A Gender Lens Approach to Military-to-Civilian Transition and Reintegration for Ukraine Joint Forces Operation Women Combatants

Authors:

Project Co-leads: David Pedlar, PhD, and Olena Suslova, MA

Linna Tam-Seto, PhD

Margaret McKinnon, PhD

Stéphanie Bélanger, CD, PhD

Rosa Gutierrez, MA

Ivona Kostyna

December 1, 2021

Acknowledgments

Dr. Pedlar and Ms. Suslova would like to thank all presenters that were part of the virtual events:

Vera Alexander, NATO

LCdr (Retd) Lori Buchart, Canada

Carl Castro, PhD, University of Southern California, USA

Maj (Retd) Yvonne Cooper, CD, Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research, Canada

Karen Davis, PhD, Department of National Defence, Canada

Sanela Dursun, PhD, Department of National Defence, Canada

Maya Eichler, PhD, Mount Saint Vincent University, Canada

H.E. Ms. Larisa Galadza, Ambassador of Canada to Ukraine, Canada

H.E. Ms. Nataliia Galibarenko, NATO

Yuliya Hromova, Ukraine

Ivona Kostyna, Veteran Hub, Ukraine

Yuliia Laputina, Government of Ukraine, Ukraine

Maryna Lazarenko, Non-Governmental Organization, Institute of Gender Programs, Ukraine

Dr. Kateryna Levchenko, Gender Equality Commission of Council of Europe, Ukraine

Margaret McKinnon, PhD, McMaster University, Canada

Natalia Melnyk, NATO

Yuliya Mykytenko, Ivan Bohun Military Lyceum, Ukraine

H.E. Jacqueline O'Neill, Ambassador for Women, Peace, and Security, Government of Canada, Canada

Olga Prokhorova, International Research and Exchanges Board, Ukraine

Oksana Syvak, International Institute of Postgraduate Education, Ukraine

Linna Tam-Seto, PhD, McMaster University, Canada

Jim Thompson, MD, Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research, Canada

Mr. David van Weel, NATO

Dawne Vogt, PhD, Veterans Affairs, USA

Deniz Yuksel-Beten, PhD, NATO

Table of Contents

General Report: NATO Advanced Research Workshop

"A Gendered Lens Approach to Military-to-Civilian Transition and Reintegration for Ukraine Joint Forces Operation Women Combatants".

Executive Summary

In Ukraine, Canada and other NATO allied and partner nations, the advancement of women's participation and integration into military service, followed by a successful transition and reintegration to civilian life, is a high priority. In recent years, research has emerged that provides guidance to nations for effective military-to-civilian (MCT) policies and programs. A key area that remains understudied is research to build policy that identifies and addresses the specialized needs of women transitioning out of military service.

Co-led by the Ukraine and Canada, with U.S. participation, this NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme (SPS) Advanced Research Workshop (ARW) applied a gender lens approach to identify the unique barriers and compounding challenges that can impede successful MCT and reintegration to civilian life for women military personnel and Veterans. A series of consultations led to a virtual ARW on Nov. 4, 2021. Overall, about 75 experts — including research scientists, people with lived experience, policy and program leaders, government organizations, serving military, Veterans, and representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) — participated in the consultations or final workshop.

Problem definition was explored through brief, nation-by-nation presentations on women's participation and integration into military organizations, as well as gender-based findings describing MCT experiences. Presenters identified MCT challenges facing women military

personnel and Veterans in each of the three nations, and shared viewpoints on priorities for future research and policy development. Workshop participants remarked on the extent of overlap and similarity of the MCT challenges experienced by women military personnel and Veterans in Ukraine, Canada and the U.S. However, differences were also noted in broader cultures, Veteran benefits systems, and availability of supportive services across the three nations.

In applying a gender lens, a model was developed to organize and highlight the unique challenges women military personnel can face in MCT. These are outlined in more detail in the report including:

- cultural factors in wider societies and within male-dominated military organizations
- research findings that indicate women Veterans have weaker social networks upon release
- less recognition for contribution as military personnel and as Veterans in civilian life
- unique types and prevalence of physical and mental health problems
- identity challenges of fitting into military life and re-entering civilian life upon release
- work-life conflicts linked to unique family and caregiving roles
- challenges in areas of employment and finances, including greater likelihood of experiencing larger income drops after release

The workshop confirmed the urgent need for more gender-based research and analysis about women to inform program and policy development with respect to MCT program design. While not the subject of this workshop, the findings suggest a need for a broader program of intersectional LGBTQ2S+ research and analysis to inform military and Veteran program and policy design.

Background & Introduction

Advanced Research Workshop Origins

Project initiation for the ARW began in late 2019 when Dr. David Pedlar (Canada) and Ms. Olena Suslova (Ukraine) received an invitation from the NATO SPS to provide a preliminary assessment of the challenges and policy opportunities available to support Ukrainian Joint Forces Operations (JFO) women combatants and Veterans. This invite launched the fact-finding mission, which began in Kyiv in March 2020. Meetings took place with more than 30 informants, including serving military members, Veterans, researchers, public servants, members of the non-profit sector, and JFO women combatants. During March and April 2020, consultations continued with Ukrainian informants and military, Veteran (former military, ex-military),[1] and gender experts in Canada and the United States. Additional English and Ukrainian documents were reviewed. Ms. Ivona Kostyna, Chief Executive Officer of the Kyiv-based Veteran Hub, supported our work by coordinating meetings with various stakeholders and contributing insights based on her experiences as a leader delivering support services to thousands of Ukrainian Veterans through the Veteran Hub.

Based on the fact-finding mission, and other sources of information, we concluded issues identified could be addressed through a NATO ARW entitled, "A Gendered Lens Approach to Military-to-Civilian Transition and Reintegration for Ukraine Joint Forces Operation Women Combatants." The original approved plan was to host a NATO ARW in person in Kyiv. Thanks to the support and approval of NATO SPS leaders, the program was converted into a virtual format. The ARW is Canada-Ukraine co-led. The U.S. was the third country involved through participation in the ARW planning and governance committee, and as expert participants.

[1] In this paper, the word "Veteran" means former military personnel during their lives after release from service. We recognize that there are many different uses for the word in various settings.

Rationale for a Gender and Military-to-Civilian Transition Workshop Theme

A methodologically strong body of MCT theory and research has emerged in recent years, as described in the findings of a recent NATO Research Task Group (RTG)-produced monograph (Castro & Dursun, 2019). Here, an international team of experts provided guidance to nations on how to build comprehensive and effective MCT programs. However, the unique needs of women were acknowledged as an important next step in advancing MCT research focusing on gender-based analysis of MCT.

MCT is generally conceptualized as a major life transition that occurs through a process of moving from one culture to another. The process requires planning and supports. Successful transition has been described as obtaining good well-being in all major areas of life. Domains can be defined differently, but often involve assessing outcomes on health, employment, finances, social integration, housing, and cultural/social environment (Pedlar et al. 2019, Besemann et al. 2019). Recently, the Veteran Hub in Kyiv developed a "Journeys of Veterans" model that highlights Veteran needs to support military-to-Veteran life courses and can be used to support careful planning and preparation for successful MCT.

Existing research of largely male Veterans demonstrates that, while many releasing military personnel experience some unique challenges and needs, most eventually reintegrate successfully, especially with the benefit of advance preparation and adequate access to effective supports. However, some will encounter serious difficulties facing complex challenges across multiple domains. The unwanted individual and societal issues associated with a failed MCT are well documented in Ukraine (World Bank, 2017), Canada (Thompson et al., 2015; Blackburn, 2016, 2017; Jetly, & Sudom, 2016; Pedlar, et al., 2019) and internationally (Ahern et al., 2015; Ashcroft, 2016; Bergman, Burdett, & Greenberg, 2014; 2017; Coll & Weiss, 2013; Cooper et al., 2016, 2017; Demers, 2011; Faulkner & McGaw, 1977; Hatch et al., 2013; Jolly, 1996; Keeling, 2019; Kintzle et al., 2016; Rogers, 1944; Sayer, Carlson,& Frazier, 2014; Sayer et al.2011). Consequently, many nations have completed policy-relevant research studies, and implemented substantial MCT legislative, policy, and program initiatives to mitigate the likelihood of poor MCT outcomes.

Despite important advances in MCT research, legislation and policymaking, the experiences and specialized needs of women military personnel and Veterans in Ukraine, Canada and internationally are understudied and not well defined. For example, Eichler (2016, 2018) concluded gendered research on women's MCT process is very limited, mostly U.S.-centered, focused primarily on health, and does not reflect the total experience of the MCT process for women. Population studies generally have not been stratified for the smaller numbers of women in military service compared to men. The small sample sizes of women have hampered the power of studies to examine women's transition experiences at a population level. Internationally, the limited findings from quantitative and qualitative research identified differences between men and women: traditional gender roles in family (children, etc.), higher prevalence of some physical and mental health conditions, reproductive health issues, challenges in adapting to military norms of masculinity and readjusting to civilian roles, differences in rates of prevalence of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression, different kinds of psychological trauma exposures (including higher exposure to military sexual trauma), difficulty gaining recognition as Veterans because they are less likely to be recognized as "Veterans" in military and civilian settings, comparatively large drops in pre- to post-release income levels in some nations, higher rates of suicide than civilian comparisons in Canada, and challenges finding social support networks, and special issues accessing Veteran benefits.

