³⁹⁰

Home Depot told *G.I. Jobs* that the company provides “a vast array of career opportunities” for veterans, which includes “full- and part-time opportunities,” including through recruitment into its Store Leadership Program (SLP). The SLP is a “24-month rotational program where participants build a strong foundation of leadership, technical and strategic skills that will prepare them to succeed as a store manager and beyond.” To qualify for the SLP, candidates must “have a minimum of four years leadership experience in a business environment or as a commissioned military officer.” Nearly 50% of the people accepted in the program are former military personnel.³⁹¹

Home Depot provides support and financial security to employees currently serving with the National Guard or the reserve forces of the five U.S. armed services (United States Army, United States Air Force, United States Navy, United States Marine Corps, and United States Coast Guard). This includes equalizing pay and benefits for its “active duty” employees engaged on military operation.³⁹² Home Depot also provides employment opportunities to military spouses.³⁹³

While the Home Depot’s efforts to recruit veterans are somewhat more limited in Canada, the company told the Subcommittee that it was actively engaged in hiring Canadian veterans. Karen Ritchie, Home Depot Canada’s Director of Human Resources and Talent Acquisition, explained some of Home Depot Canada’s efforts to attract veterans into its workforce:

³⁸⁸ Home Depot, “[The Home Depot Launches Career Assistance Program for Military and Veterans](#),” 10 October 2012 and “[Military Skills Translator Tool](#).”

³⁸⁹ *G.I. Jobs* Magazine, “[2014 Top 100 Military Friendly Employers](#)”; *G.I. Jobs* Magazine, “[2014 Top 100 Military Friendly Employers: Rank 31 – Home Depot](#).”

³⁹⁰ *G.I. Jobs* Magazine, “[Recruiter Interviews: The Home Depot](#).”

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Home Depot, “[Military Commitment](#)” and “[Partnerships: The Home Depot and the Military](#).”

³⁹³ Home Depot, “[Military Commitment](#).”

With regard to our work to help veterans transition into careers at the Home Depot, for several years we have made it a priority to reach out to veterans and their spouses. Although we do not have a specific human resources program for them, we do make significant efforts through specialized recruitment processes ... We have a comprehensive media plan to drive applicant traffic to our stores, focused primarily on students, seniors, diverse applicants and the military.

... We advertise widely in Canadian Forces military newspapers, which reach thousands of members of the Canadian Forces and their families every week. We also target military personnel through Facebook and other forms of social media. In addition, we have had success with certain networks like www.hirecanadianmilitary.com and www.hiremilitaryspouse.ca.

... We have many examples of veterans working at the store level and in corporate roles who joined Home Depot over the past 10 years. There is no unique career path. At store level, some associates retired from the military and joined us on a part-time basis; some work evenings and weekends around their full-time schedule with the military; and others have grown their careers with us from cashier to store manager. At our corporate office in Toronto, we have veterans working as managers, senior managers and directors in supply chain, learning, e-commerce and IT.

It is difficult for us to provide concrete numbers of veterans employed across Canada. We recently launched an "employee self-service" system, which asks associates to voluntarily identify their military service in terms of previous service in the regular forces, previous service in the reserves and current service in the reserves. We have to have that program on a voluntary basis due to privacy legislation. We know, however, that our online advertising this year resulted in almost 13,000 clicks to our career pages; and we had 95 applicants apply to our jobs during the period of January to June 2012. Those were tracked primarily back to www.hirecanadianmilitary.com. We also offer a military reservist leave policy for associates who may need to take a leave to fulfill their reserve commitments.³⁹⁴

Asked whether Home Depot Canada is considering setting up programs to hire veterans in Canada, like Home Depot is doing in the United States, Ms. Ritchie responded:

We have thought about it. We speak frequently with our U.S. colleagues to share best practices; and we leverage, where we can, what they are doing. However, it is a different situation in Canada compared to the U.S., where 2 million Americans have been deployed to two wars over the past 10 years. It is not an apples-to-apples comparison in

³⁹⁴ Senate, Subcommittee Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 20 June 2012 (Karen Ritchie).

