

UNCLASSIFIED



National Défense
Defence nationale

6007-4 (RCAF UMCC Secretary)

26 January 2024

RECORD OF DISCUSSION OF THE
THE RCAF LEVEL 1 UNION MANAGEMENT
CONSULTATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2023

Co-Chairs:

MGen J.R. Speiser-Blanchet, DComd RCAF
Ms. M. Simcoe, UNDE Rep

Members:

BGen J.P. Thibert, DGASRAR
LCol C.R. Chmelyk, 1 CAD
BGen J.J. Alexander, Comd 2 CAD
Col S.J. Veillette, COS 3 CSD
Col A.E. Ferriss, Comd RAWC
Mr. J. Potts, UNDE Rep
Mr. T. Zaharopoulos, PIPSC Rep
Ms. B. Stephenson, PIPSC Rep
LCol N. Griswold, FF SME
Col J.C.M. Charron, FaCT SME
Col R.T. Stimpson, FaCT SME

Secretary:

Capt K.L. Chin-Yet, EA DGASRAR

Regrets:

LGen E.J. Kenny, Comd RCAF
CWO W.J. Hall, CWO RCAF
MGen I.S. Huddleston, Comd 1 CAD
BGen G.M. Adamson, Comd 3 CSD
Ms. J. Jobin, CAPE Rep

1/11

Canada 

CAN UNCLASSIFIED

Mr. P. Cameron, IBEW Rep
Mr. D. Richard, ACFO Rep
Col S.J.D Poudrier, D Air Pers Mgt

<u>I. Opening Remarks</u>	<u>ACTION BY</u>
MGen Speiser-Blanchet shared that LGen Kenny sends his regards and that she is ready to share what the RCAF is doing and where it is going. She re-iterated that the RCAF is approximately 2000 Regular force members short resulting in attractions, recruiting and retention remaining a priority. Public Service members are part of the Defence Team and so it is very important to remember to communicate effectively, including getting feedback and promoting constructive dialogue. Ms. Simcoe mentioned that there has been a while since the last meeting due to the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) national strike. Now that we are back on track we are looking forward to a regular schedule of 2 meetings per year in sequence with L2s and the L1.	Nil
<u>II. Review of previous RoD (Dec 22)</u>	<u>ACTION BY</u>
BGen Thibert reviewed the RODs from the last L1 Union Management Consultation Committee (UMCC) meeting (Dec 22) and pointed out that they had not yet been signed by all members. He highlighted the key topics that had been discussed including remote work and mentioned that there has been no change to direction since then. Ms. Simcoe (UNDE) inquired about the flexibility in the 2 days/week members are expected to work as well as pointing out that some members don't find any value in their time in the office when the office is empty. Mr. Zaharopoulos (PIPSC) echoed Ms. Simcoe's comments about the value of coming into the office and the importance of ensuring "presence for a purpose". MGen Speiser-Blanchet agreed and pointed out that this is based on direction from the highest levels. She affirmed her	DGASRAR – Get previous ROD signed and distributed.

commitment to seeing what we can do within the Air Force to improve that.	
<u>III. Agenda Item #1: FTE Staffing Vacancies/SWE Overview</u>	<u>ACTION BY</u>
BGen Thibert presented slides on the Public Service Workforce within the RCAF. He pointed out that we are trending well in terms of increase of employees, particularly compared to Reg Force numbers which are still shrinking. Similar to last year Salary Wage Envelope (SWE) allocation is maximized and he confirmed that with respect to the upcoming budget restraints, the SWE should not be affected next fiscal year. Mr. Potts (UNDE) requested the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) allocation attributed to contracting labour to compare with the SWE spend. BGen Thibert confirmed that that number can be provided, however this should be presented after current budget reductions since we have been directed to reduce Professional Services. Ms. Simcoe brought up concerns with delays in staffing. Managers are having trouble meeting all of the requirements in order to hire a Public Service Employee and she inquired if there is any push to provide more assistance in that area. BGen Thibert responded that there are two parts explaining these delays. First, ADM HR-Civ in the last year has been committed to streamlining that process and in fact they provided an update at the national level UMCC meeting regarding improving some of the steps within the process. Second, people who are hiring new members need to be well aware of all the steps required in the process, which is not always the case. Mr. Zaharopoulos asked to find out the number of Full-Time Employee (FTE) positions that are not funded. As a follow-on question, he would also like to know how many times positions were contracted out due to lack of SWE when a public servant would have been preferred. He cited an example where ADM(IM) has over 800 positions that are created that aren't funded.	