At the policy level, there is strong international interest in advancing women's participation and integration into uniformed military service, and growing interest in assuring successful transitions from military service to civilian life. Ukraine's interest in Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) to advance the participation and roles of women in the military was well established in the "Invisible Battalion: Women's Participation in ATO Military Operations" (2016). The Canadian defence policy, *Strong Secure Engaged*, released in 2017, like some other nations, sets ambitious targets to increase women's participation in the Canadian Armed Forces, including a comprehensive plan for initiatives to support uniformed female service members. Veterans Affairs Canada established an Office of Women and LGBTQ2 Veterans in 2019. Since at least 2015, several Ukrainian reports highlighted the unique experiences and needs of women military personnel in MCT (World Bank, 2017; International Alert, 2019; Democratic Initiatives, 2020; Ministry of

Veterans Affairs 2020). Ukraine has been implementing a series of recommendations to incorporate women into military operations, including work of the NATO-Ukraine Commission since 2016, Civil Society Advisory Panel 2021, UN Security Council Resolution 1325, and others. The Ministry of Veterans, together with other stakeholders, initiated research and discussion on MCT in Ukraine. A gender lens approach to building MCT policy and programs is of great importance to Ukraine, Canada, and the U.S.

The ARW findings will be a step toward a NATO SPS research project application that will fill a major gap in Ukrainian and international MCT knowledge and practice. Many NATO and Five Eyes nations prioritized the implementation of comprehensive MCT legislation and programs. However, the important question of understanding MCT experiences from a gendered perspective has yet to be fully developed in Ukraine, Canada or internationally. This workshop, and the subsequent research-to-policy project, will help fill this gap. It should establish Ukraine, working with local and international partners, as a leader in understanding gender issues in MCT research. The topic will attract strong international interest, as many nations have prioritized women's integration and participation in their armed forces. Most importantly, the project will highlight the urgent need for a GBA+ lens to support well-planned MCT and successful re-integration to civilian life.

Workshop Objectives

1. Frame the issue of MCT from a gender-based women's lens in Ukraine, Canada, and the U.S.
2. Identify frameworks and theories to inform gender-based MCT research and policy development on women
3. Apply a gender lens to understand the gaps and challenges for women during MCT
4. Conclusions and next steps: from research to action

Workshop Process

Agendas for each of the four main workshop-related events are included as Appendix 1.

- Kickoff Event May 19, 2021
- Consultation 1 - Framing the Challenge June 30, 2021
- Consultation 2 - Models and frameworks for research policy to guide MCT Sept. 30, 2021
- Individual Consultations - One-to-one interviews with some participants, August and September 2021
- ARW Event Nov. 4, 2021
- Submit ARW General Report to NATO SPS Nov. 30, 2021

The events and the final Nov. 4, 2021, ARW were by invitation only. In total, there were 75 participants including MCT researchers, people with lived experience, policy and program leaders, government organizations, serving military, Veterans, and representatives from NGOs. The virtual versus in-person meeting approach featured repeated events leading up to the final Nov. 4 workshop presented unique opportunities for continuity and relationship building that facilitated an increasingly informative and comfortable exchange of ideas.

Report on Advanced Research Workshop Findings

The Nine Principles of Building Successful MCT Programs

Drs. Carl Castro and Sanela Dursun co-led the three-year NATO Human Factors and Medicine RTG project in 2016-2019 that examined the challenges military personnel encounter when they leave the military and transition to civilian life, and best practices to support them. Drs. Carl Castro and Sanela Dursun presented a nine-principle guide to designing effective MCT programs.

1. **A transition framework.** Transition takes place in a complex ecosystem. A transition framework positions governments to organize programs supporting Veterans in many aspects of life. A framework should identify and organize the many aspects of transition; identify objectives, resources and expected outcomes; evaluate policies and programs; and align partnerships and research activities.

2. **A clear definition of a Veteran**. Formal definitions are important for eligibility to benefits and services, including who qualifies as a family member.

3. **Focus on work disability prevention**. In addition to having income, having a purpose in work and life brings identity and social integration.

4. **Measuring outcome successes and failures**. It is important to evaluate the effectiveness of programs after they are implemented and make informed changes when necessary.

5. **Timely and appropriate engagement**. Early engagement with personnel planning to leave the military is a key to success.

6. **Address unique health and social care needs**. Transitioning members experience varying individual stresses while navigating complex release systems and supports before and after separation from service. It is important to identify and enhance members' strengths and coping skills.

7. **Culture, recognition of Veterans**. Adaptation to life in civilian culture after leaving military culture means finding new homes, jobs, health care providers, and learning to manage without military supports. It is important for society to recognize the contributions made by Veterans while they were serving.

8. **Involvement of families in transition**. Transition to civilian life also stresses families. Some experience high levels of stress. It is important to make available supports known to families.

9. **Provide employment assistance**. Employment is important to well-being. Doing well in employment is about more than simply having a job. Employment assistance programs can aid in finding the right fit for releasing members.

Drs. Carl Castro and Sanela Dursun concluded by making two key recommendations for research on women Veterans: (1) apply these nine principles in understanding how women Veterans

transition from the military to civilian life, and (2) consider issues unique or amplified in women Veterans that merit further research or policy changes.

By focusing on the MCT needs of women military personnel and Veterans, this ARW builds on the cornerstone work of Castro and Dursun (2019).

Brief Overview: Women military personnel and Veterans and MCT in Ukraine, Canada, and the United States

In Ukraine, Canada, the U.S., and other NATO allied nations, the successful transition and reintegration of women military personnel to civilian life as Veterans is an area of great interest. MCT research demonstrates most Veterans reintegrate successfully, especially with preparation and access to effective supports. The societal impacts of a failed MCT are well documented. Nevertheless, key areas remain understudied. The lack of intersectional frameworks that meet the specialized needs of women transitioning out of military service is problematic. Furthermore, adopting effective, evidence-based policies to support successful MCT is important in Ukraine, Canada, the U.S., and internationally.

This section of the ARW contributed nation-specific perspectives by Ukraine (Ivona Kostyna), Canada (Dr. Sanela Dursun) and the U.S. (Dr. Dawne Vogt). The presentations highlighted a brief nation-by-nation perspective on women's participation and integration in military organizations, as well as gender-based findings in MCT experiences, highlighting challenges facing women military personnel and Veterans and priorities for future research and policy development.

Ukraine

Almost 30,000 women currently serve in the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) (Mirzayev, 2020). This recent active participation of women in service confronts the long-standing structural barriers that historically impeded women's full participation in the military. Invisible Battalion and Invisible Battalion 2.0, initiated by a global advocacy group, were turning point documents

highlighting the challenges faced by women serving in the UAF (Ukrainian Women's Fund, 2016).

The Invisible Battalion projects advise that far more Ukrainian women served in the Donbas conflict than the Ukrainian government acknowledges (Tucker, 2019). Some reports indicate as many as 54,000 women served in the UAF in 2017 (Tucker, 2019). Yet, few enjoy the same salary, benefits, and recognition as men who served during the same time. As of 2017, it was reported only 6,282 women received Combat Veteran Status (CVS) (Tucker, 2019). Due to the informal nature of the volunteer forces, there is no official documentation certifying who served, for how long, or in what role (Damann, 2020). The lack of evidence makes it impossible for thousands of women to prove they were volunteers (Damann, 2020). As a result, many Ukrainian servicewomen are ineligible for the benefits and recognition tied to CVS. Among the few who have been granted CVS, many have not received the benefits to which they are entitled (International Alert, 2019). In October 2019, the Ukrainian Parliament voted to officially recognize volunteer soldiers of the Donbas conflict as Veterans and extend respective social benefits (UN Women Ukraine, 2020). It is not yet clear if these reparations have been made.

In a 2021 Veteran reintegration survey conducted by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) (a global development and education organization) in partnership with Veteran Hub, women were more likely to report difficulty in MCT. Decline in income after release, increase in mental health problems, and experiences of harassment were examples of problems identified by UAF servicewomen.