*terms of some of the Canadian initiatives, but certainly we leverage, where we can, some of the great things going on in the U.S. to put them in place here.*³⁹⁵

However, Ms. Ritchie emphasized that hiring of veterans has been a positive experience for Home Depot Canada and that efforts to recruit veterans would continue in the future:

*Having veterans work in our stores across Canada as well as in our corporate office has been an extremely positive experience for Home Depot. The energy, experience and professionalism they bring to our team is noticeable, as is the high level of training and skill they bring to their work. We certainly hope to continue exploring ways to maintain and build on these efforts.*³⁹⁶

As part of its efforts to recruit veterans into its workforce, the Home Depot recently registered as a military friendly employer partner in Canada Company's MET program.³⁹⁷

The Home Depot has been recognized in Canada for its hiring of military personnel. In 2005, the company won the Canadian Forces Liaison Council's (CFLC) National Award for Most Supportive Employer in Canada.³⁹⁸ Home Depot also received CFLC awards in 2011 and 2013.³⁹⁹ In its publication *The Alliance*, the CFLC calls the company a "renowned supporter of the reserves."⁴⁰⁰

5) Irving Shipbuilding

Established in 1959, Irving Shipbuilding Inc. is one of Canada's leading shipbuilders. Headquartered in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the company operates production facilities throughout Atlantic Canada, including Halifax Shipyard in Halifax,⁴⁰¹ and is involved in "shipbuilding and repair, drill rig construction and conversion, offshore fabrication, industrial manufacturing, engineering supply chain management and quality and technical services."⁴⁰²

Irving Shipbuilding has a workforce of between 1,600 and 2,000 employees, most of them working in the company's Halifax Shipyard.⁴⁰³ According to *Canadian Defence Review*, about 80% of Irving Shipbuilding's business is defence related. In 2013, *Canadian Defence Review*

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ Canada Company, "[Military Employment Transition Program: Employers.](#)"

³⁹⁸ DND, "[Canadian Employers Win National Awards for Supporting Canadian Forces Reservists, 27 June 2005](#)"; Home Depot, "[Partnerships: The Home Depot and the Military](#)"; and "[Awards-Recognition Rankings: 1981-2006](#)"; Kristina Davis, "[Most Supportive Employers Honoured at CFLC Event](#)," *Maple Leaf*, Vol. 8, No. 24 (22 June 2005), p. 4.

³⁹⁹ DND, "[News Release: Canadian Forces Liaison Council Honours 2013 National Employer Support Award Recipients](#)," 7 June 2013; DND, "[Awards Ceremony Recognizes Employers and Educators Who Support Canadian Forces Reservists](#)," 9 March 2011.

⁴⁰⁰ Cliff Jamieson, "From Home Depot to Helmand Province: Human Resources Manager Granted Year-Long Leave to Serve in Afghanistan," *The Alliance* (Canadian Forces Liaison Council), Issue 3 (2011), pp. 9–10.

⁴⁰¹ Irving Shipbuilding Inc., "[About Us](#)," "[Our History](#)," and "[Locations](#)."

⁴⁰² Irving Shipbuilding Inc., "[About Us](#)."