MGen Speiser-Blanchet invited the L2s present to respond based on their respective organizations. Col Ferriss (RAWC) stated that they are primarily using contractors to backfill vacant military positions, not public service positions. BGen Alexander (2 CAD) stated that similar to the RAWC they use contracts to backfill military positions. Additionally, most of their contracts are short term and terminate this year. They are trying to create public service positions but not making great progress. He confirmed that they are not using contracts to cover public service positions. BGen Thibert stated that FTE positions cannot be created without allocated SWE. Within the Air Force, SWE is being maximized with the allocation we are given. He offered to provide details on how many positions on average are empty. Ms. Simcoe stated that they regularly push for vacancy management reports at the local level but that they are often not received because at the L3/L4 level they don't know where to look for them. MGen Speiser-Blanchet stated that they would look into ensuring those reports provided at the lower levels. Col Veillette (3 CSD) shared that 3 CSD has had issues hiring public servants due to the length of the hiring process and not due to lack of funds. They have a notable gap between their SWE allocation and filled civilian positions. Mr. Potts stated that in the past national hiring pools were used. They take longer to establish but once established they could be used to draw from a list of pre-screened individuals. Lately there seems to be a push from HR to go non-advertised because it's quicker and easier. BGen Thibert advised that using pools is a known practice. All the services are aligned on this and are pushing in the same direction to improve the hiring process. He concluded by stating that in the RCAF continues to maximize its SWE in terms of FTEs, Casuals, and are looking to expand students as it is a great recruiting tool to encourage students to consider the public service as they graduate.	DGSARAR – provide details on average of FTE positions that are empty. DGASRAR – Ensure L3/L4s are providing vacancy management reports when requested.
---	--

<u>IV. Agenda Item #2: RCAF Strategy and Campaign Plan Overview</u>	<u>ACTION BY</u>
MGen Speiser-Blanchet introduced the RCAF Campaign Plan and Strategy. She stated that the RCAF developed the strategy to articulate where we need to be to address the current and future threat environment. We are not currently in a position to provide the necessary deterrents for the threat environment today. She explained that a lot of research went into the RCAF Strategy to be able to define what is needed by 2035. There are 4 strategic objectives to the Strategy: Value our people and invest in their future; Ready to conduct operations; Modernize for tomorrow; and Engage and partner for success. The end state is to be a credible force capable of providing Canada the deterrence necessary to prevent conflict. She brought up several major capability acquisitions such as the F35, P8, NORAD Modernization, and OTHR as examples of investments in the Air Force. Recognizing the gap we currently have in our people, she emphasized that this will take strong leadership to ensure we can maintain current operations while onboarding new capabilities. MGen Speiser-Blanchet explained that the Campaign Plan placemat takes the 4 strategic objectives and outlines nearer term objectives. The 2028 Goal is to achieve operational relevance focused on continental defence. She highlighted that partnerships are very important and that we need to continue to evolve our culture and our mindset. Mr. Zaharopoulos commented that it looks good but that he is concerned about the lack of mention of Public Servants. He stated that he would like to see something about training and career development for Public Servants in particular. He also mentioned that including them in products like these will help to make them feel like a part of the team. He brought up an issue that has appeared at units where Public Servants are told that they cannot participate in sports days or other events due to liability concerns despite this not being the case. There are clearly mixed messages on this topic. MGen Speiser-Blanchet stated that this is a good reminder to encourage L2/L3/L4s to continue with an inclusive mindset and include Public Servants as a part of the Defense Team.	