The road to securing women's rights in Ukraine has not been a straightforward path. Ukraine continues to struggle to care for and reintegrate the 385,000 Donbas Veterans and volunteer combatants, 13,000 of whom are legally disabled (Van Metre & Boerstler, 2020). The NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC, 2016) deemed necessary to incorporate gender mainstreaming into the planning, execution, and evaluation in all phases of operations. Further, since the Civil Society Advisory Panel (2016), representatives from civilian society organizations and networks have been working with community leaders and academics, as well as networks and organizations on conflict prevention and resolution, to function as a channel for dialogue with women transitioning from military service. In considering differing experiences between servicewomen and servicemen in the MCT process, the government has been implementing UN

Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Annual National Programme under the auspices of the NATO-Ukraine Commission (2021). This allows for: providing women in the security and defense sector with infrastructural facilities, material and technical conditions that meet women's needs; identifying institutional mechanisms to combat sexism, sexual harassment, psychological and sexual violence, discrimination in recruitment, during performance of duties and participation in decision-making; ensuring appropriate conditions for the professional development of women cadets of higher educational institutions; revising the normative and legal acts that approve regulations on the activity of security and defense sector bodies, etc., in regard to compliance with the principle of equal rights and opportunities for women and men and making the necessary changes.

Ukrainian Veteran Hub contributed to MCT by introducing a *Journey of Veterans* map in 2020. The goal is to provide a structured approach to prepare for the evolving needs of Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO)/JFO Veterans. For example, Veterans interact with numerous people and organizations who may not be considered Veteran service providers on an official basis, but who nonetheless impact Veterans' experiences. In an important step forward, Veteran Hub introduced the *Journey of Veterans* map to help identify the needs of Veterans and types of services required to support successful MCT.

Canada

Today, women represent 16.3% of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and are among the fasting growing cohort of Canadian Veterans (Shoemaker & von Hlatky, 2020). This trend is in keeping with other Five Eyes partners and elsewhere, where rates of representation range between 10.9% and 19.2%.

Dr. Sanela Dursun identified a recent increase of women entering uniformed service and holding command-level positions, and noted women remain disproportionately represented in administrative, logistics, and intelligence roles. Half of the women in the Regular Force component occupy one of only 10 trades, namely Health Service and Logistics. By contrast, combat arms represent 30% of the CAF, yet women only account for 5.5%.

Issues involving the integration of women into the CAF extend beyond representation rates. Women often reported "a lack of fit with military lifestyle," or a challenge in finding an adequate

identification within military life, as a reason for releasing. Many concerns explain this deficiency in identifying and fitting into military culture, such as: family and work/life balance; training, deployments and multiple postings that impose frequent upheavals and impact children; long separations from family; service couples with dual deployments; career management and progression barriers due to maternity leave; the lack of women in senior ranks or the unfairness of merit boards; male-dominated military culture; and issues with harassment and sexual misconduct. In a survey assessing the relationship between transitioning from the CAF and well-being, women respondents were more likely than men to report experiences such as finding a health care provider or losing their military identity as "very to extremely challenging." Among recently released CAF members, women also commonly reported experiencing chronic health conditions that included chronic pain, hearing problems, arthritis, and mood disorders. Over 90% attributed their condition to military service. Regarding Veterans, the *Life After Service Study* found notable differences in the MCT experiences of men and women Veterans. For example, in Canada, women Veterans face a steep decline in income and have lower rates of labour force participation after releasing from the military. Many work part-time, attend school, or become full-time caregivers (Beck, 2017).

This Canadian presentation identified the following areas for future study: the attrition rates of servicewomen with 20+ years in the military, women's health from a GBA+ perspective, and identity in MCT. Ultimately, there is a need for deliberate, structured research to comprehensively examine the MCT process for women through a GBA+ lens, to assess how women, men and gender diverse people may experience policies, programs, and initiatives. A more holistic, multi-disciplinary, synthesized, contextualized, intersectional understanding of personnel issues in the military will better inform decision and policymakers, as well as clinicians, practitioners, and military members themselves, in post-service transition to optimize the mobilization of personnel science into action. Policy-relevant research in many of these subject areas is underway.

United States

Dr. Dawne Vogt examined women's experiences during and after U.S military service. In a brief overview, she advised the number of women in the U.S. military has grown substantially since the 2% cap on women's participation in active-duty service was lifted in 1968. Similar to the

Canadian and Ukrainian contexts, women make up more than 15% of the U.S. Armed Forces, with over 200,000 women deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan. This increase is attributed to the rescinding of a 2015 combat ban, and many women now serve in key combat support and combat arms roles.

Women report challenges persist, despite their increased participation. Military sexual trauma (MST) remains a pervasive problem. Additionally, the risk for combat trauma has risen as women increase participation in combat roles and operations. Women in the military cite resistance to women's participation and recognition, particularly among male peers, as an additional stressor during military service. Less recognition of military experience and Veteran status, poor mental health, divorce, and single parenthood post-military are identified as challenges in the MCT process.

Regarding future directions, Dr. Dawne Vogt highlighted expanding research on the impact of combat exposure on women's health and broader well-being; testing strategies to increase social support for women during and after military service; identifying and remediating barriers to mental health treatment for women; and enhancing knowledge of why women experience poorer post-military life outcomes as critical for identifying and remediating barriers. Dr. Dawne Vogt urged that future research efforts move MST intervention strategies upstream, placing a greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention.

Research Methods: The Path Forward Through Research and Action

Background information

Drs. Margaret McKinnon and Linna Tam-Seto discussed how, across nations, our work has been guided by UN Resolution 2242 (adopted by the Security Council on Oct. 13, 2015) and aims to integrate women, peace, and security concerns in its agenda (United Nations, 2015). This includes aiming to double the number of women in peacekeeping operations within the next five years. Despite mounting progress, in 2020, of the estimated 95,000 peacekeepers involved in UN-led missions, women made up only 4.8% of military contingents and 10.9% of police units

deployed. Targets for 2028 include the goals that women make up 15% of the UN military and 25% of military observers and staff officers. A similar target has been set for women to comprise 20% of uniformed police units and 30% of individual police officers.

For these goals to be achieved, critical research is required to identify and address the unique challenges faced by women military personnel and Veterans. MCT has been identified as a critical period where women Veterans face unique obstacles to successful transition to post-service civilian life. Throughout the preceding NATO workshops, numerous models and frameworks were presented that, together, assist in conceptualizing the universal and nation-specific experience of MCT among Veterans. These existing models and frameworks aim to describe and better understand the processes and factors that contribute to the MCT experiences of releasing members. Specifically, existing models and frameworks of MCT across Canada, Ukraine, and the United States share a common consideration of factors such as health status (e.g., mental health, physical health, access to health services); social relationships (e.g., family, friends, community); financial situation; housing; and post-release education and/or work. Despite these common frameworks, to date, little has been done to characterize the specific experiences of women Veterans.

Although continuously evolving, these models are not conceptualized, validated, or applied within guiding principles for research on women Veterans as proposed by Eichler (2021). Speaking from a Canadian context, Eichler (2021) argues that:

> Military and Veteran research has likely reinforced — rather than challenged — existing sex and gender inequities, with negative spillover effects for military and Veteran policy, programming, benefits, and services… the goal of research should be to address the diverse needs of all in the military and Veteran population in a way that enables fair access to services, benefits, and treatment and, ultimately, promotes equitable service and transition outcomes for all (p. 144).

The importance of using an approach that addresses sex and gender equalities to inform and guide any future work (e.g., research, policy development, program evaluation), must

consciously consider the principles identified by Eichler (2021), as well as integrate the aforementioned learnings stemming from this ARW series of NATO SPS meetings, workshops and small group consultations.

In her NATO SPS presentation and perspective piece, Eichler (2021) emphasized it is insufficient to simply conduct research concerning women Veterans. Instead, we must also pay careful attention to how such efforts are conducted. As elucidated by Eichler (2021), five principles for research on women Veterans should include:

- An intersectional sex- and gender-based analysis and GBA+ lens (Government of Canada, 2018b)
- Inclusion of lived experience voices to ensure that, in all work surrounding MCT, the experiences and voices of those with lived experiences are engaged and included
- Feminist scholarship that includes reflection on the role of power dynamics and how power informs every aspect of research, policy, and program development
- Trauma-informed practice that carefully considers the impact of trauma and engages in research that is conducted in a manner sensitive to these deleterious impacts
- Ethics guidelines such that all research is informed by, and follows, careful ethical guidelines to which all researchers are accountable, including the *Declaration of Helsinki* (World Medical Association, 1964*)*