⁴⁰³ "Canada's Top 50 Defence Companies," *Canadian Defence Review*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (March 2013), p. 33.

ranked Irving Shipbuilding Canada's number six defence company in its annual survey of "Canada's Top 50 Defence Companies."⁴⁰⁴

Irving Shipbuilding is currently engaged in several major shipbuilding projects for the Canadian government. Halifax Shipyard, for example, is contracted to build nine Hero class mid shore patrol vessels for the Canadian Coast Guard. The first ship was launched in November 2011. All vessels are expected to be delivered by 2014.⁴⁰⁵ Halifax Shipyard is also contracted to modernize seven of the Royal Canadian Navy's 12 Halifax class frigates as part of the Halifax Class Modernization / Frigate Life Extension Program. The first frigate – HMCS *Halifax* – entered its mid-life refit at Halifax Shipyard in the fall of 2010.⁴⁰⁶ Irving Shipbuilding expects work on the last ship to be completed in 2018.⁴⁰⁷

Irving Shipbuilding is one of two Canadian shipbuilders selected under the Canadian government's 2010 National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy (NSPS) to rebuild the fleets of the Canadian Coast Guard and the Royal Canadian Navy. Halifax Shipyard will deliver the combat package of the NSPS, which consists of 21 to 23 warships for the Royal Canadian Navy. This includes six to eight Arctic / Offshore Patrol Ships and 15 Canadian Surface Combatants to replace Canada's existing fleet of Iroquois class destroyers and Halifax class frigates.⁴⁰⁸ The combat package is currently estimated to be worth about \$29.3 billion.⁴⁰⁹ An umbrella agreement was signed with Irving Shipbuilding in February 2012.⁴¹⁰ Preliminary contracts were also awarded to Irving Shipbuilding for the Arctic/Offshore Patrol Ships (\$9.3 million in July 2012 and \$288 million in March 2013).⁴¹¹ These contracts relate to ship design and pre-production work at the shipyard. Contracts will be issued at a later date for the actual construction of the

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 32-33.

⁴⁰⁵ Irving Shipbuilding Inc., "[Mid-Shore Patrol Vessel \(MSPV\) Procurement](#)"; Fisheries and Oceans Canada (FOC), "[Minister MacKay and Ashfield Unveil the First Canadian Coast Guard 'Hero' Class Vessel: The CCGS Private Robertson V.C.](#)," 9 November 2011, "[New Mid-Shore Patrol Vessels Named in Honour of Canadian Heroes](#)," February 2011, and "[Government of Canada Moves Ahead with Construction of New Mid-Shore Patrol Vessels](#)," 2 September 2010.

⁴⁰⁶ DND, "[Halifax Class Modernization / Frigate Life Extension](#)."

⁴⁰⁷ Irving Shipbuilding Inc., "[Projects](#)."

⁴⁰⁸ DND, "[The Department of National Defence and the Government of Canada's National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy](#)," 3 June 2010; DND, "[Arctic/Offshore Patrol Ships \(AOPS\)](#)" and "[Canadian Surface Combatant \(CSC\)](#)"; Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC), "[Results of the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy](#)," 19 October 2011; PWGSC, "[National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy \(NSPS\)](#)" and "[Chronology of Events and Milestones](#)."

⁴⁰⁹ The \$29.3 billion includes \$3.1 billion for the acquisition of the Arctic/Offshore Patrol Ships and \$26.2 billion for the Canadian Surface Combatants. It should be noted, however, that the current through-life estimate of the Arctic/Offshore Patrol Ships is \$8.6 billion (\$3.1 billion for the acquisition of the ships and an additional \$5.5 billion in projected personnel, operations and maintenance costs over 25 years) and the Canadian Surface Combatants about \$90 billion (\$26.2 billion for the acquisition of the ships and an additional \$64 billion in personnel, operating and maintenance costs over 30 years). PWGSC, "[Background on the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy \(NSPS\) – Year 2: A Status Update](#)," November 2013.

⁴¹⁰ PWGSC, "[Canada Signs Long-Term Agreements with NSPS Selected Shipyards](#)," 15 February 2012; PWGSC, "[National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy \(NSPS\): Chronology of Events and Milestones](#)."

