



SCOPING OUT WEAPONRY

Alex Lister checks out a high-powered rifle Wednesday at CANSEC, the annual Canadian defence trade show. The show continues Thursday at the EY Centre. *DARREN BROWN/OTTAWA CITIZEN*

Sexual misconduct report ‘surprised’ senior military leaders

DAVID PUGLIESE
OTTAWA CITIZEN

One of Canada’s top military officers says he believes there is a lack of consensus on the extent of sexual assault and harassment in the Forces and that the findings of a recent report on the subject came as a shock.

The vice-chief of the defence staff, Lt.-Gen. Guy Thibault, said in an interview Wednesday that in any large organization people have very different views based on their own experiences.

“A lot of people were very surprised by what they heard because it doesn’t reflect what their experience has been in the military,” Thibault said of the scathing report on sexual misconduct in the military prepared by former Supreme Court justice Marie Deschamps.

On Monday, Maj.-Gen. Christine Whitecross, who is in charge of the military’s response to the Deschamps report, told a Commons committee there was no agreement among the leadership about the extent of the problem.

“While there is a collective will to move the organization forward, there is little consensus as to the gravity of the existing problem,” she told parliamentarians.

Thibault said that despite the lack of consensus, the military leadership is serious about confronting the problem.

“We can’t take away from the fact that any member of the Canadian

Forces has suffered at the hands of another member of the Canadian Forces,” he explained. “It’s of concern. From that perspective, where there’s smoke there’s fire.”

On Monday, Deschamps reiterated her calls for an independent centre to deal with sexual misconduct in the military, as far removed “as possible from the Canadian Armed Forces.”

Her report contained 10 recommendations, many of which focused on an independent centre that would receive reports of inappropriate sexual misconduct, as well as oversee prevention, victim support and research.

Defence Minister Jason Kenney promised the creation of an independent body two weeks ago after senior brass were seen to waver on the idea. But specifics have not been revealed, including whether the term “independent” means outside the military or simply removed from an individual’s immediate supervisor.

During her committee appearance, Deschamps said that an independent centre is “crucial” to addressing sexual misconduct in the military.

“The more independent the centre is, the better the chances the victims will seek support and fully report incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault,” she said. “Reporting is fundamental. Not only because victims need support, but also because the Canadian Forces needs to know how members behave.”

That doesn’t mean it can’t be located in the civilian component of National Defence, she said. “If it’s located in National Defence as opposed to the Canadian Armed Forces, to me it would qualify as an independent process.”

But Whitecross said it’s too early to determine what form any centre would take and she and her team continue to look at options.

“It is my objective to identify a comprehensive option for an independent centre to go forward,” Whitecross said. “And that is something that our group is working diligently on, as we speak.”

With files from Lee Berthiaume, Ottawa Citizen



Check out today's Ottawa Citizen tablet edition.

DND fears delay for supply ships

Project may miss deadline and need long stopgap lease, documents show

DAVID PUGLIESE
OTTAWA CITIZEN

Defence officials are concerned that the government’s project to buy new supply ships, already behind schedule, could be further delayed, according to documents obtained by the Citizen.

The joint support ships, which will be used to resupply and refuel navy vessels at sea, were originally supposed to be in the water in 2012. That attempt to buy the vessels foundered, and a new date for the ships to be fully operating was set at 2019. That was later delayed to 2020, when the vessels are supposed to reach their full operational capability (FOC).

But construction of the joint support ships (JSS) has yet to begin, and the Conservative government is considering leasing a commercial tanker to provide a stopgap until the new fleet is up and running.

Now, Department of National Defence officials are worried that the 2020 date could also be missed. They warned the government that the proposed lease of a commercial ship as a stopgap measure must run long enough to deal with any further “possible schedule slippage of JSS FOC,” according to DND documents obtained by the Citizen.

“The risks associated with delivery (of JSS) cause a necessary view to examine options beyond the currently forecasted gap,” a Jan. 27 briefing note pointed out.

“A five-year lease is required if this file is going to go anywhere,” then-defence minister Rob Nicholson’s office also advised the department in January, the documents show. Companies might be reluctant to bid on providing a ship to the navy for a shorter period, his office added.

If the government proceeds with leasing a commercial ship, the winning bidder will have to modify the vessel so it can refuel warships.