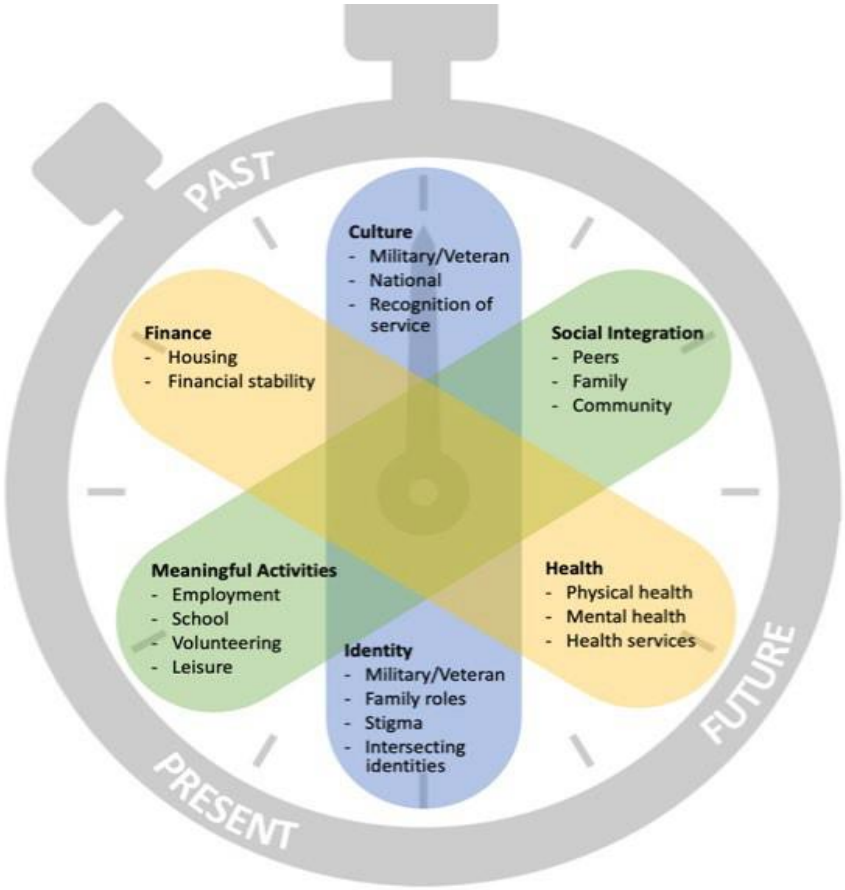

Figure 1: Approach to Understanding Gaps and Challenges for Women During Military-to-Civilian Transition

During the final SPS workshop, Drs. Linna Tam-Seto and Margaret McKinnon of Canada (drawing on Eichler, 2021) presented a model to guide future work in research, policy development, program development and evaluation, and to assist in better understanding gaps and challenges experienced by women during MCT.

This approach was informed heavily by an analysis of the information presented at previous workshops and during small group consultations held with stakeholders, researchers, and individuals with lived experiences in Canada, Ukraine, and the U.S.

Several important considerations emerged in relation to this proposed approach:

1. The themes and subthemes presented in Figure 1 are based on information obtained from previous ARW meetings and small group consultations. It is important to note these themes and subthemes are not definitive, as they do not include the insights, experiences, knowledge, and voices of stakeholders, researchers, and people with lived experience who were not included in conversations until this point in time.

2. It is evident from work thus far that identified themes and subthemes are not siloed. Here, relative "success" or "shortcoming" in one area may affect the same in another area. Thus, it is critical any future work recognize efforts addressing one area of the model requires conscious consideration of other areas. For example, an initiative to support women in finding civilian employment needs to also consider issues of finance (e.g., does pay sufficiently address financial demands), identity (e.g., how does new employment impact identity changes), health (e.g., are resources sufficient to access and utilize health), and culture (e.g., does a civilian workplace recognize and respect military service?). This example highlights the interconnectedness of identified themes and subthemes evident throughout the consultations.

3. The proposed approach highlights the importance of time as a concept when understanding the MCT experiences of women Veterans across Canada, Ukraine, and the U.S. Workshops and consultations emphasized research, policy, and programs need to extend beyond the immediate months and years of a release date, underscoring the need to consider temporal factors related to military release. The need for preventative efforts was identified in various consultations, pointing to the urgency of enacting preventive and early-intervention systems to ward against known obstacles for women in MCT the moment they enter military service.

For many people, early foundational experiences in the military may serve as a harbinger of life at time of release. For example, while numerous workshop presentations drew attention to women's physical health issues related to reproductive life cycle, fertility, and menopause there is little research to further understanding of these issues and allow for evidence-informed prevention and early intervention during military service and into the MCT period. There is also a proactive need to examine health and well-being not only at time of release, but also as Veterans age. For example, work by Ritchie et al. (2019) explored the relationship between combat trauma exposure and dementia, highlighting the need to not only conduct research in this area, but also to establish policies and programs aimed at healthy aging. Here, the principle of

temporal thinking, or considering health and well-being across lifespan, is useful in identifying gaps and challenges in the MCT experiences of women that must be addressed in a meaningful way.

Lighting the Path Forward

As we reflect on current understanding of the MCT experiences of women Veterans, we need to consider not only the voices forming the current corpus of work, but also voices underrepresented in past efforts to address these issues. Here, the rich voices of Veterans belonging to equity-deserving, marginalized, and racialized communities, along with Veterans like those in Canada who suffered the LGBTQ2S Purge and, across nations, those who experienced the detremental impact of MST, must be uplifted and heard. An intersectional lens will assist in these efforts, recognizing the multiple identities (e.g., woman, Indigenous, LGBTQ2S) embodied by Veterans. Finally, the lingering effects of gender-based violence and other forms of trauma on women Veterans' post-service life must be considered and addressed throughout the MCT and beyond.

Taken together, the work described herein is useful in understanding and supporting the MCT process of serving members, including women. While some work is already known, going forward, researchers must reflect on the strengths and limitations of existing knowledge surrounding women's military experiences. Using tools, such as the Sex- and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (SGBA+) lens (Government of Canada, 2018a, 2018b), and Eichler's guiding principles (2021), we can advance across nations to foster a broader and deeper lens of inclusivity and intersectionality.

Together, the SPS workshops and consultations have not only identified specific areas of MCT that require additional exploration and support, but also highlighted the urgent need to embrace the role of time (e.g., prevention vs. reaction; women's place and experience in the military and civilian worlds across the reproductive life cycle). Understanding and appreciating unique cultural contexts will also be critical in strengthening and enhancing the MCT experience for all women.

As we move forward in these multinational efforts, it will also be critical to prominently feature voices of those with lived experiences as a guiding star for our efforts to improve the MCT

experience for all those who serve, and, as brothers and sisters in arms, stand united in the quest for a more just and peaceable society across nations and globally.

Identified Gaps and Challenges in Research and Programming for Women in Ukraine, Canada, and the U.S.

In addition to providing a summary of research presentations shared during previous NATO workshops (May 19, June 30, and September 15), this report also includes stories of those with lived experiences, results of one-on-one interviews with workshop participants and stakeholders, and the outcomes of roundtable discussions.

Current challenges and gaps in understanding of the MCT process among female Veterans in Canada, Ukraine and the U.S. are highlighted. This summary is organized thematically, with the understanding that several themes overlap and, therefore, cannot be viewed as distinct entities.

As previously indicated, there are overlapping challenges and gaps across each nation, along with important differences. Together, the challenges and gaps identified here assist in informing how each of the themes outlined herein are understood, how future priorities will be set, and how solutions will be developed, implemented, and evaluated.

Major Themes

Critically, any projects or initiatives stemming from these workshops will need to be completed with the following in mind:

- Intersectional sex and gender lens
- Lived experience voices
- Trauma awareness
- Reflection on power relations
- Ethics guidelines

Here, there is an urgent need for more SGBA+ research, and for data and evidence to support decision-making in military and Veteran research generally, as well women and MCT, specifically. This work is expected to focus on understanding the needs of women in MCT using

SGBA+ and feminist approaches, and through related designs that systematically collect information on men and women to understand their differences and the underlying mechanisms of these distinctions. In general, there is very limited research and policy development using the SGBA+ approach to examine, understand, and address challenges and issues identified during MCT. Considerable policy development and research is needed to address the similarities and differences experienced by women in each country.

Research and policy development grounded in intersectionality needs to go beyond sex and gender, as it relates to women, to incorporate an intersectional approach (McKinnon 2021). Examples of needs in Canada include an enhanced understanding of the LGBTQ2S Purge and its associated impact on Veterans, as well as increased knowledge surrounding the MCT experiences of LGBTQ2S communities. The compounding effects of intersectional identities also need to be better understood, for example, why young minority women are most likely to experience sexual assault in the CAF Regular Force (McKinnon 2021).

One of the current challenges of this work is person-to-person and country-to-country differences in how success during MCT is defined (Dursun 2021). Any future approach will need to consider "broader life outcomes" (Vogt 2021). Not only is there a call to enhance the breadth and depth of our understanding of factors contributing to successful MCT, but there is also a need for careful examination of the foundation of MCT, with a focus on prevention (Vogt consultation, 2021).

It is important to note the domains identified by speakers do not exist in isolation. Relative success in one domain has implications for others. This interdependent relationship between domains is illustrated by the overlapping areas of Figure 1 above.