⁴¹¹ Government of Canada, "[Preliminary Contract signed with Irving Shipbuilding for the Arctic Offshore Patrol Ships](#)," 10 July 2012; Government of Canada, "[Progress continues under the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy with contracts to Irving Shipbuilding Inc.](#)," 7 March 2013

vessels.⁴¹² Current target dates for the award of the Arctic/Offshore Patrol Ships and Canadian Surface Combatants construction contracts are 2015 and 2018, respectively.⁴¹³

In response to this growing workload, Irving Shipbuilding is currently planning a major expansion of its labour force to be implemented in the near future. Brian MacCarthy, Vice-President of Human Resources at Irving Shipbuilding, told the Subcommittee that it expects to increase its workforce “by about 1,500 over an 8- to 10-year period.” The exact timing of that growth is difficult to predict currently and will depend on the signing of the contracts and the initiation of work related to the NSPS program.”⁴¹⁴ The company assured the Subcommittee that job opportunities will be given to veterans as part of this workforce expansion.

Although Irving Shipbuilding does not have a hiring program in place that specifically targets veterans, the company told the Subcommittee that it was putting recruitment plans in place and that these will take former military personnel into consideration as potential employees. “We are big supporters of the military, and we have a number of people in our organization working with the military,” Brian McCarthy told the Subcommittee, adding that the company currently employs “a large number” of veterans and is “very supportive of them.” He also said that numerous reservists were working with the company.⁴¹⁵ Although Mr. McCarty could not give the Subcommittee an idea of the number of veterans and reservists currently employed by Irving Shipbuilding, he emphasized that former members of the CAF and their families “will certainly be part of our recruitment strategy going forward.”⁴¹⁶ As he noted in his testimony, veterans bring important experience and skills to the Irving Shipbuilding workforce.

*Having military or ex-military military work for an organization is not a tough sell for many companies. Based on the skills and the experience and what they bring to the job, most organizations would be open or very open to bringing them on as part of their company. I do not think it is something that necessarily has to be sold ... military personnel have a lot to offer in terms of their background, experience and training. In our experience, they fit in well in our organization.*⁴¹⁷

Mr. McCarthy anticipates that many of the veterans who will join the Irving Shipbuilding workforce in coming years will be former members of the Royal Canadian Navy. As former warship and naval weapon and equipment operators, naval veterans have much to offer companies like Irving Shipbuilding. They understand naval technology and how it is used by naval forces. Their knowledge, experience, training and skills can be highly beneficial to Irving Shipbuilding. Many veterans of the Royal Canadian Navy, for example, possess specializations in complex naval trades that could be of value to any shipbuilder, regardless of whether the

⁴¹² PWGSC, “[NSPS Technical Briefing – Speaking Notes](#),” 11 October 2013.

⁴¹³ PWGSC, “[Backgrounder on the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy \(NSPS\) – Year 2: A Status Update](#),” November 2013.

⁴¹⁴ Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 28 November 2012 (Brian McCarthy).

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

individuals served as marine engineers, marine systems engineering officers, hull, electrical, weapons engineering and supply technicians, logistics officers, or naval combat systems, electronic sensor, and sonar operators. As McCarthy told the Subcommittee, naval personnel are a “natural fit” for shipyard work. Halifax Shipyard “is right next to the navy yards” in Halifax and “the work that is done in shipbuilding is very similar” to that taking place in the dockyards.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

WITNESSES

41st Parliament – 2nd Session (October 16, 2013 - Present)

Organization	Name/Title	Date of Appearance
Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research	Alice Aiken, Director	February 12, 2014
Office of the Veterans Ombudsman	Guy Parent, Veterans Ombudsman	December 4, 2013 December 11, 2013
	Gary Walbourne, Executive Director Operations and Deputy Ombudsman	December 4, 2013 December 11, 2013
	Colonel (Retired) Denys Guérin, Team Leader for the New Veterans Charter Review	December 4, 2013
Veterans Affairs Canada	The Honourable Julian Fantino, P.C., M.P., Minister of Veterans Affairs	March 26, 2014
	Mary Chaput, Deputy Minister	
	Lieutenant-General Walter Semianiw, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy, Communications and Commemoration	