LCol Chmelyk (1 CAD) shared that this was brought up at the L2 UMCC about mixed messages where some wings are told that Public Servants can participate in these events while some wings are told that they can't. Additionally, a recent change to DOA from the CDS excludes civilians from the unit assistance grants. BGen Thibert stated that the issue of Public Servants participating in unit events such as sports days was brought up at the national level UMCC. The HR-Civ rep clarified that if the event is an activity that is sanctioned by the Chain of Command, then the Public Servants are covered. He acknowledged that we need to communicate this message to all levels to prevent future confusion. BGen Thibert addressed Mr. Zaharopoulos' concern about the lack of mention of Public Servants in the RCAF Strategy by sharing that there was no distinction made but the term "RCAF members" includes both Public Servants and military members. MGen Speiser-Blanchet added that this is meant to be a very high-level view. There are many plans and directions that will come out of this that can get into more specifics. She emphasized that we need to continue to work towards an inclusive environment where everyone feels like they are members of the Defence Team. Ms. Simcoe raised concerns about the unit assistance grant now excluding Public Servants. She gave an example where there were unit events planned using this money that would now exclude Public Servants. BGen Thibert stated that this is a national direction but that we can raise concerns with this change. MGen Speiser-Blanchet stated that the wings have some leeway on how they implement this direction so there is room to manage equitably at the wing level. She offered to ask questions to find out what the wings are doing with this information.	DGASRAR – Send a message to all RCAF L2s that Public Servants are covered when participating in Unit sanctioned events. DComd – Determine how new national direction on the unit assistance grant is being implemented

<u>V. Agenda Item #3: Update on FaCT and Future Fighter Program</u>	<u>ACTION BY</u>
LCol Griswold provided an update on the F35 program, highlighting the collaboration with the winning bidder, Lockheed Martin, and Pratt & Whitney. The Government of Canada announced the F35 acquisition a year ago. The first aircraft for Canada is expected as early as 2028. The focus is on determining the HR requirements, anticipating changes in the current fighter program across military, civilian, and contracting areas. Challenges include uncertainties in integrated mission data systems and security within the special access program, with ongoing efforts to refine information before 2028. Ms. Simcoe voiced concerns about potentially having new buildings without SWE or having them managed by contractors. She emphasized the importance of keeping the public service involved in the future plans. LCol Griswold shared that new security program positions, such as general security officers and AS-7 and AS-6, are being hired. Security architecture will involve a mix of public service and military, particularly for fighter squadron facilities due to special access program requirements. BGen Thibert assured growth in positions and shared information about the NORAD Modernization program's increase in indeterminate positions. Ms. Simcoe raised concerns about the funding source for new positions, emphasizing the importance of having dedicated funds rather than repurposing from existing positions. BGen Thibert acknowledged the repurposing but emphasized that new capabilities do come with incremental growth. Mr. Potts expressed concerns about facilities management, particularly the contracting of cleaning services, leading to lower wages for workers. MGen Speiser-Blanchet assured that such factors would be considered at the L2 level and in project development, noting that cleaning staff in these buildings will need to meet the required security levels. Col Charron informed the group that the preferred contractor for the FaCT program has been selected, with two qualified	