1. Culture

Today, there is an enhanced understanding that military organizations are situated within broader societies where structural gender-based inequalities can disadvantage women. These issues are exacerbated by ongoing issues concerning violence against women and children, including domestic violence. These issues appear salient in military organizations where women are, generally, a minority population and less likely to hold senior leadership roles.

Overall, there is increased recognition broader societal and military-specific cultural barriers must be identified and studied to enhance understanding of challenges in MCT for women.

Military/Veteran culture

As a minority group in the military, women face numerous challenges in male-oriented military organizations, including post-discharge access to benefits, health care, and service specific to their unique needs. Although common challenges were identified across nations, there were also distinct differences in the kinds of health care systems available to female Veterans, with various states of development regarding health care observed. Overall, several potential structural barriers were identified as targets for remediation efforts.

National (civilian) culture

There is an urgent need to better understand women's experiences of shifting from military culture to civilian culture, with speakers noting the role and effect of each nation's civilian culture on this transition. Indeed, national/civilian culture is considered key to shaping Veteran identity (Castro 2021). The role of women in society, beyond their role in the military, is informed by commonly perceived roles of women in civilian culture, including expectations of women as caregivers in families and expected norms of femininity.

Research identified a variety of reasons for women voluntarily leaving the military. Many of these factors appear attributable to "a lack of fit with military lifestyle" (Dursun 2021), including family and work-life balance (gendered, social culture); training, deployments, and multiple postings (military culture); career management and progression (military culture); and sexual misconduct (military culture).

Recognition of service

Across nations, speakers identified resistance to women's participation in the military from men military peers. Similarly, civilians appear to not value, or recognize much less so, the contributions of women's military service, and appear less willing to readily accept women's Veteran status.

In keeping with women servicemembers' devaluation in society, one speaker reported women not in combat roles do not view themselves and their contributions as equally important to that of men. This diminished self-recognition appears to further intersect with identity challenges.

As noted by Dr. Carl Castro, service members need to develop a new identity during MCT, one that merges military and civilian identities. Accordingly, transition programs must facilitate this identity integration by recognizing the sacrifices and contributions military Veterans have made.

Unfortunately, recognition of the contributions of women military members appears inconsistent in the civilian world, causing a potentially deleterious impact on how women view themselves and their military service.

2. Social Integration

Interestingly, women Veterans who developed social networks during military life appeared to have weaker social networks and support systems post-service than men Veterans. Consistent with an overwhelming body of literature pointing to the positive impact of social support, Dr. Carl Castro highlighted social support as a key area of focus when considering future paths and research aimed at supporting the needs of women Veterans.

Notably, U.S. research by Vogt shared in the workshop indicated that women receive a less positive reception from civilian communities learning of their Veteran status and service history than men. Many women Veterans report civilian employees do not fully recognize or value their military experience or Veteran status.

Here, support services are urgently required to better understand the unique needs of women Veterans and to establish enduring supports within the military community that meet the needs of women Veterans. Notably, it is common for women to retire and remain in the communities of their last postings. Without long-standing community relationships, these women may lack social supports and connections to assist with MCT. Peer support, a type of social support, is a valuable resource for minimizing negative mental health outcomes for women Veterans during MCT.

3. Health

Physical health

Within the Canadian context (McKinnon 2021), key research recommendations from the first annual Women Veterans Forum (2019) included increased focus on the observation that women experience certain physical health conditions in greater proportion to men, including: migraines, asthma, arthritis, cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder, cancer, chronic

pain, and gastrointestinal problems. Other women-specific physical health issues, and their relation to military service, remain largely unknown and unsupported, including infertility, stress incontinence, menopause, musculoskeletal issues, and medication metabolism.

The need for increased focus on women's health issues was echoed in the speakers' descriptions of support programs serving women Veterans in Ukraine (Ukrainian Women Veteran Movement consultation, 2021). Current challenges include the need to reduce the knowledge gap surrounding how reproductive health is impacted by service, and the need to better understand women's unique relationships with the military healthcare providers responsible for assisting women.

Mental health

Women face shared, but also unique, forms of trauma exposure and stressors that, together, may impact mental health. These include heightened rates of MST among women, although, notably, MST is experienced by men and women. Here, MST and harassment are unique stressors that can be difficult to disclose, where such disclosures may result in complex and — at times — deleterious, social implications for women in military organizations and communities. Accordingly, specialized approaches to disclosure and intervention are required, as are organizational-level culture changes to prevent and treat MST.

Although, across nations, women appear to report experiencing higher levels of anxiety and depression, the causes underlying this discrepancy are poorly understood. It is also unknown whether women are more likely than men to report symptoms of depression and anxiety if faced with similar experiences.

In the U.S., increased numbers of women served in combat roles. Women were no more likely than men to experience PTSD due to combat exposure.

In Canada, a smaller proportion of women served in combat roles. Nonetheless, approximately 40% of women medically released from the CAF due to mental health challenges, highlighting the need to better understand the root causes of higher levels of some mental health problems among women (Dursun 2021).

There is also a critical need to better understand the role family stressors (e.g., expected familial roles of women during and after service) play in the overall mental health of women Veterans.

Across nations, speakers highlighted mental health challenges post release. Although factors contributing to mental health challenges among women Veterans remain understudied, it appears probable that unique stressors arising from MCT, including social integration post-release, recognition of service issues, family stressors, and post-release identity changes, are contributory.

Various speakers raised concerns about the ability of women Veterans to access mental health care. For example, there appears to be a shortage of trained psychologists and mental health services in Ukraine. Speaker Maryna Lazarenko from Ukraine pointed to psychological health and suicide prevention in the military as important directions for future work.

There was also considerable discussion among speakers about how to approach mental health in MCT research. Many identified the need to determine underlying stressors contributing to mental health challenges among women Veterans, as well as the need to understand diagnostic criteria relating to the presence of mental health difficulties.

Health services

Numerous speakers identified the need to recognize the unique health needs of women and, at times, their limited access to services meeting their needs. Indeed, across nations, there were shared, but also unique, issues identified relating to women Veterans' abilities to access health providers and health benefits — including mental health care.

There is an overwhelming need to identify, recognize, and address barriers to health services specific to the roles and expectations of women. Proposed areas for targeted study included barriers preventing women from timely access to services and the impact of childcare responsibilities on women's ability to seek care (Vogt consultation, 2021).

Across nations, there appears to be limited military cultural competency among health care providers, including — strikingly — those serving the health needs of women military personnel and Veteran women. Notably, this absence of understanding and cultural competency among

health providers was shared further by Ukrainian stakeholders during consultation (Ukrainian Women Veteran Movement consultation, 2021).

4. Identity

Changes (and challenges) in identity, and the impact of these changes on the MCT journey of women, remain poorly understood (Castro consultation, 2021). Here, the complex interplay of identities described by speakers points to the need for an intersectional approach to the researching women's MCT, as well as in-program development and evaluation. During transition, many women describe scrutiny of their identities as service members and Veterans, as well as their personal identities.

Military/Veteran

An emerging body of work points to the various challenges surrounding identity women face during their military careers. For example, upon entry to a military organization, many women are challenged to fit into the male-dominated organization. Similarly, there is often a need to redefine identity in the post-release civilian context. Social adaptation was a further challenge identified by stakeholders and researchers in Canada, Ukraine and the U.S.

Family roles

Caregiving roles were cited as being one of many identities challenged for women during MCT.

5. Meaningful Activities

Employment

There was discussion across contexts about potential stigma surrounding Veteran status during post-release civilian employment. The reduced likelihood of civilian employers recognizing the value of a Veteran's military skills and training was also identified as a barrier to employment during MCT.

Numerous presentations further highlighted the unique challenges women face in finding civilian employment.

Education

Programs have been established to support the educational efforts of Veterans. For example, in Ukraine, the Bohdan Radchenko Scholarship for Veterans helps support access to quality educational opportunities.

6. Finance

Typically viewed as a key marker of successful MCT (Castro consultation, 2021), there is a need to better understand the financial well-being of women Veterans in relation to other areas of MCT. It is notable that indicators of financial success may differ across individual Veterans and will be influenced by cultural norms and expectations. For example, home ownership is viewed strongly as an indicator of financial success in Ukraine.

In some cases, women are more likely to experience a drop in income, a longer period to recover losses of income at release and to recover pre-release income levels, and challenges in accessing benefits.

As discussed by Drs. Margaret McKinnon and Sanela Dursun, in the Canadian context, following discharge, medically released members and women experience the largest decreases in income. Veteran income recovers over time, reaching pre-release income approximately eight years post-release, taking women Veterans longer than male Veterans to reach pre-discharge levels of military income.

The financial challenges experienced by women were further echoed in a consultation with the CAF Transition Group. Here, several factors were identified as impacting the financial well-being of servicewomen on release, including a tendency for women not to work as long as men (therefore not achieving the same pension benefits); women being burdened with financial/time costs related to family responsibilities; and women having less time to pursue a post-military career due to family time commitments.