41st Parliament – 1st Session (June 2, 2011 - September 13, 2013)

Organization	Name/Title	Date of Appearance
British Columbia Institute of Technology, Legion Military Skills Conversion Program	Kevin Wainwright, Program Head	May 30, 2012
	Natalie Condrashoff, Project Manager.	
Canada Company	Peter Hart, Managing Director	November 28, 2012
Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists	Elizabeth Steggles, Public Affairs Executive.	October 24, 2012
Canadian Corps of Commissionaires	Colonel (Ret'd) W.G.S. Bill Sutherland, Chairman, National Board of Directors	October 26, 2011
	Captain(N) (Ret'd) Paul A. Guindon, Chairman, National Business Management Committee	
	Colonel (Ret'd) J. Douglas Briscoe, Executive Director	
Canadian National	Christine Joanis, Senior Manager, Talent Acquisition	March 7, 2012
	Nancy Villeneuve, Sourcing Manager	
Canadian Pacific	Paul Wajda, General Manager of Human Resources, Planning and Development	March 7, 2012
Helmets to Hardhats	Christopher Smillie, Senior Advisor Government Relations and Public Affairs, Building Construction Trades Department (BCTD)	April 4, 2012
Helmets to Hardhats (U.S.)	Darrell Roberts, Executive Director	April 4, 2012
Home Depot Canada	Karen Ritchie, Director of Human Resources and Talent Acquisition.	June 20, 2012
Irving	Brian McCarthy, Vice-President, Human Resources (Irving Shipbuilding)	November 28, 2012

National Defence	Rear-Admiral Andrew Smith, Chief Military Personnel	December 14, 2011
	Colonel Gérard Blais, Director Casualty Support Management	December 14, 2011 April 25, 2012 May 2, 2012
	Colonel Jean-Robert Bernier, Deputy Surgeon General	May 2, 2012 May 9, 2012
	Brigadier-General Fred Bigelow, General of Personnel and Family Support Services	April 25, 2012
	Catherine A. Campbell, Assistant to the Chief Scientist, Military Personnel Research and Analysis	May 9, 2012
	Kerry Sudom, PhD, Military Personnel Research and Analysis	May 9, 2012
Prospect Human Services	Melanie Mitra, Chief Executive Officer	May 30, 2012
Public Works and Government Services Canada	Pablo Sobrino, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Acquisitions Branch	November 23, 2011
	Vincent Robitaille, Senior Director, Professional Services Procurement Directorate, Acquisitions Branch.	
The Royal Canadian Legion	Andrea Siew, Director of the Dominion Command Service Bureau	November 30, 2011
	Brad White, Dominion Secretary	
Service Income Security Insurance Plan, (SISIP)	André Bouchard, President	April 25, 2012
Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat	Marc O'Sullivan, Assistant Comptroller General, Acquired Services and Assets	November 23, 2011
	Shirley Jen, Senior Director, Real Property and Materiel Policy Division	

U.S. Chamber of Commerce	Kevin Schmiegel, Vice-President and Executive Director of Hiring our Heroes	October 3, 2012
Veterans Affairs Canada	Keith Hillier, Assistant Deputy Minister, Service Delivery	December 14, 2011
	Anne-Marie Pellerin, Director, Rehabilitation and Case Management	December 14, 2011 May 9, 2012 October 24, 2012
	David Pedlar, PhD, Director, Research	May 9, 2012
	Raymond Lalonde, Director, Operational Stress Injury National Network	May 2, 2012 June 13, 2012
	David Ross, National Clinical Coordinator, Operational Stress Injuries National Network	June 13, 2012
	Charlotte Bastien, Regional Director General, Ontario/Quebec	October 31, 2012
	Janice Burke, Senior Director, Strategic Policy Integration	
Wounded Warriors	Philip Ralph, Secretary and Program Director	December 5, 2012
	Wayne Johnston, Founder and Fundraising Chair	