contractors and two compliant bids. While the Treasury Board submission is underway, the contract is still in negotiation. The expected contract award in the next spring will reveal the details of the performance-based contract focused on training. An Operational Implementation Working Group (OIWG) is locally situated to address HR issues related to the FaCT program without compromising contract performance. Ms. Simcoe expressed concerns about the ongoing negotiations, particularly regarding facility maintenance contracts. Initially understanding it to be only the training building, recent information suggests it also involves a hangar. There are uncertainties about the inclusion of Public Service employees within 17 Wing. Col Charron clarified that there will be only one building, combining a hangar and the school. HR requirements will be mapped out by the OIWG at the contract award stage. Until then, the focus is on protecting bid validity. The OIWG is scheduled to start, and a regional PS representative can be included in the Personnel OIWG, likely beginning in January 2025. BGen Alexander highlighted that it's too early to determine the specifics since the chosen contractor and contract details are not finalized. Ms. Simcoe expressed concerns about being involved too late in the process, emphasizing the importance of PS not being an afterthought. BGen Alexander clarified that the contractor would own the buildings, and the split between contractor and PS involvement would be determined during negotiations. MGen Speiser-Blanchet sought clarity on the right time to involve PS. BGen Alexander acknowledged the concern and emphasized that PS involvement in the OIWG and negotiations would happen at the right time, ensuring that local and regional working groups would include PS representatives.	Comd 2 CAD – To advise DComd on when is the right time to involve PS Reps in the FaCT Personnel OIWG.
<u>VI. Agenda Item #4: RCAF Culture Implementation Plan Update</u>	<u>ACTION BY</u>

BGen Thibert provided an update on the RCAF Culture Implementation Plan, emphasizing the goal of creating a safer and more inclusive workplace. The recently approved DND/CAF Culture Evolution Strategy includes tasks assigned to L1s (e.g. the RCAF is responsible for developing its own implementation plan). The current RCAF draft plan focuses on five pillars: establishing clear governance; removing systemic barriers; providing training and education; assessments and evaluation; and internal communication. A first draft is expected by mid-February, with the goal to have a final draft by Spring 2024. BGen Thibert expressed a willingness to share the final draft for review and discussion with UMCC stakeholders.	Nil
VII. <u>New Business</u>	<u>ACTION BY</u>
Ms. Simcoe raised concerns about updates on the priorities of SWE and vacant positions, specifically in the case of Dundurn's firefighter vacancies under 17 Wing. BGen Alexander acknowledged the ongoing challenge of hiring firefighters and would be willing to engage UMCC reps to clarify the situation. Ms. Simcoe also expressed concerns about cleaning contracts at 8 Wing and 19 Wing, advocating for bringing these services back "in-house". LCol Chmelyk explained the challenges with the EC process and the inability to create positions without funding. The issue will be taken up with 1 CAD for resolution.	Comd 2 CAD - to have Comd 17 Wing follow-up with Ms. Simcoe on funds available for firefighter positions in Dundurn.
VIII. <u>Round Table</u>	<u>ACTION BY</u>
a. UNDE • No points. b. PIPSC • Highlighted that many of the issues discussed are critical to the retention of the Public Service. • Asked if the TOR had been signed yet. c. 1 CAD • No points.	DGASRAR – Get TOR signed and distributed.

d. 2 CAD • No points e. 3 CSD • No points. f. RCAF AWC • No points. g. AS • No points.	
<u>IX. Closing Remarks</u>	<u>ACTION BY</u>
MGen Speiser-Blanchet thanked the group for the frank and productive discussion. It's crucial to maintain this dialogue, recognizing shared challenges. We're committed to continuous improvement, acknowledging the constraints we face. Everyone, both in the Public Service and the military, wants to do what's right, reason why collaboration remains key. She looks forward to the next engagement scheduled next Spring (date TBD).	

J.R. Speiser-Blanchet
MGen
DComd RCAF
UMCC Co-chair

M. Simcoe
Civ
Labour Rep
UMCC Co-chair

Distribution List

External

1 CAD HQ//Comd/COS/A1/A8/HQ CO/Div CWO
2 CAD HQ//Comd/COS/A1/A8/HQ CO/Div CWO
3 CAD HQ//Comd/DComd
RCAF AWC HQ/Comd/COSUNDE Representative
PIPSC Representative

10/11

CAN UNCLASSIFIED

CAPE Representative
ACFO Representative
IBEW Representative
ADM (HR-Civ) Labour Relation LO

Internal

RCAF HQ//DComd/RCAF CWO/DGASRAR/DG A&S FD/COS/D Air Pers Mgt