Conclusion and Next Steps

By applying a gender lens, this AWR confirmed the striking, high-level extent of overlap and similarity in the nature of unique experiences and challenges women military personnel and Veterans experience in MCT in Ukraine, Canada and the U.S. Participants noted priority-setting on these challenges and strategies for mitigation could differ by nation.

The workshop produced a model to organize the findings by a list of challenges: cultural factors in wider societies and within male-dominated military organizations, research findings that indicate women Veterans have weaker social networks upon release, less contribution recognition as military personnel and as Veterans in civilian life, unique types and prevalence of physical and mental health problems, identity challenges of fitting into military life and civilian life upon release, work-life conflicts linked to unique family and caregiving roles, and challenges in areas of employment and finances, such as the magnitude of income drop upon release. It should be noted these findings are not based on the reporting of a research study conducted as part of this project, but from an ARW where highly qualified researchers and other stakeholders shared research findings and other perspectives through presentations, discussions and one-on-one interviews.

The workshop findings are sufficiently robust to confirm the urgent need for more gender-based research and analysis on women to inform program and policy development about MCT program design. We suggest future research to policy analysis build on the body of previous MCT research and be based on the principles for research of women Veterans presented in this workshop.

The high level of similarity and overlap in the gender-based MCT challenges faced by women military personnel and Veterans indicate a solid foundation for a multi-year, multi-nation, intersectional study of MCT. Continuing a focus on women is a high priority, given the commitments to increase their military participation, but a broader, long-term vision is suggested to widen the scope to include LGBTQS2+ populations. Projects could be organized around the

challenges identified in this workshop. Another option suggested by a well-known scientist at the event was a multi-year, multi-nation longitudinal study on women's MCT where many of the issues identified in this workshop could be viewed together, including how they interact with each other, as well as the effectiveness of mitigation strategies.

Citations in This Document

Ahern, J., Worthen, M., Masters, J., Lippman, S. A., Ozer, E. J., & Moos, R. (2015). The challenges of Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans' transition from military to civilian life and approaches to reconnection. PLoS One, 10(7), e012599. https://doi.org/ 10.1371/journal.pone.0128599.

Beck M. (2017). The gender dimension of Veteran transition: international best practices and the way forward. *CIDP*. Retrieved from: https://www.queensu.ca/cidp/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.cidpwww/files/files/DEP%20Proceedings%20Report%20-%20Final.pdf.

Blackburn, D. (2016). Transitioning from military to civilian life: Examining the final step in a military career. Canadian Military Journal, 16(4), 53e61.

Blackburn, D. (2017). Out of uniform: Psychosocial issues experienced and coping mechanisms used by Veterans during the military to civilian transition. Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health, 3(1), 62e69. https://doi.org/10.3138/jmvfh.4160.

Bergman, B. P., Burdett, H. J., & Greenberg, N. (2014). Service life and beyond e institution or culture? Armed Forces & Society, 159(5), 60e68. https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2014.969946.

Besemann M, Heber J, Thompson J, Cooper RA, Gupta G, Brémault-Phillips S, Dentry SJ. (2018). Reflections on recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration of injured service members and Veterans from a bio-psychosocial-spiritual perspective. Can J Surg.; 61(6 Suppl 1):S219-S231. DOI: 10.1503/cjs.015318 http://canjsurg.ca/61-6-s219/.

Castro C & Dursun S. (2019). *Military Veteran Reintegration: Approach, Management, and Assessment of Military Veterans Transitioning to Civilian Life.* (eds.) Elsevier Academic Press.

Castro C, Dursun S, MacLean MB, Lazier R, Fossey M, & Pedlar D. (2019). Essential components for a successful military-to-civilian transition. In: Castro C and Dursun S (eds.), *Military Veteran Reintegration: Approach, Management, and Assessment of Military Veterans Transitioning to Civilian Life.* (pp. 245-251). Elsevier Academic Press.

Cooper, L., Caddick, N., Godier, L., Cooper, A., & Fossey, M. (2016). Transition from the military into civilian life: An exploration of cultural competence. Armed Forces & Society, 44(1), 156e177. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X16675965.

Damann, T. (2020) Ukraine: Visible Legacies for Invisible Battalions. *Pulitzer Centre.* Retrieved from: https://pulitzercenter.org/stories/ukraine-visible-legacies-invisible-battalions.

Demers, A. L. (2011). When Veterans return: The role of community in reintegration. Journal of Loss & Trauma, 16(2), 160e179.

Democratic Initiatives Foundation, (2020), Status of Women Veterans and the Service Provided to Them. Technical report. Funded by the Eastern Europe Foundation and British Embassy.

Eichler, M. (2016). Add female veterans and stir / A feminist perspective on gendering Veterans research. Armed Forces and society, 1-21, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0095327X16682785.

Eichler, M. (2021). Equity in military and Veteran research: Why it is essential to integrate an intersectional sex and gender lens. Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health, 7, 143-149. https://doi.org/10.3138/jmvfh-2021-0016.

Eichler, M. Smith-Evans, K., (2018). Gender in Veteran reintegration and transition: a scoping review. Canadian journal of Military and Veteran Health Research. Vol. 4, No. 1 DOI: 10.3138/jmvfh.2017-0004.

Faulkner, R. R., & McGaw, D. B. (1977). Uneasy homecoming: Stages in the re-entry

transition of Vietnam Veterans. Urban Life, 6, 303e328.

Government of Canada. (2018a). How CIHR is Supporting the Integration of SGBA. Government of Canada. [Internet] Retrieved from: https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50837.html.

Government of Canada. (2018b). What is GBA+? [Internet]. Retrieved from https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/gba-acs/index-en.html.

Hatch, S. L., Harvey, S. B., Dandeker, C., Burdett, H., Greenberg, N., Fear, N. T., et al. (2013). Life in and after the armed forces: Social networks and mental health in the UK military. Sociology of Health & Illness, 35(7), 1045e1064.

International Alert, (2019). Policy Brief: What is next for Veterans in Ukraine. [Internet]. Retrieved from: https://www.international-alert.org/publications/whats-next-veterans-ukraine.

International Alert. (2019). What's next for Veterans in Ukraine? Promoting inclusion to improve the reintegration architecture for former combatants. [Internet]. Retrieved from: https://www.international-alert.org/publications/whats-next-veterans-ukraine.

IREX. (2020). Ukraine Veteran reintegration. https://www.irex.org/project/ukraine-veteran-reintegration.

Jolly, R. (1996). Changing step. London, U.K.: Brassey's Ltd., 178.

Keeling, M. (2018). Stories of transition: US Veteran's narratives of transition to civilian life. Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health 4(2). https://jmvfh.utpjournals.press/toc/jmvfh/4/2.

Kintzle, S., Rasheed, J. M., & Castro, C. A. (2016). The state of the American Veteran: The Chicagoland Veterans Study. Los Angeles, CA: Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans and Military Families, University of California School of Social Work.

Kuzmenko, O. (2016). Ukrainian Women Face Tough Battle for Equality in Military. *VOA News* Retrieved from: https://www.voanews.com/europe/ukrainian-women-face-tough-battle-equality-military.

Ministry of Veterans Affairs (Ukraine) (2020). Life after conflict; survey on the sociodemographic and socio economic characteristics of Veterans of the conflict of eastern Ukraine and their families.

Mirzayev, G. (2020). Ukraine's women at arms. *Security Praxis.* Retrieved from: https://securitypraxis.eu/ukraine-women-military/.

Pedlar, D., Thompson, J., Castro, C., (2019). Military-to-civilian transition theories and frameworks. In Castro C. 7 Dursun, s. (2019). Approach, Management, and Assessment of Military Veterans Transitioning to Civilian Life. Academic press. Pg 24-50.

Ritchie, K., Cramm, H., Aiken, A., Donnelly, C., & Goldie, K. (2019). Post-traumatic stress disorder and dementia in Veterans: A scoping literature review. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, 28(5), 1020-1034. https://doi.org/10.1111/inm.12601

Rogers, C. R. (1944). Psychological adjustments of discharged service personnel. Psychological Bulletin, 41(10), 690e693.

Sayer, N. A., Frazier, P., Orazem, R. J., Murdoch, M., Gravely, A., Carlson, K. F., et al. (2011). Military to civilian questionnaire: A measure of postdeployment community reintegration difficulty among Veterans using department of Veterans Affairs medical care. Journal of Traumatic Stress, 24(6), 660e670.

Sayer, N. A., Carlson, K. F., & Frazier, P. A. (2014). Reintegration challenges in U.S. service members and Veterans following combat deployment. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 8, 33e73.

Shoemaker M & von Hlatky S. (2020). Unblurring the Lines of Responsibility: The Puzzle of Veteran Service Provision and its Gendered Implications. *Journal of Veterans Studies* 6(2): 88–100. DOI: http://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v6i2.181.