The navy announced last year it would decommission its two resupply ships, which provided fuel, ammunition, food, spare parts and other supplies to warships at sea. Without such vessels, the navy is limited in what it can do both on international missions and in domestic waters, naval officers say.

Navy commander Vice-Admiral Mark Norman acknowledged last year that Canada is facing a serious problem because of the delays in building the JSS fleet.

Another delay on the JSS project would be a blow to the Conservative government’s much vaunted national shipbuilding procurement strategy. The delivery of Arctic offshore patrol ships, as well as replacements for the navy’s frigates and destroyers, has also been delayed.

A number of companies have already submitted proposals to provide the Royal Canadian Navy with a commercial vessel as an interim resupply ship.

Lauren Armstrong, spokeswoman for Defence Minister Jason Kenney, said in an email that “the Royal Canadian Navy continues to be able to support missions asked of it by the Government of Canada at home and abroad.

“The building of the first Joint Support Ship is expected to start in 2017 and the Navy is currently studying several options for an interim solution,” she added.

DND spokeswoman Ashley Lemire said via email “no decisions on length of lease, budget or way forward have been made. As such, it is impossible to comment on the length of any potential lease period.”

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ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS OF HYDRO OTTAWA LIMITED

Hydro Ottawa Limited has applied to raise its electricity distribution rates and other charges.

Learn more. Have your say.

Hydro Ottawa Limited has applied to the Ontario Energy Board with a plan to set the amount it charges for electricity distribution in each of five years beginning on January 1, 2016 and ending on December 31, 2020. If approved, the amount Hydro Ottawa Limited charges each month for the typical residential customer using 800 kWh per month would increase by the following amounts:

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
\$2.42	\$1.68	\$1.29	\$0.90	\$0.47

Other customers, including businesses, may be affected as well. Hydro Ottawa Limited has also applied to change other miscellaneous charges. It is important to review the application carefully to determine whether you may be affected by these changes.

THE ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD IS HOLDING A PUBLIC HEARING

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) will hold a public hearing to consider Hydro Ottawa’s request. We will question the company on its case for a rate increase. We will also hear arguments from individuals and from groups that represent Hydro Ottawa’s customers. At the end of this hearing, the OEB will decide what, if any, increase will be allowed.

If Hydro Ottawa’s application is approved, the OEB’s review in the years 2017 through 2020 will be limited to ensuring certain annual adjustments are made in accordance with the approved rate plan.

The OEB is an independent and impartial public agency. We make decisions that serve the public interest. Our goal is to promote a financially viable and efficient energy sector that provides you with reliable energy services at a reasonable cost.

BE INFORMED AND HAVE YOUR SAY

You have the right to information regarding this application and to be involved in the process.

- You can review Hydro Ottawa’s application on the OEB’s website now.
- You can file a letter with your comments, which will be considered during the hearing.
- You can become an active participant (called an intervenor). Apply by **June 8, 2015** or the hearing will go ahead without you and you will not receive any further notice of the proceeding.
- At the end of the process, you can review the OEB’s decision and its reasons on our website.

LEARN MORE

These proposed charges relate to Hydro Ottawa’s distribution services. They make up part of the Delivery line – one of the five line items on your bill. Our file number for this case is **EB-2015-0004**. To learn more about this hearing, find instructions on how to file letters or become an intervenor, or to access any document related to this case, please select the file number **EB-2015-0004** from the list on the OEB website: www.ontarioenergyboard.ca/notice. You can also phone our Consumer Relations Centre at 1-877-632-2727 with any questions.


ORAL VS. WRITTEN HEARINGS

There are two types of OEB hearings – oral and written. The OEB will determine later in the process whether to hold an oral or a written hearing in this case. If you think an oral hearing is needed, you can write to the OEB to explain why by **June 8, 2015**.


PRIVACY

If you write a letter of comment, your name and the content of your letter or the documents you file with the OEB will be put on the public record and the OEB website. However, your personal telephone number, home address and e-mail address will be removed. If you are a business, all your information will remain public. If you apply to become an intervenor, all information will be public.


This rate hearing will be held under section 78 of the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, S.O. 1998 c.15 (Schedule B).



Ontario Energy Board / Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario



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