Thompson JM, Lockhart W, Roach MB, Atuel H, Bélanger S, Black T, Castro CA, Cox D, Cooper A, de Boer C, Dentry S, Hamner K, Shields D, Truusa, TT (2017). Veterans' Identities and Well-being in Transition to Civilian Life – A Resource for Policy Analysts, Program Designers, Service Providers and Researchers. Report of the Veterans' Identities Research Theme Working Group, Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research Forum 2016. Charlottetown PE: Research Directorate, Veterans Affairs Canada. Research Directorate Technical Report. 01 June 2017. https://cimvhr.ca/documents/Thompson%202017%20Veterans%20Identities%20Technical%20Report.pdf.

Tucker, P. (2019). 'That's When I Became A Sniper': Ukraine's Women Vets Describe Their War. *Defense One.* Retrieved from https://www.defenseone.com/policy/2019/11/s-when-i-became-sniper-ukraines-woman-vets-describe-their-war/161247/.

Ukrainian Women's Fund. (2016). Invisible Battalion "Invisible Battalion": Women's Participation in ATO Military Operations. [Internet]. Retrieved from: https://invisiblebattalion.org/en/invisbat-2/#invisbat1-0.

United Nations. (2015). Security Council Unanimously Adopts Resolution 2242 (2015) to Improve Implementation of Landmark Text on Women, Peace, Security Agenda. United Nations. [Internet]. Retrieved from: https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12076.doc.htm.

UN Women Ukraine. Women Veterans in Ukraine strengthen their movement amid the COVID-19 pandemic. United Nations Ukraine. [Internet]. 2020 Oct 23 [cited 2021 Mar 19]. Available from: https://ukraine.un.org/en/98200-women-veterans-ukraine-strengthen-their-movement-amid-covid-19-pandemic.

Van Metre L, Boerstler J. (2020). The trip from Donbas: Ukraine's pressing need to defend its Veterans. *Atlantic Council*. Retrieved from: https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/ukraines-veterans/.

World Bank Group. (2017). Summary Report: Conflict in Ukraine, Socio-economic impacts of internal displacement and Veteran return. World bank Report.

World Medical Association. (1964). WMA Declaration of Helsinki- Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Subjects. World Medical Association. [Internet]. Retrieved from: https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki-ethical-principles-for-medical-research-involving-human-subjects/.

Appendix 1 - Agendas

Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme

NATO SPS Advanced Research Workshop

A Gender Lens Approach to Military to Civilian Transition and Reintegration for Ukraine Joint Forces Operation Women Combatants

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

8:00 AM ET | 2:00 PM CEST | 3:00 PM EEST

Emerging Security Challenges Division

In Ukraine, Canada and other NATO allied and partner nations, the advancement of women's participation and integration into military service followed by a successful transition and reintegration to civilian life is a top priority. Military to civilian transition (MCT) research demonstrates that while many releasing military personnel experience unique challenges and needs, most reintegrate successfully, especially with the benefit of preparation and adequate access to effective supports. However, some will experience severe difficulties in varying areas of life, such as: forming a civilian identity, employment, finances, mental health, PTSD and other common mental health conditions. The societal impacts of a failed MCT have been well documented. For these reasons, adopting effective evidence-based policies to support successful MCT is a high priority internationally.

In recent years, research has emerged that provides guidance to nations for effective MCT policies and programs. Nevertheless, key areas remain understudied, including the development of transition theories and multi-domain frameworks to support transition policymaking, with emphasis on meeting the specialized needs of women transitioning out of military service. One key priority area is understanding how women experience PTSD and other common mental health conditions when they return from combat zones.

Apply a gender lens to translate existing research to policy opportunities and define priorities for new research relevant to MCT policy development for NATO member and partner nations.

During the virtual workshop, speakers from Ukraine, Canada and the United States will apply a gender lens to MCT research findings, theories, and frameworks, to advance this area of research. Released or releasing Joint Force Operations (JFO) women combatants in Ukraine with lived experience will be given a voice to inform the workshop proceedings and outcomes. The final workshop report will summarize immediate research-to-action opportunities and clarify the path forward for possible new projects and studies.

The project will adapt current frameworks, and examples reviewed through gender-based lenses to better support policy development to advance successful MCT for woman combatants.

Wednesday, May 19, 2021 - 8:00 AM ET | 2:00 PM CEST | 3:00 PM EEST

Moderator: **Maj (Retd) Yvonne Cooper**, Executive Director, Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research

8:00 AM **Opening Remarks**

Maj (Retd) Yvonne Cooper, Executive Director, Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR)

8:05 AM **Welcome from NATO**

Mr. David van Weel, Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges, NATO

8:10 AM **Welcome from Canada**

Ambassador Jaqueline O'Neill, Canada's Ambassador for Women, Peace and Security

8:15 AM **Welcome from Ukraine**

Dr. Kateryna Levchenko, Vice-Chair of Gender Equality Commission of Council of Europe, Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy of Ukraine

8:20 AM **Keynote Remarks**

Dr. Margaret C. McKinnon, Homewood Chair in Mental Health and Trauma; Associate Professor and Associate Chair, Research, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences, McMaster University

8:30 AM **Canadian representation at NATO**

Ms. Vera Alexander, Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada to NATO

8:35 AM **Ukrainian representation at NATO**

Ms. Natalia Melnyk, First Secretary of the Mission of Ukraine to NATO

8:40 AM **NATO SPS Programme**

Dr. Deniz Beten, Senior SPS And Partnership Cooperation Advisor, NATO Emerging Security Challenges Division

8:45 AM **SPS Advanced Research Workshop presentation by co-directors**

- **Dr. David Pedlar**, Scientific Director, Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research
- **Ms. Olena Suslova**, Women's Information Consultative Center (WICC)

8:55 AM **Closing Remarks**

Maj (Retd) Yvonne Cooper, CIMVHR

9:00 AM **Launch Ends**

CIMVHR | ICRSMV

Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR)

CIMVHR is an innovative organization that engages existing academic research resources and facilitates the development of new research, research capacity and effective knowledge translation. Founded by Queen's University and the Royal Military College, CIMVHR has a network of academic researchers from across Canada and serves as the hub for 46 Canadian universities and 14 Global Affiliates who work together in addressing the health research requirements of the Canadian military, Veterans and their families.

Women's Information Consultative Centre (WICC)

The WICC was established in 1995. The main objective of the WICC is to provide a forum for discussion of gender-related issues in society, in all sectors and at all levels, to aid in understanding gender transformation, eliminate gender discrimination, and ensure gender equality. The center's activities to achieve these goals focus on disseminating information, providing education and training, conducting research and analysis, and advocacy work. Since 2014 the WICC works actively on Women, Peace, and Security Agenda.

Corporal Shannon Clayton, an Aviation Systems Technician aboard HMCS CALGARY loads a torpedo on to a CH-148 Cyclone Helicopter during operation PROJECTION in the Indian Ocean, 14 April 2021.

© Corporal Lynette Ai Dang, Her Majesty's Canadian Ship CALGARY, Imagery Technician

The Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme is an established brand for NATO based on four pillars: science, partnership, security, and unconventional issues (hybrid threats). It has been contributing to the core goals of the Alliance for more than six decades. Today, the SPS Programme continues to be one of the largest and most important partnership programmes addressing 21st century security challenges, particularly cyber defence, counter-terrorism, CBRN defence, energy security and advanced technologies.

The NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme enhances security-related civil science and technology to address emerging security challenges and their impacts on international security. It connects scientists, experts and officials from NATO and Partner countries to work together to address these challenges. The SPS Programme provides funding and expert advice for security-relevant activities in the form of Multi-Year Projects (MYP), Advanced Research Workshops (ARW), Advanced Training Courses (ATC), and Advanced Study Institutes (ASI). SPS activities are always demand-driven, modular, and designed to meet the requirements of the nation(s) and end user(s). The relevance of SPS activities in response to NATO Strategic Objectives and political priorities is reinforced also via special calls, which are issued on an ad hoc basis to draw the attention of the scientific community towards current topics of interest for Allies.

Every year, approximatively 2000 experts participate in SPS activities and help to build capacity in partner nations, and support NATO's security efforts.

More than 20 Nobel Laureates have been involved in the SPS Programme, a testament to the scientific excellence supported by the SPS Programme.

Young scientists are also actively supported through SPS activities, which contribute to broaden their professional network and scientific expertise.

The SPS Programme also has a high public diplomacy value for NATO, providing the Alliance with separate, non-military communication channels by bringing together experts from NATO and Partner countries, often in situations or regions where other forms of dialogue more directly focused on defence and security are difficult to establish. Accordingly, the Programme enables NATO to become actively involved in such regions, often serving as the first concrete link between NATO and a new Partner.

Emerging Security Challenges Division

NATO Headquarters I Brussels - Belgium

NATO HQ – Bd. Leopold III
B-1110 Brussels – Belgium

You can find further information on our website:
www.nato.int/science

@NATO_SPS

E-mail: sps.info@hq.nato.int

0400-21 NATO Graphics & Printing

NATO SPS Advanced Research Workshop - A Gender Lens Approach to Military to Civilian Transition and Reintegration for Ukraine Joint Forces Operation Women Combatants

Wednesday, June 30, 2021: 7:00AM-10:30AM (PDT), 10:00AM-12:30PM (EDT), 5:00PM-7:30PM (EEST)

CIMVHR | ICRSMV

Consultation 1: Understanding and Framing the Challenge: A gendered approach for research-informed policy development for women in military to civilian transition

10:00 AM **Opening Remarks**

Emcee: Maj (Retd) Yvonne Cooper, CD, Executive Director, Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR)
David Pedlar, PhD, Scientific Director, CIMVHR, Canada
Olena Suslova, Women's Information Consultative Center (WICC), Ukraine

10:10 AM **Opening Speaker**

Yuliia Laputina, Minister for Veterans Affairs, Ukraine

10:15 AM **Big Picture of Women in Military and Veterans in Ukraine**

Ivona Kostyna, Chairperson, Veteran Hub, Ukraine

10:20 AM **Lived Experience Perspective Interview**

Yuliya Mykytenko, Instructor, Ivan Bohun Military Lyceum, Ukraine

10:35 AM **Veteran Reintegration Program Research of Veterans Needs and Attitude to Services: approach and preliminary findings**

Olga Prokhorova, Country Director, IREX in Ukraine, Veteran Reintegration Program, Ukraine

10:45 AM **Clinical Experience in Working with Female Veterans**

Oksana Syvak, Director of International Institute of Postgraduate Education, Ukraine

10:55 AM **A Canadian and International Perspective on Women and Military to Civilian Transition**

Sanela Dursun, PhD, Chief Scientist, Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis, Department of National Defence, Canada

11:15 AM **BREAK**

NATO OTAN | This activity is supported by: The NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme

11:20 AM **Military to Civilian Transition from an American, International and NATO Perspective**

Carl Castro, PhD, Professor and Director of the University of Southern California Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans and Military Families and the Military and Veterans Programs. Co-lead of 2016-2019 NATO RTG and monograph, United States of America

11:40 AM **Panel Discussion**

What are the research-to-policy priorities to advance gender considerations in military to civilian transition for women military personnel?

Moderated by: Karen Davis, PhD, Scientific Advisor - Chief, Professional Conduct and Culture, Department of National Defence, Canada

Panellists: Carl Castro, Sanela Dursun, Ivona Kostyna, Olga Prokhorova, Yuliya Mykytenko, and Oksana Syvak

12:00 PM **Roundtable Discussion**

Moderated by: Dr. David Pedlar and Ms. Olena Suslova

12:20 PM **Closing Remarks and Next Steps**

Dr. David Pedlar, CIMVHR
Ms. Olena Suslova, WICC

12:25 PM **Consultation Ends**

NATO SPS Advanced Research Workshop - A Gender Lens Approach to Military to Civilian Transition (MCT) and Reintegration for Ukraine Joint Forces Operation Women Combatants

CIMVHR | ICRSMV

Wednesday, September 15, 2021: 8:00 AM - 10:15 AM EDT | 3:00 PM - 5:15 PM EEST

Consultation 2: A gender lens in applying theories and frameworks to support women military personnel in civilian transition research, planning and policy

8:00 AM **Opening Remarks**
Emcee: Maj (Ret'd) Yvonne Cooper, CD, Executive Director, Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR)
David Pedlar, PhD, Scientific Director, CIMVHR, Canada
Olena Suslova, Women's Information Consultative Center (WICC), Ukraine

8:10 AM **Lived Experience Perspective**
Only Thing Constant: Change. Successes and Challenges in Transition from CAF
LCdr (Ret'd) Lori Buchart, PhD, Canada

A Feminist perspective on Veteran and military to civilian transition research

8:20 AM **Institute of Gender Programs**
Maryna Lazarenko, Executive Director, NGO, Ukraine
Інститут гендерних програм
Марина Лазаренко, виконавча директорка

8:35 AM **A Canadian perspective: conceptual and ethical considerations for women veterans research**
Maya Eichler, PhD, Mount Saint Vincent University, leading researcher on military and Veteran gender research in Canada.

Theories and frameworks to guide research and policy impact: USA/ Canada/ Ukraine

8:50 AM **A Canadian perspective: well-being framework for understanding MCT and living with mental health conditions like PTSD**
Jim Thompson, MD, Canada, Medical Consultant, CIMVHR; and Adjunct Associate Professor, Department of Public Health Sciences, Queen's University, Canada

NATO OTAN
This activity is supported by: The NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme

9:00 AM	Women's Experiences During and After U.S. Military Service *Dawne Vogt, PhD, Health Research Scientist, Women's Health Sciences Division of NCPTSD, VA Boston Healthcare System & Professor of Psychiatry, Boston University School of Medicine, USA*
9:15 AM	Break
9:20 AM	The "Journeys of Veterans": A Ukrainian approach to the transition journey map developed in collaboration with Canada and the United States *Ivona Kostyna, Chairperson, The Ukraine Veteran Hub, Ukraine*
9:35 AM	Summary of Consultations *Linna Tam-Seto, PhD, Research Associate, McMaster University, Canada*
	Roundtable Discussion *Moderated by:* *David Pedlar, CIMVHR* *Olena Suslova, WICC*
10:10 AM	Closing Remarks and Next Steps *David Pedlar, CIMVHR* *Olena Suslova, WICC*
10:15 AM	Consultation Ends

NATO OTAN

This activity is supported by: The NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme

A Gender Lens Approach to Military to Civilian Transition and Reintegration for Ukraine Joint Forces Operation Women Combatants

CIMVHR | ICRSMV

Thursday, November 4, 2021: 5:00 AM - 7:30 AM PST | 8:00 AM - 10:30 AM EST | 1:00 PM - 3:30 PM CET | 2:00 PM - 4:30 PM EET

Advanced Research Workshop

8:00 AM **Opening Remarks**
Emcee: Maj (Ret'd) Yvonne Cooper, CD, Executive Director, Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR)
Olena Suslova, Women's Information Consultative Center (WICC), Ukraine
David Pedlar, PhD, Scientific Director, CIMVHR, Canada

8:10 AM *David Van Weel, NATO Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges "Perspective from NATO"*

8:15 AM *H. E. Ms. Nataliia Galibarenko, Head of the Mission of Ukraine to NATO, "Perspective from Ukraine"*

8:25 AM *H.E. Ms. Larisa Galadza, Ambassador of Canada to Ukraine, "Perspective from Canada"*

8:35 AM *Yuliya Hromova, Ukrainian Veteran, "A personal perspective"*

BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM DEFINITION

8:45 AM **Military to Civilian Transition (MCT) - The Big Picture**
Carl Castro, PhD, Professor and Director of the University of Southern California for Innovation and Research on Veterans and Military Families and the Military and Veterans Program
Sanela Dursun, PhD, Chief Scientist, Department of National Defence, Canada

8:55 AM **Summarize NATO, United Nations and Ukraine Support for Advancing Women's Integration as Priority Citing Past Declarations**
Olena Suslova, WICC, Ukraine

NATO OTAN
This activity is supported by: The NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme

9:05 AM **Overview of Women in Military and as Veterans in Ukraine, Canada, and the United States**
Ivona Kostyna, Chairperson, The Ukraine Veteran Hub, Ukraine
Sanela Dursun, PhD, Chief Scientist, Department of National Defence, Canada
Dawne Vogt, PhD, Health Research Scientist, Women's Health Sciences Division of NCPTSD, VA Boston Healthcare System & Professor of Psychiatry, Boston University School of Medicine, USA

RESEARCH METHODS TO STUDY MCT

9:20 AM **The Needs of Women Veterans in Transition to Post-Service Life**
Margaret C. McKinnon, PhD, CPsych, Homewood Chair in Mental Health and Trauma, Associate Professor and Associate Chair, Research, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences, McMaster University
Linna Tam-Seto, PhD, Research Associate, McMaster University, Canada

9:35 AM **BREAK**

SUMMARY OF ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN PREVIOUS CONSULTATIONS ABOUT WOMEN VETERANS

9:40 AM **Integrated Summary of Issues and Challenges**
Linna Tam-Seto, PhD, Research Associate, McMaster University, Canada
Ivona Kostyna, Chairperson, The Ukraine Veteran Hub, Ukraine

CONCLUDING REMARKS

10:15 AM **Summary Comments**
David Pedlar, CIMVHR
Olena Suslova, WICC

10:20 AM **Closing Remarks**
Deniz Yuksel-Beten, PhD, Senior SPS & Partnership Cooperation Advisor, NATO
David Pedlar, CIMVHR
Olena Suslova, WICC

10:30 AM **Workshop Ends**

NATO OTAN
This activity is supported by: The NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme