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Chair: Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg



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• (1835)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 36 of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted on Monday, October 3, 2022, the committee is resuming its study on the national strategy for veterans employment after service.

[*Translation*]

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format. To ensure an orderly meeting, I would like to outline a few rules.

Wait until I recognize you by name before speaking.

If you are on the video conference, please click the microphone icon to unmute yourself and speak. For the interpretation, you have the choice of language at the bottom of your screen. I believe the clerk has informed our witnesses of what to do to switch from English to French.

I would remind you that all comments must be addressed to the chair.

I would inform you that per our routine motion on this subject, the sound tests have been done. We hope that everything will be working as it should at this meeting.

I will now welcome our witnesses.

[*English*]

We have, from the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada, Mr. Mike Mueller, president and chief executive officer, by video conference. From Helmets to Hardhats, we have Paul Bury, director, transition services, and Normand Trépanier, deputy director.

Mr. Mueller, you'll have the floor for five minutes, but please look at me, because I'm going to tell you when you have one minute left and when your time is over. Please respect that.

After that, we'll have a series of questions from members of the committee.

Mr. Mueller, the floor is yours for five minutes or less. Please turn on your mike and go ahead.

Mr. Mike Mueller (President and Chief Executive Officer, Aerospace Industries Association of Canada): Excellent. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll keep an eye out for the cue cards.

I apologize to the committee that I couldn't be there in person.

Good evening, everyone. It's a real pleasure to be here on behalf of the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Excuse me, Mr. Mueller.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: I'm sorry. The interpreter is telling me that there seems to be background noise and the sound quality is not sufficient to enable him to interpret what the witness is saying.

[*English*]

The Chair: Excuse me, Mr. Mueller. We have to check the sound because we're having problems with the interpretation.

What we'll do is start with the witnesses in the room. After that, we'll go back to you.

[*Translation*]

That reminds me to say hello to our two colleagues who are also with us in the room, Kristina Michaud and Francis Drouin.

With that said, which witness will be speaking first?

[*English*]

Is Mr. Paul Bury or Mr. Normand Trépanier taking the floor?

Mr. Bury, you have the floor for five minutes or less. Please go ahead.

Major-General (Retired) Paul Bury (Director, Transition Services, Helmets to Hardhats): Good evening, Mr. Chair.

As introduced, I'm Paul Bury, a director with Helmets to Hardhats Canada. I'm joined this evening by my co-worker, Mr. Normand Trépanier.

I'd like to thank you and the members of this committee for the opportunity to talk with you this evening about the Helmets to Hardhats program and the benefits it offers to Canadian Armed Forces veterans, serving reservists, military spouses, dependents, members of the Canadian cadet organizations aged 16 to 19, and now resettled Afghan interpreters who worked with the Canadian Armed Forces when it was deployed to Afghanistan.

Helmets to Hardhats is a national non-profit organization funded by the unionized construction industry and staffed by both military veterans and industry representatives. Helmets to Hardhats also receives periodic federal or provincial government funding for specific veteran employment initiatives. Specifically, Helmets to Hardhats has received funding through the veteran and family well-being fund that has allowed us to expand our presence in Atlantic Canada and create a specific initiative for women and LGBTQ+ veterans. We are extremely grateful for this funding and we look forward to further opportunities through Veterans Affairs Canada.

Affiliated with the 14 Canadian building trades unions representing over 60 occupations, H2H focuses on assisting armed forces veterans, serving reservists and our other select clients in finding rewarding civilian career opportunities in the building and construction industries across Canada. Networked across the country, H2H has deep connections with construction trade union locals and their affiliated contractors. H2H connects registered participants with apprenticeship and employment opportunities in Canada's construction industries. The apprenticeship programs provide the skills training needed to achieve journeyman and Red Seal qualifications across various occupations.

H2H provides professional and personalized services to registered participants by guiding registered members as they transition to a new career and by assisting employers in their search for potential employees. Since its inception in 2012, Helmets to Hardhats has referred over 2,300 service members to well-paying second careers in the skilled trades. We are in receipt of many testimonials that testify to a significant and positive effect on those veterans, their families and the community.

H2H is uniquely positioned within Canada to help in the transition of Canadian Armed Forces veterans and serving reservists to these careers in the skilled trades. We work closely with transitioning personnel to help reduce the stress of their transition by offering job information, apprenticeship placement referrals and employment contacts across Canada. Additionally, we work closely with local unions to ensure that women, indigenous and racialized veterans are prioritized as part of this group and receive the benefits and services that H2H offers.

The Canadian construction industry has an aging workforce, and in the coming decade it will lose a significant percentage of its skilled workers to retirement. To fill the vacancies left by the retiring baby boomers and meet the demands of the anticipated growth, the industry needs to recruit and train new workers. Canada's veterans and serving reservists are seen as highly skilled and desirable for occupations in the trades. H2H is able to open avenues to employment for Canada's veterans and offer solutions to Canadian contractors and construction employers by helping to fill the vacancies in the trades.

Mr. Chair, I'd like to hand the floor to my colleague, Mr. Trépanier, for a couple of minutes for his comments.

Thank you.

• (1840)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Normand Trépanier (Deputy Director, Helmets to Hardhats): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank you for inviting us and allowing us to speak on behalf of our organization, Helmets to Hardhats.

Many people do not realize that when they decide to join the Canadian Armed Forces, they are putting their civilian lives on hold. Their time and lives are dedicated to protecting their country and the people who live there. There is an urban legend that says that all military personnel leave the CAF with a pension for life, which is not exactly true. To be eligible to receive a pension, CAF members must have put in at least 25 years of loyal and dedicated service. However, if an injury occurs and that injury is attributable to military service, a pension for life may be awarded for medical reasons.

A veteran who serves for less than 25 years is not eligible to receive a pension. However, when they are discharged from the CAF, veterans will be given their contribution to the Canada Pension Plan less uncollected taxes. After serving for 5, 10, or 20 years, all of a sudden they are responsible for making decisions about their new life. It may seem like a minor thing for those who leave a great career, but the fact remains that starting over can be very stressful and, for some, nightmarish. Helmets to Hardhats was created to prevent our veterans from going through this stress.

A veteran who decides to start a second career in the construction industry can count on the expertise and experience of the people at Helmets to Hardhats. Twice a year, in the spring and fall, we are invited to the second-career seminar to talk about the program and to tell seminar participants about the services we offer. We invite them to register.

The Chair: Mr. Trépanier, time does fly by. I'm sorry to interrupt you, but you will be able to continue the discussion when you answer questions, so you will be able to refer to your speech.

[*English*]

Leaving H2H, let's now go back to Mr. Mueller.

We'll do a quick sound test.

I'd like you to say a few words in order to make sure the sound is working.

Mr. Mike Mueller: I apologize for that, Mr. Chair. I hope the sound is coming through decently, now. I'm not sure what was going on. There was a fan in the room. That might have been it.

The Chair: That's okay.

I'll put the clock on. You have five minutes. Please go ahead, Mr. Mueller.

Thank you.

Mr. Mike Mueller: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Again, I apologize for not being able to be there in person. It's so good to see people in person again.

It's my real pleasure to be here on behalf of the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada.

I appreciate your time and the committee's interest in this important topic. As you may know, our industry employs a significant number of veterans from the Canadian Armed Forces. It makes me especially proud, personally, when I visit member companies, to see the number of veterans employed in the industry, so any actions you can take to help support this are greatly appreciated.

By way of background, our members represent over 90% of aerospace activity in Canada, spanning the civil, defence and space sectors. In 2021, Canada's aerospace industry contributed over \$24 billion in GDP and close to 200,000 jobs to the Canadian economy. These are highly skilled, well-paying jobs in every region of the country. The industry is an important sector in regions across Canada, driving innovation, creating jobs and promoting economic growth.

However, we're facing a significant challenge in getting the right talent to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving market and rapidly changing technological advancements. Our industry relies heavily on skilled labour, from engineers and technicians to machinists and assemblers. There is a growing gap between the number of jobs available and the number of qualified workers to fill them. I'm sure you're hearing this from a lot of industries. This is due to a combination of factors, including the retirement of experienced workers, the increasing demand for skilled labour across the board and the need for further workforce development and training programs.

On the training side, we recently had some good news. As part of the recent Canadian Aerospace Summit, the government announced an investment of \$39 million under the sectoral workforce solutions program for the Canadian Council for Aviation and Aerospace, which specializes in such training. Over 900 new and current aerospace workers across Canada will benefit. We're pleased to be working closely with them on this important initiative and very appreciative of that investment. It is meeting both the sustainability imperative and, simultaneously, Industry 4.0 requirements for new skills and training.

In its 2021 study of Canada's aerospace industry, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry and Technology called out the need for the federal government to collaborate with provinces and territories to fund post-secondary training across all aerospace sectors. The industry is competing with other countries to attract the best talent, and we need to ensure employers can attract the workers they need. Getting talent back, or finding new sources,

is both an opportunity and a challenge for the industry. Estimates say we require an additional 58,000 workers in key skilled roles by 2028. We have a real opportunity, now and moving forward, to get things right, and I'm very pleased to see this committee prioritizing a study on a national strategy for veterans employment after service.

Utilizing the talent we have—talent that is ready to be put to work—is critically important. Our industry welcomes the skills, knowledge and experience of veterans; it's a natural fit. Many of our member companies employ veterans, as I said at the outset. At our national association, we are fortunate to have two extremely accomplished military veterans among our ranks. Both are former brigadier generals. They are now providing invaluable expertise to our members through their work with our association and leadership on our technical committees. The breadth of knowledge veterans provide is something that only comes from the unique experiences they bring.

In conclusion, labour market challenges in the aerospace industry are significant, but they are not insurmountable. Ensuring we're utilizing the talent and experience of our veterans is something we fully support. I think we all share the goal of ensuring this important industry continues to thrive and provide exciting, well-paying careers for generations to come, while benefiting from the experience, talent and knowledge of our country's veterans.

Again, thank you for your interest. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

• (1845)

The Chair: Thank you so much, Mr. Mike Mueller, for your remarks.

Now let's go to the rounds of questions.

First we have Mr. Fraser Tolmie. You have six minutes or less.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Mueller, for your presentation.

Mr. Bury and Mr. Trépanier, thank you for joining us today.

It's the aim of this committee to ensure that veterans who have served our nation and put their lives on the line and who are looking for a second career are able to find meaningful work. I believe your presentations have represented that.

One of the things we are trying to understand as a committee before we go forward on a strategy is where that logjam is. There seems to be, as you were talking about, Mr. Bury, an availability to employ our vets after they've been serving, and obviously there's a need a need in the building industry, if I'm not mistaken.

Could you tell me where you see the challenge in getting veterans employed? Is it a skills issue? Is it an awareness issue? Is it just an availability issue?

MGen (Ret'd) Paul Bury: Thanks, Mr. Chair. That's a great question.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: That's why I asked it.

Voices: Oh, oh!

MGen (Ret'd) Paul Bury: I'd be happy to comment on that.

I think the answer to all the points you address in your question—skills, awareness—is yes. There are issues in that. While it's recognized that a lot of veterans come with significant leadership, maturity, discipline and the ability to get the job done, they may not have the specific skill required for the civilian job that they're going to do.

I'll use this example. If you have an individual who's an electrician on a navy ship and is qualification level 5 qualified—QL5 qualified—they can test for their Red Seal, but that qualification, that experience, does not equate to a residential electrician's experience. There will be a skills gap there.

• (1850)

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Okay. Just for clarity, a Red Seal is for a journeyman electrician who has written their exam, like a plumber—

MGen (Ret'd) Paul Bury: That's right.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Yes. I want that put in the record for other people to know. I'm aware of that, but I think that has to be put in. If we use acronyms, not everybody understands the acronyms.

The challenge is that they don't have that skill, but that's where... If someone applies to you and says they want a job but they don't have that skill, are they rejected?

MGen (Ret'd) Paul Bury: No. In fact, the Canadian Building Trades Unions, the employers and the contractors will really work with the individual to ensure they become employable—that they get that experiential piece, that they understand what the gap is and they can make it up.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: If you can follow my line of questioning here, when someone applies for work, what's the rejection level for them to not be able to be employed with you? You're talking about skills that are not transferable. That's what we need to focus on. We need to focus on skills that are not transferable, that are not recognized.

A pilot flies a cargo airplane or a fighter jet in the military. They can transfer their skills through training, through Air Canada, WestJet, Sunwing or whatever. They're able to do that. The challenge we have is that some of these vets don't have that transferable skill. I want to hear your thoughts on that.

MGen (Ret'd) Paul Bury: Mr. Chair, I would say that the business leaders and the unions will seek out veterans for the soft skills—the leadership, the discipline—that they bring. The trade-specific skills can be taught. They can get that experience and move forward. What we find in the testimony and information we get back from the employers is that they seek out these individuals because of those skills. They can teach trade-specific skills, but they want the veterans for all the other assets they bring to the work site.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Thank you for that.

Mr. Mueller, is it something similar that you see from your perspective with the airframe techs and safety systems?

There's a lot of expertise that comes out of the skill sets of those who have served as ground crew, maintenance and even engineers. Is there a challenge for people who have skills that are not recognized to get into the aviation industry?

Mr. Mike Mueller: Thanks for the question.

Your comments with respect to all of the different challenges make a lot of sense. You have some of the upskilling requirements that are needed.

I would agree with the previous individual's comments about the soft skills. I'm sorry; I've forgotten your name. The soft skills that veterans have coming out of the military are absolutely top-notch. Those hard skills are also absolutely top-notch, but sometimes there is that need for some upskilling.

We also heard that comment across the country, generally with respect to company-specific skills that are required. That's why we're especially pleased to see the investment that the government is making in industry-led training, because that's clearly needed among industry.

The other piece I would also—

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Mueller. I'm sorry. We'll come back.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Samson, the floor is now yours for six minutes.

[*English*]

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Thank you very much for being here today.

I must say, listening to your presentation, that I was quite impressed. When we look at the aerospace industry and see that you have a significant number of veterans, it is quite impressive. I thank you for that. The work you do is that transition, which is so crucial, and we know it's necessary.

I know my colleague asked questions around the recognition of qualifications, but are both of your organizations aware that there's an education training program out there for veterans that can be used to support the veterans' upskilling or upgrading?

Go ahead, Monsieur Trépanier.

• (1855)

Mr. Normand Trépanier: Yes, we are. We understand. We know.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Darrell Samson: Are people using that program? Are there veterans who are taking courses thanks to this education and training allowance?

Mr. Normand Trépanier: Yes, definitely. Not everyone uses it, but we know that this allowance is very widely used. We ourselves encourage veterans to take advantage of this allowance when they need it and they meet the requirements, like having a minimum of six years' service.

[*English*]

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Mueller, what about you? The question is about the veterans you're hiring and whether they are using, as far as you know, the education and training program when they may not have all the skills when they arrive. There's funding available for them.

Mr. Mike Mueller: Yes, I am aware of the program that is available. I don't have any updated information as to whether those folks coming into the aerospace industry specifically are taking advantage of it.

Going back to the previous question, building the awareness of what's available is absolutely critical, both from a veteran perspective and from a potential employer perspective. How can we take advantage of some of these tools that are out there, or guide veterans to some of the tools that are there?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Darrell Samson: My question now is for the two witnesses regarding recruiting: what recruiting strategies have been put in place, and what are the best practices for recruiting more veterans?

Mr. Normand Trépanier: If I had been able to finish my speech, I would have answered some questions.

We visit military bases and we make sure that people know about the Helmets to Hardhats program. People are then able to register free of charge. We explain the program and what we can do to help them in their new career.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Thank you, Mr. Trépanier.

Time is moving on, but I would like to hear Mr. Mueller's answer.

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Mueller: Recruitment is top of mind for our industry. We work closely with colleges and universities, and of course with veterans organizations.

The other area where we've really tried to have discussions is with regard to air cadets. They are a great group of young adults

who are going through air cadets right now, and who are potentially going to go into the military. We want to ensure they understand both the benefits of the aerospace industry and the potential jobs that are available to them, either when they come out of the air cadets or when they come out of their term with the military.

Again, we need greater awareness of how we make sure that everyone knows of the opportunities we have in the industry. We have work to do on that, absolutely.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Thank you very much for that.

I do want to mention this to our colleagues. Mr. Bury and Mr. Trépanier, it's impressive that you are also helping or hiring those resettled Afghan interpreters. Tell me a bit about that. It seems complicated, but I'm impressed with what you are doing.

I do want to thank you, before you answer, and I know my colleague from the NDP will touch on the fact that you are also hiring women, members of the LGBTQ community and marginalized Canadians. That's also quite impressive.

Can you just touch on the resettled Afghan interpreters?

MGen (Ret'd) Paul Bury: This is an initiative that we undertook about 12 months ago, and it slowly took form. We work with other community-based organizations that help resettled Afghan interpreters.

Working with Canada's Building Trades Unions over the last, I would say, six to eight weeks, we've been quite successful, not only making them aware but recruiting them to the organization. Just over the last few weeks, we've been successful with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters in the Toronto area in placing quite a number of them. That is a successful initiative, and it's thanks to VAC funding that it happens.

• (1900)

Mr. Darrell Samson: I really appreciate the work and expansion you're bringing to Atlantic Canada. I think it's really important. The needs are quite wide right across the country, but also in Atlantic Canada. People might be surprised, but there are workers with many needs.

Thank you for the work you're doing on that end. I appreciate it.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Samson.

Ms. Michaud, the floor is yours for the next six minutes.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm very happy to be here with my colleagues this evening. I have replaced committee members several times in the past, but this is the first time I have done it on the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. I am definitely going to learn some things this evening.

I would first like to thank the witnesses for being here. We are grateful for their presence.

Mr. Trépanier, you didn't have time to finish your opening speech. I did note some things that I found extremely interesting. For one thing, you pointed out that where veterans are equally qualified, the federal public service will perhaps give preference to a veteran in the hiring process, unlike the private sector.

You may have some recommendations to make to us on that subject, so I will give you an opportunity to pick up where you left off in your speech when you were cut off and to tell us more on that specific point.

Mr. Normand Trépanier: Thank you, Ms. Michaud.

Yes, in the public service, where applicants are equally qualified, the service member will have priority. That is not the case in the private sector. So we would like veterans to be recognized outside the public service as an underrepresented group in the same way as women, whom we hope to see in the construction industry, and as indigenous people and visible and other minorities, to encourage them to apply for jobs.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you.

Do you want to add anything else? There may be somewhat interesting points in your speaking notes that are worth mentioning.

Mr. Normand Trépanier: There is one point I would like to add, briefly. I want to thank Veterans Affairs Canada for the funding it has granted us for offering construction site safety training. As you know, everyone who goes onto a construction site must have received training on occupational health and safety.

At present, all these courses are given in Ontario, a province we have been using as a testing ground for a year now. I can assure you that it is a success all around. We would now like to provide this training nation-wide. However, Employment and Social Development Canada would have to provide funding for that. We have applied for funding already, but we have not had an answer after waiting for a year. I hope we will get an answer. If we had this funding, we would be able to develop the same project Canada-wide.

I would also like us to be able to have access to service members who are going to be starting their transition to civilian life in the near future and who—I don't want to say they're "vegetating"—are waiting to leave the Canadian Armed Forces. If we could take them on and provide them with the training they need, they could start working in the trade they have chosen right away after being demobilized, rather than waiting a month or two before acquiring the necessary skills.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you.

On the answer you have been waiting a year for, you can write to my colleague Luc Desilets who ordinarily sits on the committee. We would undoubtedly be able to help you move things forward so you get an answer within a short time.

The analysts at the Library of Parliament have kindly prepared a summary for us of the national veterans employment strategy and the existing programs, including the one referred to by Mr. Samson.

Do you find the existing programs useful? Do you use them? Do you think they have a positive effect for the veterans who come to you? Have you identified other items or other needs in which the

government could invest? Could the government introduce new programs?

Mr. Normand Trépanier: What we have at present, thanks to the Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund, is ideal. In fact, I don't want to pat ourselves on the back, but it is Helmets to Hardhats that approached Veterans Affairs Canada in 2014 to have a fund like the one in the United States created.

The department listened to us, and we now have this fund and it is working well. Yes, we use it. We encourage our veterans to look into it and use it if they meet the criteria. That gives them access to resources and funding to attend a postsecondary education institution or university.

All indications are that the answer is yes, ma'am.

● (1905)

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you.

Mr. Mueller, we all imagine that the aerospace industry, kind of like a number of industries, unfortunately experienced problems during the pandemic.

Can you tell us about the repercussions? How is the industry doing? Has it recovered from the pandemic? Did the pandemic cause a labour shortage, as we are seeing in a number of other areas? Do you think veterans could add value to your industry? How do you see the situation at this point?

[English]

Mr. Mike Mueller: Thank you very much for the question.

We saw some significant challenges through COVID-19. I don't think it's any surprise to anyone on this committee that aerospace took a disproportionate hit from the impacts of COVID-19.

I think the latest numbers we saw were that about 3,500 jobs were lost in the sector. These are high-quality, highly skilled, good-paying jobs. I think they're 30% higher than the average manufacturing job. They are quite good jobs. We're very concerned about that. We do see a bounce-back. It's coming sooner in maintenance, repair, overhaul and manufacturing, which is a good sign.

For long-term viability, we need to find the people. We need to make sure that we have a good pipeline of talent coming into the industry. That's where I think veterans are very well placed for this piece. I should say that we as an industry are committed to working with the government and this committee to make sure we're securing employment for veterans.

We see this happening on an organic basis already. There are some challenges there. We talked about the awareness piece. We talked about the colleges and the upskilling pieces. I'm very pleased to see the committee looking at the need for a strategy.

Another thing we've been calling for is a broader—

The Chair: Mr. Mueller, I'm so sorry, but the time is up. We're at six minutes and 39 seconds. You'll have the possibility to answer other questions, even though Mr. Samson took one of your questions.

Thank you, Mr. Samson.

Ms. Blaney, you have six minutes to ask questions. Please go ahead.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Thank you so much, Chair.

I thank all the witnesses for being here. I deeply appreciate the information you've shared with us so far.

I'm going to come to you, Helmets to Hardhats. I will leave you to decide who answers, because you know what you do the best.

One thing you mentioned in your introduction today is about having created a specific initiative for women and LGBTQ2+ veterans. I'm wondering if you could expand a little on what that looks like so we can better understand what framework you're moving forward with.

MGen (Ret'd) Paul Bury: Certainly. Thanks for the question.

We applied for a grant through Veteran Affairs Canada and the veteran and family well-being fund specifically to promote skilled trades opportunities to women and LGBTQ2+ veterans. Through that grant, we were able to hire two outreach workers. Their focus is to go out to talk to women vets and LGBTQ vets, and to communicate, familiarize and inform them about the opportunities in the skilled trades.

Because of that work, we have seen an uptick in the number of veterans who have registered with us. We look forward to their work in furthering that initiative and cause. Over time I think we'll see that it has been successful.

• (1910)

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Thank you.

That answers a bit of another question that I have, which is around whether you have particular strategies to reach out to these communities. It sounds like you have people who are actually going out there.

Is that different from the attraction strategy for veterans generally? Is it a little more specific?

MGen (Ret'd) Paul Bury: I would say that it is.

We have a general outreach strategy. Monsieur Trépanier noted that we attend the second career assistance network, the SCAN seminars. We meet with regular and reserve forces across the country. We communicate and inform them about the opportunities and about the Helmets to Hardhats program.

The two outreach workers whom the VAC grant allowed us to hire really dug down into the demographics. They help them. They mentor them. They work with them closely as they go through the process of applying for union memberships and apprenticeship opportunities. I think that really helps. It's about making that connec-

tion and then helping them through the process to ensure there's a successful outcome.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Thank you for that.

It's interesting. A lot of the research says that there are a few different groups of veterans who are challenged in terms of finding employment after service. One of those groups, of course, is women veterans, and another is veterans who served for a very short time and are now out in civilian life. Another is medically released veterans. One thing that I'm hoping will come out of this study is more ideas about specific ways to do that outreach so that those numbers aren't continuing to fall below or behind other groups of veterans and they have an opportunity.

One other question I have is around whether you have specific targets in terms of the numbers of folks from these communities participating in the program.

MGen (Ret'd) Paul Bury: Yes. Thanks for the question.

When you're talking about specific targets, we had some metrics, obviously, when we applied for the funding. However, I think it's too early in the process to tell you where we are and whether we are achieving success.

Over the last few months, we've seen in an uptick in the number who have applied. We have had far more communications this year with women and LGBTQ2+ veterans than in the past few years. I would attribute it to the work that those two outreach workers do. If you come back in two years and ask me, I could give you a far more thorough answer.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: That's excellent; I look forward to that.

Another thing I noticed in your intervention with us, and I know you didn't get to everything.... One thing that really impacted me was that once the receipt of documents is done, there's that really good reaching out to the veteran—making a phone call, talking to them about the process and looking at what's happening for them personally.

I'm wondering if you do that with every single veteran and if you feel that it is part of the capacity to retain them in this industry.

Mr. Normand Trépanier: Yes, definitely. We speak with everybody who registers with us. The reason is that I'm an old-fashioned guy, so I like to speak with people. After that, we can leave and say, "Okay, we're on the same track." We go from there, and the work starts. We send the file all over the place in the places where the member, the veteran, wants to go.

Mr. Chair, I'd like to correct something. At the beginning, I said that the safety training fund came from Veterans Affairs. I'm sorry; it comes from the Province of Ontario from the SDF, the skills development fund program. My apologies.

As I said, we speak to everyone. We want to make sure that we're all on the same track.

The challenge that we sometimes have with the Afghans—we're just starting—is the language. Even though I come from near Shawinigan and probably got the accent from Monsieur Chrétien, we have fun with them, and they work. Because we speak with them directly, they can express themselves better.

• (1915)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Trépanier and Ms. Blaney.

Before concluding this part of the meeting and welcoming another group of witnesses, we will go to one final round of questions.

[English]

I'd like to invite Mrs. Cathay Wagantall to take the floor for five minutes, please.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Thank you so much, Chair.

First of all, I want to make a comment on your statement that there was something you didn't get a chance to say.

We know that the Canadian government gives employment priority in its public service to equally qualified veterans. We received information as a committee that as of September 1, 2021, there were 171 VAC employees who have self-identified as being current or former Canadian Armed Forces members. Out of 3,455 full-time equivalents at VAC, that's about 5%, we'll say.

According to the Public Service Commission, which is responsible for administering hiring priorities, 330 appointments out of the 64,796 hires made in 2021-22 for the entire public service were veterans. That's about half a per cent.

In your thinking, is that a good representation or under-representation within the public service itself of the hiring of veterans?

Mr. Normand Trépanier: Mr. Chair, I don't have those figures, so I don't know. I can't say, and I don't want to lie, so I can maybe find the answer, but right now, madame, I can't.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: That's fine. I think it's important that we realize that VAC and the public service need to be setting an example, but at the same time I really appreciate the opportunities here in the private sector. I think you're doing a remarkable job of this.

You indicated that twice a year, in the spring and the fall, you're invited to the second career seminar to talk about your program, which is wonderful. Where does that invitation come from?

Mr. Normand Trépanier: It comes from Canadian Forces bases and garrisons. It's from the transition group and from the base personnel service officer. They send us the invitation as a third party to speak about whatever program they have, and the veterans know that we are a tool in their tool box.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: I appreciate that.

You're invited, and you're part of that fair. Can you tell me roughly how many different organizations would be part of that career seminar? Is it just you? Are there other options there as well, or is it something specifically to—

Mr. Normand Trépanier: Mr. Chair, they have a lot more representatives, not only H2H. There are groups all over the place.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Thank you very much.

Mr. Mueller, I'd like to ask you a quick question about your comment that you received \$39 million to help with reinvesting in our aviation and aerospace industries. You talked about needing to get talent back, plus new employees. Is the "talent back" in reference to what the industries have been going through since the shutdowns with COVID and whatnot? Is that what you're referring to?

Mr. Mike Mueller: Yes, that's what I was referring to. How do we get back the talent that we lost through the devastation of COVID-19?

We were pleased with the \$39 million that you referenced. That is going towards industry-led training. There's that skills mismatch, if you will, with the previous experience that somebody may have or with somebody coming out of university. What specific skills are required by that particular company or industry sector?

We're very pleased to see that funding.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Does this include pilot training as well?

Mr. Mike Mueller: I am not a 100% sure. I don't believe it's pilot training. No, it's more on the manufacturing side.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: It's manufacturing, maintenance and all those types of things.

Mr. Mike Mueller: That's correct.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Okay.

We are short on—

I'm sorry. Go ahead.

Mr. Mike Mueller: Just to be clear, this funding did not go to AIAC, but to the Canadian Council for Aviation and Aerospace. I think they'd probably be better placed to answer some of those very specific questions on the program. I don't want to mislead the committee.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Sure. I appreciate that. Thank you.

You also indicated that we need 58,000 more employees by 2028. Is that accurate?

• (1920)

Mr. Mike Mueller: Yes, that is the estimate for what is required for the aerospace and the aviation sectors. It's quite significant.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: We're talking about the civilian sector and not dealing with the needs of our armed forces in manufacturing, overhaul and all the maintenance of our—

Mr. Mike Mueller: That's correct. Those numbers are for the civilian side. I know there also are challenges on the military side, but I wouldn't be the best expert to talk about those numbers.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: It would be a good place for us to be hiring as well.

How much time do I have?

The Chair: It's over. Thank you. I don't have to cut off Mr. Mueller again. That's great.

Now let's go to Zoom. I invite Mrs. Rechie Valdez to ask questions for five minutes or less. Please go ahead.

Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to welcome the witnesses joining us this evening for this important study.

First off, I really want to thank you for all the work you do to empower our veterans and assist them in transitioning into meaningful work.

Through you, Mr. Chair, I am going to direct my first questions to Mr. Bury or Mr. Trépanier.

I am curious. When you pair a veteran with a place of employment, what do you base it on? Is it based on their existing skill sets or interest?

Walk us through what that process is like.

MGen (Ret'd) Paul Bury: I would hesitate to use the term "pairing" a veteran to a position or an occupation. Helmets to Hardhats is a referral service for veterans and serving reservists and the other client base—the demographics that I spoke of. We work with the locals of the Canada's Building Trades Unions and their apprenticeship and training coordinators. We look to match an individual with an apprenticeship in their local area.

When an individual is transitioning from the military, we'll ask them three questions: Where do you want to live? What do you want to do? When can you start? This refers to their release date, when they are free from their commitment to the Canadian military.

Based on their answers, we'll work with an apprenticeship and a training coordinator to match them with that position and get them through the process so that they can start an apprenticeship.

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: That's awesome.

Based on all your experience over the years, can you share what feedback employers have given about veterans in terms of their preparedness for the job? Also, have you seen an increase in the rate of hiring veterans over the years?

MGen (Ret'd) Paul Bury: We have received quite a lot of comments and feedback, whether it's from contractors, business owners or the unions themselves. They are very impressed with the quality of the veterans as individuals. They understand that when they hire a veteran, they will get real-world experience along with specific skill sets. They'll get leadership, commitment, the ability to work in a teamwork setting and punctuality. Most of all, what they're after is maturity.

They actively seek out veterans from us who bring those soft skills to the work site. As I said before, through the apprenticeship system you can teach specific skills required for the occupation, but it is all those other real-world soft skills that they really seek out.

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: Thank you.

Could you share the typical success rate? How long do they remain in the role? I'm not sure if you have any statistics or any knowledge on that.

MGen (Ret'd) Paul Bury: Just to clarify, do you mean how long they remain employed with contractors?

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: That's right.

MGen (Ret'd) Paul Bury: Mr. Chair, we don't track that type of statistic. Once the individual veteran is hired on and they start moving through the apprenticeship system with the union, we don't track that. We don't have longitudinal studies about success rates going through their apprenticeship system. That would be a question for the unions, I would imagine.

• (1925)

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: Thank you.

Through you, Mr. Chair, I have a quick question for Mr. Mueller.

Do you exclusively hire veterans who have experience with aerospace in the field, or do you just try to find someone who has the overall skills and then train them on the job?

Mr. Mike Mueller: Thank you for the question.

It would be on a case-by-case basis, depending on the needs of the particular company. It would probably be a little bit of both.

Obviously, if they have the hard skills that are required for the industry, that's an easier transition, but the leadership skills and those soft skills that veterans have make them ideal employees and contributors to the industry in any capacity. As a general rule, veterans have a lot of the skill sets, whether hard or soft, that are very attractive to the sector.

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you so much, Mrs. Valdez.

[*Translation*]

We will now have two members take brief turns.

Ms. Michaud, the floor is yours for two and a half minutes.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to address you again, Mr. Trépanier. Your colleague can also answer my question.

One point piqued my curiosity on your website. We see that the Afghan interpreters are part of the military community and eligible for the Helmets to Hardhats program. As well, in the text of your opening remarks, which you provided to us, you say:

Let's not forget our brave Afghan interpreters who left everything behind to relocate to Canada to start over; we have a duty to help them. Our goal is to offer program participants not just a job, but a career that lives up to their expectations.

Can you tell us more about this program? How many Afghan interpreters have you assisted to date? How does that work? Is it a program that generates interest?

Mr. Normand Trépanier: Thank you very much for that question.

We currently have just over 20 Afghan interpreters registered in our program. As Mr. Bury said earlier, the local 27 carpenters in Toronto are encouraging and engaging these Afghans.

Why is it to be expected that we would work with them? We must not forget that in Afghanistan, where Mr. Bury and I were, the interpreters put their lives at risk just as we did. The danger they faced was even greater than ours, because they became potential enemies to the Afghan community, which knew that they were working with us. To come to Canada, those interpreters had to abandon everything and start all over. I believe that we, as Canadians, must absolutely help them and help them well.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: That is to your credit. We get the sense that things are going fairly well for them.

Do they feel safe enough when they are rebuilding their lives here? Do they feel that they are getting the right help, the right support, once they are enrolled in the program?

Mr. Normand Trépanier: I hope so.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you.

Mr. Mueller, I would like your opinion about how things are going, in general. You said you were prepared to work with the government to get more veterans in your industry. What do you think could be done to improve this national strategy?

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Mueller: Thank you for the question.

More collaboration is always best. We're fully supportive of a strategy to ensure that we can secure employment for veterans, but I think it's also broader than that. We've been talking a lot to government about the overarching need for an industrial strategy. How do we attract investment? How do we remain competitive? We need to plan these things out in very structured ways.

I think this in particular is one component of that overarching strategy. How do we make sure that it is non-political and that it survives right across the board for the long term, building capacity and capability so that—

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Mueller.

For the last questions, I invite Ms. Rachel Blaney for two and a half minutes.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am going to come back to the amazing Helmets to Hardhats.

I will, first of all, just say how much I appreciate the work that you do. I've been really impressed. I love your monthly stats. They are so transparent. They let us know how many veterans are registered in your program. That's incredibly helpful. They let us know what provinces.... It's fantastic.

I have a couple of questions. First, what kind of support do you provide when they move to the work site? I'm curious about that, because it sounds like it's one of the important parts of supporting that civilian transition and all of the different steps. As they go through this process, how do you support them in each of those steps?

• (1930)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Normand Trépanier: That is a good question, Mr. Chair.

We support the veterans throughout their process, right up to when they are recruited for the occupation they have chosen. We know what union they are affiliated with and we know the name of the company they are working for.

[*English*]

Yes, we always follow up with them. Even though they've been hired, we're going to carry on asking questions how the guys, or girls, are doing, and so on. We don't give up. We always make sure they're doing well, and that we're getting some feedback from the company or the union on how things are going as well.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Perfect. Please speak in French. The interpretation is amazing, so whatever works best for you is great.

The other question I have is with regard to the supports for military spouses and dependents. Having represented a base for a long time, I know that one of the challenges is often that the spouses and dependents are sometimes frustrated because they're moving from place to place and they don't have the ability to develop their careers.

What kinds of supports do you have in place, and how do you feel they support the veteran?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Normand Trépanier: Right. I'm going to speak in French.

We offer the same support for our veterans' spouses and dependents. There is no difference, no discrimination. We use exactly the same process as for the veterans. I'm glad you asked the question.

The spouses and their children follow the veterans from one end of Canada to another, as very often happens. At about the age of 18, quite often, the children don't really know what to do. We have started helping these young people, and it's working. We have placed people who are quite happy. Their moms and dads call us to thank us.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Thank you.

[Translation]

Mr. Normand Trépanier: I would like to add one last thing, if I may.

Our organization, Helmets to Hardhats, also helps our veterans experiencing homelessness. We help them find a job, provided they want one. A veteran is a veteran 365 days a year, not just on November 11.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Blaney.

That's where we're going to stop for this panel.

On behalf of the members of the committee, I'd like to thank the witnesses for their participation in this study. From the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada, we had Mr. Mike Mueller, president and chief executive officer. From Helmets to Hardhats,

[Translation]

Gentlemen, after listening to you, I assume you have also gone the "Helmets to Hardhats" route. Since I have the impression that you have served, I would also like to thank you for your military service.

[English]

We had Mr. Paul Bury, director, transition services; and Mr. Normand Trépanier, deputy director.

Thank you so much.

Members, we're going to take a short break in order to salute our witnesses and welcome the new ones.

[Translation]

I will now suspend the meeting.

• (1930) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1940)

[English]

The Chair: We will now proceed to the second panel of witnesses.

I will give a quick reminder to our witnesses that before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name unless a member calls on you directly or asks you a question. When speaking, please speak slowly and clearly. When you are not speaking, your mike should be on mute.

I would like to welcome our witnesses. I'm pleased to say that we have with us tonight, from the Persian Gulf Veterans of Canada, Harold Davis, president.

[Translation]

We also have with us Alexandre Tremblay, chief executive officer, safety and health, for Prévactions.

Both witnesses are online.

Gentlemen, I am going to let you know when you have one minute left to speak. When you see the red card, you have to stop.

[English]

I would like to give the floor to Mr. Davis for five minutes or less.

Please go ahead with your remarks.

Mr. Harold Davis (President, Persian Gulf Veterans of Canada): Good evening, and thank you very much for inviting me to the hearing on a national strategy for veterans employment after service.

I was a weapons systems technician in the air force for almost 32 years. My trade was working with munitions, aircraft weapon systems and bomb disposal for most of my career.

After I passed the 20-year mark, I started to wonder what I would do once I retired, but at that time, I didn't think much more of it. In 2009, the day came when I was medically released and my 35-year retirement plan went out the window. If you don't think that is scary, let me tell you, it is. A family, mortgage and car payments are normal for most veterans, but now I had to figure out what my next job would be.

I got lucky in some ways. I had a retraining package because I was medically released. Friends who got out for other reasons did not.

I thought I would look at my trade. I know how my trade translates to civilian life. It doesn't, unless you know someone who wants a weapons system on their plane or a bomb made, for I was trained in bomb disposal. None of these translate to civilian life.

As I said, I got lucky. My retraining package worked for me, and I had a 10-year career with Shared Services Canada as a network analyst.

The system as it stands right now only works sometimes. From what I've heard from Gulf War veterans, it's more on the not working side. I want you to hear some of the comments I've received on this subject, because I consulted those veterans.

"Post-release training would be great for some veterans, but for a lot of us, it seems we did not meet the requirements for release date versus program eligibility."

Another veteran said, "It's a scam. I applied for many positions which I was qualified for. I never received one call, and at the end of the five years, I received a call from VAC telling me it's been five years and I will be dropped from the program, but 'thank you for your service'."

Another said, “Why doesn't the CAF give papers to show what civilian skills you have when someone gets out? When I was looking for work after leaving the CAF after 27 years, every place I went to said that because I didn't hold any papers that I could show them saying I was or had taken courses in X, I was not able to get a job. This has to change. Yes, I have heard all the reasons why they don't give us papers to say we are skilled or have taken a course that is equal to the skills that the civilian world wants. It is time that the CAF gets on and catches up to 2023 and stops living in the past. They want to know why they can't keep people in the service. They have to start treating all who have civilian skills like real people and not like crap. This plan works if you are still in your 40s, but the CAF and VAC must start thinking outside of the box. Life doesn't stop at 65.”

Wayne Finn wrote, “If you are talking about priority hire or CAF veterans medically released, that system only works if you know someone, from my experience, and having the PSC looking after vets is wrong. Why? If you read the PSECA and the PSER, a CF veteran is to be deemed a public servant while applying for a job, a.k.a. doing a competition. I found that hiring managers hope the vets don't understand the act so they can BS you. Another part is proper accreditation for what we did in the military. For example, in my trade, we operated 15 different cranes. Because I never had the rights for a 20-tonne crane, I never got the job, but if they used the accreditation part of the act, I had two years to get the ticket for that crane.”

He's available, if anyone wants to talk.

Another veteran said, “I applied for a number of maintenance jobs, some with corrections, Natural Resources and CFB base Edmonton. I never inquired about why I was not selected. I always thought they were picking other priority hires. There are a lot of us in the Edmonton area. After paying for the doctor's note, the mountain of paperwork and a poorly designed website, I didn't have the steam left to jump through any more hoops. Maybe they figured I didn't want it badly enough, but for me it was a matter of pride. Having to go crying to them with my hat in my hand is below me. I would rather suffer and feed my kids beans than beg on my knees for a job.”

As you can see, there are not many happy veterans who have been released who have a lot of good to say about this program or how it is handled. My opinion is that this program—or parts of it—has been running now for many years, yet here we are, still talking about it.

- (1945)

From what I have heard in the past, it appears to have two shortcomings.

One is that the CF isn't doing enough in a timely fashion for veterans who are being released when it comes to retraining veterans prior to release, and, two, in paperwork as to what they are qualified for on civilian street. The CF needs to ensure we have the proper paperwork required to prove it, as the government's civil service hiring practices are not being monitored enough to ensure they are following hiring practices for veterans, who don't see any checks and balances in place to ensure the applications are being looked at properly for veterans—

The Chair: Mr. Davis—

Mr. Harold Davis: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mr. Davis, you're right on time. Thank you very much.

Also, congratulations. We can see how proud you are to show your recognitions, and thank you for your service too.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tremblay, before inviting you to speak for the next five minutes, the entire committee congratulates you on your excellent achievement last week. You know what I am talking about, even if the public isn't aware.

Mr. Alexandre Tremblay (Chief Executive Officer, Safety and Health, Prévactions): Good evening, everyone.

My name is Alexandre Tremblay and I am the chief executive officer of the Prévactions group, which includes the Webex digital agency and Prévactions, a firm specializing in occupational health and safety.

I would like to talk a bit about my career. I have always been in the military system. At the age of 12, I joined the cadets. At 16, I became a reservist in the Canadian Armed Forces, and I studied policing. I left the Canadian Armed Forces temporarily in about 2016, before rejoining the Régiment du Saguenay, where I continued my career until March 2022.

In civilian life, I was always attracted to policing. My father was a police officer and my brothers and uncles were soldiers, so this was something I was always interested in. It was important for me that this be part of my everyday life. At the same time, the army also helped me enormously.

In 2001, when I entered the army, I very much liked the values it instilled in us. It taught us to become leaders, because, basically, I think the first job of the Canadian Armed Forces is to train people to become good citizens. That is something I have always instilled. In 2006, I went to do my chef course, and from the end of 2006 to 2008, I worked full-time providing training at the Land Force Quebec Area Training Centre. At the time, it was called LFQA TC; now it is 2 Cdn Div TC, the 2nd Canadian Division Training Centre.

In 2008, I left the Canadian Armed Forces to become a police officer with the Sûreté du Québec. I was transferred to Maniwaki. At that time, I was in the Supplementary Reserve, because I still missed it a bit. Being a soldier provides a feeling of pride and offers a lot in personal terms.

Then, in 2013, I left the police and started a career in occupational health and safety prevention. I have had a lot of problems and Mr. Davis is entirely correct in saying that it is extremely difficult to have the skills and training acquired in the military recognized in civilian life. So I had to do a lot of things over and take a lot of courses over at university. There were times when I could have given up, but I kept working toward my goal.

In 2016, I started wanting to become an entrepreneur. When I returned to the Régiment du Saguenay as a reservist, I went to finish my sergeant's course, and then my corporal's course, and so I became an infantry warrant officer in 2019.

Starting in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic hit. I was transferred to the Territorial Battalion Group to participate in the operation carried out in seniors' residences, as a deputy commander of an infantry platoon.

On the entrepreneurial front, all the experience I had amassed in the army helped me enormously in becoming an entrepreneur. I think that people could easily be helped to develop as entrepreneurs in the Canadian Armed Forces, because the qualities and training we acquire in the army, in themselves, enable us to become good entrepreneurs. I know people who are doing well in the business world.

• (1950)

I launched my businesses in 2020 after my time in the territorial battalion group. I now have three businesses, including Michel Larouche Consultants RH inc. At the provincial level, with Prévactions, I have many clients outside of Quebec. We currently have about 21 employees.

I see that I've run out of time.

The Chair: You are correct, Mr. Tremblay. Thank you for your comments. It's clear that there is a strong military tradition in your family and I'd like to thank you for everything you're doing.

We will now ask the two witnesses a few questions.

[*English*]

I would like to start with the first vice-chair of the committee, Mr. Blake Richards, for six minutes.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Thank you.

I have questions for both of you. Thank you for your presentations.

I'll start with you, Monsieur Tremblay.

You mentioned starting some businesses. I don't think you mentioned—at least, I didn't catch anything on it—any support, help or assistance you got, or programs available to you through Veterans Affairs in order to run down that road.

Was that something made available to you? Were there programs or services made available to you that encouraged you and helped you become an entrepreneur or start a business, as a veteran?

• (1955)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Tremblay: I was a reservist at the end of my career. In the reserve, we're hearing a lot less about programs for veterans. After leaving the reserve officially in March 2022, I began to hear a bit more about these programs. Prior to that, however, I had not heard much about it, if at all. I arranged my training myself.

It's important to point out that as reservists, we often have a civilian career, but are nevertheless very much involved from the military standpoint. I spent an average of three or four days a week at the reserve, in spite of my civilian job and my other civilian obligations. Nevertheless there are lots of full-time reservists.

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Richards: Thank you.

I think that might identify a gap and something that perhaps we should explore as a committee and possibly make recommendations on. I think it is important that whatever path a veteran looks to in order to move on—whether gaining employment or starting a business, which is a great way to move on to the next chapter of your life—there should be things there and programs in place to help encourage and assist with that, in whatever way Veterans Affairs can. I'm glad you were able to highlight that.

Mr. Davis, I have some questions for you, specifically on some of the programs and things.

However, while you're here, I also want to take the opportunity to let you speak to an issue that I'm sure you would have liked to speak to, but you had five minutes. You wanted to talk about the subject matter at hand as a representative of the Persian Gulf veterans association. I know you guys have long fought for the recognition many other veterans have, which is to see your service recognized as wartime service.

I want to let you speak to that quickly, if you'd like to, and tell us what you're fighting for and why it's so important.

Mr. Harold Davis: Thank you very much.

We are the Persian Gulf Veterans of Canada. There are approximately 5,000 of us. We are trying to get recognition for our wartime service during the Persian Gulf war. That was over 32 years ago. Until this day, we are still not recognized for the service during the actual war. The liberation of a country was what we helped in doing.

Nobody is really listening within the government. We're trying our best to get the recognition we deserve for that. Along with that there are different benefits, of course, and some of them are for families of members. It's just that nobody understands what a veteran goes through if you haven't really served outside the country.

You've got the former country of Yugoslavia. You've got Afghanistan. You've got the Persian Gulf and many other very dangerous missions that went on out there.

The recognition is not forthcoming in the proper way. Persian Gulf veterans are recognized as special duty area veterans, yet we served in a war. Korean War veterans were recognized as special duty area veterans at that time, and it took them 30 years to receive recognition for their war service.

Today we are hitting 32 years as of Wednesday of next week, and we still haven't been recognized for proper service. The only outfit in Canada that is actually recognizing us for our service is the Kuwaiti embassy. It recognizes us every year. It gives us these medals that are on this side for our service there, which we're not allowed to wear on our left side. If you understand military service, you'll understand that when you get a medal from a different country that recognizes you for your service and you can't wear it with your other medals, you'll know what that does to a lot of veterans mentally.

You wouldn't believe some of the stories I've heard from some of the veterans who served in the Persian Gulf and how not being recognized for what they actually did has affected them mentally. They have medical problems now just like everybody else, but many of them stem from their service in the Persian Gulf. We're not recognized for medical issues, such as Gulf War illness. Other countries recognize it; Canada doesn't recognize Gulf War illness. We've got veterans out there who are paying with their own money to go and get help in the United States.

• (2000)

Mr. Blake Richards: I'm really saddened to hear that. I know how difficult it must be to have to fight for something that should be recognized and should be there, and for what goes with that. Thank you for fighting on behalf of your fellow veterans to see that happen. Please keep up the fight.

Mr. Harold Davis: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Richards.

We'll now go to the web and Mr. Wilson Miao for six minutes or less, please.

Mr. Wilson Miao (Richmond Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

Definitely, we all recognize the work you have done for our country. Thank you to both of you for serving and allowing us to enjoy the Canada we have today.

I would like to address my first question to Mr. Davis.

Through your experience in serving and working with the veteran communities, what kind of support do you feel veterans need the most after their release that would better help facilitate the transition to their civilian employment?

Mr. Harold Davis: Thank you for your support, sir.

From what I've heard from my veterans—I'm calling them "my" veterans just because that's who I talk with a lot—they are not really getting the outfits to listen. I'm talking about VAC and I'm talking about the military.

You've got two different releases. You've got your medical release and you've got your normal release. When the medical release happens, that should be automatically kicked over to VAC. Let VAC start with all the medical requirements, the doctor's notes and stuff like that. When they get out from the regular service....

Now, I know that earlier you had a bunch of outfits that are helping veterans. Thank them very much for me, but the veterans I've talked to were never told about them. When I got out in 2009 medically, I went through all the seminars and everything else. Nobody told me about Helmets to Hardhats. I'm not even sure if they were around back then. There were outfits out there that we didn't hear about. I never heard about any of them when I got out.

Fortunately, again, I was lucky. Well, you can call it lucky or not, but I was a medical release. I had to do all my retraining package myself. I had to contact them and do all the footwork myself. Nobody was there holding my hand. I had to learn it all and do it myself. I lucked out, because I'm like a dog with a bone: I'll go after it and keep at it until I get the answers I want.

Some veterans out there are getting the help they need, but others are just walking out the door. When I hear about them, that's when I call VAC and say, "I have a veteran here who's almost homeless. He needs help." When they call, they're not getting a lot of what they should be getting. They're not getting the people who will actually help them.

Mr. Wilson Miao: Thank you very much for sharing that with us.

What recommendation do you have or what do you feel we absolutely should include as part of the national strategy for veterans employment in this case? From your comments, we definitely need to provide more resources and support prior to their release.

Maybe you can share with us your recommendation.

Mr. Harold Davis: My recommendation is that there must be checks and balances. When you turn around and tell a veteran that they can do a priority hiring and stuff like that within the government.... I went through all of that. I went through the priority hiring. I lucked out—like I said, I'm a dog with a bone—but take the guys I mentioned in my opening statement: It didn't work for them. The civilian side is not looking at, yes, this is a veteran, and he's a priority hire.

After I got into the civil service side at Shared Services and stuff, I heard comments like, "Oh. You're a priority hire." Yeah? "Well, I had a friend who put in for that job too."

That wasn't my problem. I'd already done 30 years serving all over my country, and that was supposed to be my country giving back to me a little bit. They're not doing it the way they should be doing it. Nobody's watching the hiring practices that are going on.

When it came time for me to qualify to be a computer network analyst, I had all the courses but I never had that piece of paper that said I had a computer science degree. Luckily, the guy who hired me said, "I don't care. I want you to work for me because you have the training", but that was one in probably 25 people who would go out on a limb. He actually had to fight for me to do that.

Then, when it came time for the security clearance, I didn't understand that the military security clearance and the civilian security clearance, although they're all done by most of the same people in the RCMP, don't roll over. I had already carried a "secret" security clearance within the military, but I had to wait another four months for them to do a security clearance check so that I could get another "secret" clearance.

Stuff like that is not helping a veteran when he's trying to get a job to put food on his table for him and his family.

• (2005)

Mr. Wilson Miao: Thank you for sharing that.

Mr. Chair, do I have more time?

The Chair: You have one more minute.

Mr. Wilson Miao: Perfect. Thank you.

Through you, Chair, I would like to direct my next question to Mr. Tremblay.

I know that you are quite entrepreneurial with your skill set. From your experience, have you seen that businesses are interested in hiring more veterans? Do you feel that these businesses have any concern about hiring a veteran?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Tremblay: Thank you very much for the question Mr. Miao. I was hoping someone would ask me. The answer is definitely yes.

I'll give you an example. Our company is currently working with someone who is making the transition to civilian life, and who is going to leave the Canadian Armed Forces to begin working for one of our companies, Michel Larouche Consultants RH inc., which specializes in human resources. We are trying to promote this and trying to support organizations that work with veterans who have experienced post-traumatic shock. We would like to become specialists in that area.

Soldiers with skills in occupational health & safety are familiar with the work, the people and the training that's available. It would be extremely useful if their expertise could be recognized.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Tremblay.

Ms. Kristina Michaud now has the floor for six minutes.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the witnesses for their service and for being here with us today.

I'd like to congratulate you, Mr. Tremblay, on the birth of your baby.

You worked in the reserve for approximately 10 years and then held various civilian jobs. You are now an entrepreneur. You took various kinds of training before getting to where you are now, and I would like to congratulate you on your accomplishments.

You mentioned that the services and programs available to reservists were not the same as those available to members of the Canadian Armed Forces, and that prior learning recognition was problematic.

What are you proposing? What form of mentoring could the Canadian Armed Forces or Veterans Affairs Canada provide in situations like these?

Mr. Alexandre Tremblay: Well, I had about 13 years of experience in the Canadian Armed Forces. But I don't know whether the programs for reservists are different from those available to active members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Here's what I suggest. It would be important to find out where the obstacles are. We've been talking about this for years, and it was discussed at various seminars with high-ranking officers: the skills of military personnel do not get the same recognition as civilians' skills.

You heard Mr. Davis raise an important point about security clearances. Why is the armed forces security clearance not recognized in civilian life? It's as if there were two parallel systems.

In the armed forces, standards and training are much more stringent and advanced than civilian ones. Infantry or armed forces adjutants are managers. And yet, once back in civilian life, there is no recognition for their skills even if they've been a manager responsible for 30 or 100 people. It's as if all of the managerial expertise acquired had disappeared when they left the military.

Some employers decided not to hire service members I had recommended, even though they had considerable personnel management expertise. When employers looked at the CVs, they said they were military CVs and that the people didn't have a degree. It's unfortunate, but there are people who think like that. I believe it's a poor way of benefiting from an individual's skills.

How come training in the military is not recognized in civilian life? Prior learning recognition is something concrete.

Here's the best possible example: the training of a master corporal is spread over numerous hours under the worst possible conditions. A master corporal learns how to teach in the classroom and prepare lesson plans, among other things. In civilian life, it would be equivalent to training as an instructor or teacher. And yet, even though these people would like their experience to be recognized in civilian life, they would not be able to become a teacher because all they have is an advanced leadership or instructor diploma from the Canadian Armed Forces. In civilian life, their skills are not recognized.

In my view, prior learning recognition would be something concrete that would help members of the military make the transition to civilian life. After 20 years in the Armed Forces, all kinds of training has been acquired. For example, Mr. Davis's CV must be extremely impressive, but once in civilian life, his military training won't be recognized. And yet, his background and experience are probably more substantial than what many civilians have.

Have I answered your question?

• (2010)

Ms. Kristina Michaud: That's a very good answer to my question. Thank you very much.

That's extremely interesting and I think you're raising a very good point. I see that my colleagues around the table are nodding. One of the recommendations the committee could make to the government would be to finally recognize the skills of military personnel to facilitate their transition to civilian life. That would certainly help a lot of veterans.

We've been talking a lot about employment assistance, but we should perhaps be talking more about entrepreneurship support, because you also have that kind of experience. My colleague discussed it briefly earlier, and I found the suggestion that more should be done to help veterans become entrepreneurs to be a very interesting one.

My Liberal colleague asked you whether you hired veterans. Any entrepreneur who has previously done so is already open to that and doesn't need to be convinced about how important it is to hire veterans.

I don't know whether you have any suggestions about that and will give you the floor, because I see that there's only a minute left.

Mr. Alexandre Tremblay: I'm going to make a proposal and I'll be very brief about it.

I personally will always be prepared to hire veterans. Occupational health and safety is a field that's very accessible for veterans because they have a critical eye, leadership ability and poise, and are rarely impressed by stubborn people. So I don't need any convincing.

In terms of entrepreneurship, I think there's a lot of work still to be done. Everyone knows that entrepreneurial talent is hard to spot. But there's a way of helping people to develop their ideas.

You have my name, and some people no doubt have my telephone number. I'd be happy to have them call me and give them a hand with their efforts, if they need any assistance. I believe that

veterans are highly competent or even overqualified, that they have leadership ability and are extremely...

• (2015)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Tremblay.

Mr. Alexandre Tremblay: I wanted to talk about investments, but I'll...

The Chair: I know that you're disciplined, owing to your background, and will understand why I have to interrupt you to give the floor to the next speaker.

Ms. Blaney, you have the floor for six minutes.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Thank you, Chair.

I want to thank the members here who have testified. Thank you both for your tremendous service.

Of course, Mr. Davis, I really appreciate the advocacy you're doing for the Persian Gulf War vets in bringing awareness and recognition of that situation. We must always acknowledge that service. When our country and citizens fail to do so, I think it's so important that you stand up and do that work and that we all do our best to support that voice being heard.

Coming back to this study, one of the things both of you talked about that impacted me was the idea of translating what it means when you serve into civilian skills, the fact that it isn't done at all and that often members will have to retake training for things they're already very skilled in to prove that they know what they know. I thought it was very important that you talked about the security clearance you received. Of course, when you move into civilian life, that clearance is not translated into civilian life. Again, it feels like a way of not celebrating the tremendous training and effort and the people who serve our country, and I think that's very shameful.

Could you speak a little about what you think would help with that? During the transition process, however that transition process goes in leaving the military and moving into civilian life, should there be a process included in which you have the military outline your qualifications, almost like a verification that you can bring to future employers? Do you think that would support veterans in moving forward into civilian life?

Mr. Davis, I will ask you first, and then Mr. Tremblay.

Mr. Harold Davis: I think there should be something prior to getting out so that the members to be able to take their UER—their unit employment record—and walk into an office over at the training building, as an example, and say, “I'd like all of this transcribed to show what I can do when I get out of the service on the civilian side.”

I have a one-inch binder. Every course I took in the military is in that binder. When I got my job with Shared Services Canada, the guy who was doing my thing asked, “Do you know how many courses you had on computer training?” I had listed them all on my resumé. I said, “No. I don't remember. I've been in an out of computers for years on aircraft, systems and stuff like that”. He said, “You've had 37 courses just on computer training alone”, and those certificates were in my book. As Mr. Tremblay said, they're not recognized on the outside, because they're military.

I took a three-month electronics course at the Saskatchewan Technical Institute back in the mid-1980s. There was a civilian instructor and a whole classroom of military people. They taught the exact same thing during their regular school year as they taught in the military. We walked out of there, and we never got one piece of paper from that institute telling us that in three months, we had just taken all the basic electronics that they teach in one year. We just took it, and it's not recognized anywhere. I get a diploma from the military. It has to be translated somewhere along the line.

It's the same thing with security clearances. I have the “secret” military security clearance. I've had it for 30-odd years. I go over to Shared Services to work for the same government—remember, I'm going to be working for the same government—yet my security clearance from DND does not translate over to the Shared Services civilian side of the house. All you had to do is walk the paper across the road, but they didn't do it. That's another time lag that could be incorporated. When the member is getting close to release, within six months he could walk into training with all of his UERs, start the process right away, and have it all done before he walks out that door. Once he walks out that door, all of the support he has is not there anymore. It's gone.

● (2020)

Ms. Rachel Blaney: That was an excellent answer, Mr. Davis.

Mr. Tremblay, I'd love to hear from you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Tremblay: Mr. Davis has in fact, identified the major challenge with respect to prior learning recognition.

I'll put on my entrepreneur/investor hat to talk about the financial side of things. Human and financial aspects are important. They are the key to prior learning recognition.

I don't know how many thousands of dollars Canada contributed to Mr. Davis's training. In my case, Canada invested tens of thousands of dollars to give me warrant officer training until I was promoted to my rank.

And yet, when people leave the military, no one reaps the rewards of this investment. That's really too bad, in my opinion. It's as if Canada were shooting itself in the foot, because it spent all kinds of money training people who could become agents of change and make an economic contribution to their country. At the end of the line, it's as if we were throwing money away, because the expensive investment is lost when someone who has acquired a lot of skills returns to civilian life.

It's all very well to appear before committees, but we want the training that has been given to veterans to help them become agents

of change. From an entrepreneurial standpoint, when you help veterans to develop, put their ideas forward and contribute to economic development, you find yourself with people who have already been trained and who are able to generate millions of dollars and create jobs. If you send people like that back to school to repeat the training they've already had, then you're wasting one, two or three years of investment. And I'm only talking about the financial aspect here.

From the human standpoint now, it's extremely...

The Chair: Mr. Tremblay, we'll wait a while to discuss the human side of things. You'll be able to speak again later, but time is short at the moment.

We are going to a final round of questions. This time, I'll give people three minutes in order to finish within our scheduled time.

[*English*]

I will start with Mr. Terry Dowdall, please. You have three minutes.

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to take an opportunity to thank our guests for being here as well, and for their service.

I've been especially listening to the testimony from Mr. Davis about the frustrations that he had and still hears. That's the number one thing I'm getting constantly, whether it's emails or veterans I'm running into in my riding. They are frustrated with Veteran Affairs Canada and how complicated it is to see what channel they actually fit into as somebody coming out of the service.

How can we make that simpler?

Mr. Harold Davis: I don't know how you can make it simpler. It is very simple. As I said earlier, over in the training building, turn around and have an office for release. Let the member go in there and have his qualifications transcribed before he walks out the door, because once he walks out the door, he's done. He has no backing of the military anymore. He gets his two-dollar pin and walks out the door. He's done. VAC doesn't even start to look at you unless you have a medical claim done. Unless you're on a medical release, like I was, then there's no support. You have to rely on all the other agencies that are out there—Helmets to Hardhats and all the other ones—

Mr. Terry Dowdall: It's hard to know all of those. That's the problem.

How do we get 6,000 homeless veterans through the program to know all these options and corporations that are out there?

Here's another quick question. Do you think that VAC, as an organization, is walking the walk, when we hear that 4.95% of their employees are actually veterans?

• (2025)

Mr. Harold Davis: In some cases, yes; in some cases, no. I know....

I've helped veterans with VAC. They get a civilian case manager, and a lot of what they actually need is not carried out. When they end up with a military-background case manager who understands what that veteran is actually going through, things change 120%. I've watched it in different veterans who have contacted me saying they need help with VAC.

As I said, when you get out of the military, unless you have a claim.... Most members don't even know how to put a claim in to VAC while they're still serving. They don't think they are allowed. They just don't know where to go sometimes, once they get out. I hate to say it, but honestly, they just fall through the cracks.

You know how hard it is to tell a veteran to go and ask for welfare. I've had to do it. It hurts.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Davis.

Now let's go to another intervention. We have Mr. Churence Rogers for three minutes, please.

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to Mr. Davis and Mr. Tremblay for being here with us and giving us the benefit of their experiences.

Earlier, I listened to the gentleman from Helmets to Hardhats. I was very encouraged by his positive presentation and the things they're doing for veterans. I was very encouraged that we're getting somewhere. They're taking advantage of the funding program for education and the family well-being fund and so on, and doing some great work, but I just want to hear from Mr. Davis and his experiences. I'm not sure what else can be done in terms of connecting you with that group or others and trying to work in collaboration with them to provide support for veterans.

I'd like to know if there's one thing in particular—because we have a very short time period here—you would like for us as a committee to recommend to Veteran Affairs that could assist your group and veterans that you dial up with.

Mr. Harold Davis: That's a very hard question to answer, because every veteran has a different story, and that story dictates which way they're going to go.

You mentioned Veterans Affairs. Again, Veterans Affairs doesn't work with veterans who are not clients. It's hard for a veteran who got out on a normal release to gain any help. His contract is up, and he's walking out the door. He has to go to the other.... I'll call them "options", because there are so many different guys or organizations out there, trying to help veterans. However, he doesn't know them all, because nobody tells him on the way out the door from the military. They just say, as I said, "Here are your pin. Here's your flag, now. We're giving you a flag."

If you're on normal release, you're finished. You're out the door. Once you leave and go through that gate, you're on your own, unless you have a claim with Veterans Affairs.

Mr. Churence Rogers: Time is very short here. I'm sorry to interrupt.

Is there something you think we should be doing, as a committee, and recommending to support veterans? I'd appreciate it if you could send along some ideas in writing to our clerk. We'd appreciate that, because we know you have a lot to offer.

Mr. Harold Davis: Thank you.

Mr. Churence Rogers: Mr. Tremblay, in your experience, where do you think most veterans gravitate, in terms of jobs? Is it in construction, security, or health and safety? What are your experiences?

[Translation]

The Chair: Please answer within 15 seconds, Mr. Tremblay, if you could.

Mr. Alexandre Tremblay: I didn't hear the question very well, but I think Mr. Rogers asked what fields should be prioritized for veterans.

I don't believe that there is any particular field that needs to be focused on. As Mr. Davis was saying, every individual has followed a different course. After having been a service member for many years and having given to their country, the time will come for them to change and do what they want in life. For me, it was occupational health and safety, because I was very much attracted to it from the human standpoint.

Having people with expertise...

• (2030)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Tremblay, I've stretched the 15 seconds to the max.

Ms. Michaud, you have the floor for three minutes.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Tremblay, I'll give you the opportunity to finish what you were saying, if you'd like. It sounded interesting.

Mr. Alexandre Tremblay: Generally speaking, if we really want to help veterans, they need to be asked at the outset what they're interested in. After that, their task needs to be facilitated, because it's often not clear and they wonder where they're going to find the resources. It's true that there are some good programs, but concretely, the steps to be followed are not obvious. What I wanted to do was work on prevention in the occupational health & safety field. I had received various kinds of training, and I had also trained others, but I didn't know what the next step should be.

In the military, things have already been mapped out. If someone is encouraged to achieve their objective of working in health & safety, they won't know how to go about it. These things have to be facilitated. It's not enough to just coach them, because facilitating the process is what's really needed. They need to be presented with concrete programs and given whatever help they require. This means making things that are not obvious more concrete. That's what would be most useful in facilitating the lives of veterans.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: That's interesting. Thank you very much.

I will end by speaking to you about professional and personal feelings of satisfaction. Despite the 4.5% unemployment rate, compared to the 6.6% rate for Quebec's and Canada's civilian population, veterans are apparently more likely than others to say they are dissatisfied or not being used to their full potential.

One solution to that could be something like going into business, in something that they really like, and to become self-employed. That may not have been your experience because you had been a police officer before starting a business, but do you think that entrepreneurship could be a default option for veterans to consider? In view of the lack of coaching or mentoring for entering a specific field, and the problems in having their prior learning recognized, might it not be easier for them to start a business?

Have you heard about things like this or do you feel that veterans would work even harder if they were to become entrepreneurs? You obviously have your own story to tell, but what do you hear from people you know?

Mr. Alexandre Tremblay: I've seen a lot of former members of the military start a business. They tell themselves they're going to go into business, be their own boss and do what they want. However, they are often fooling themselves by thinking that because they've been in the military, and have training and leadership skills, they have what it takes to be an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship has its benefits, but it can be extremely difficult from the mental, moral and family standpoints. It's easy to fall into a trap.

I think that service members who say they have a good idea and would like to pursue it could be mentored by veterans and by the Canadian Armed Forces. I believe it would be a worthwhile investment to coach them through their projects. There are mentors, like retired former entrepreneurs who have had very successful careers and who would be willing to help people who want to start their own business. That form of collaboration would be excellent.

The Chair: Thank you for your intervention, Mr. Tremblay.

[English]

Now I'd like to invite Ms. Rachel Blaney for three minutes, please.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Thank you.

My question is for Mr. Tremblay.

I feel very concerned that we are making you work so hard when you have so many serious things to look after in your household that I know are taking a lot of energy.

My question for you is actually two in one.

The first question is about specific challenges that you think reservists face in their transition. The second part is that we have also heard from research that one of the biggest gaps in supports for veterans involves entrepreneurship.

I wonder if you could speak to what would be supportive for a veteran who's considering entrepreneurship to move forward.

• (2035)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Tremblay: To begin with, veterans should be mentored and taught how to manage a business budget. Managing a personal budget and a business budget are two very different things. In the military, you don't learn how to manage a budget at all because it's not really part of military life as such. For entrepreneurs, however, it's extremely important.

You make your own luck, and I was lucky to some extent because my idea worked. I listened to a lot of advice from business leaders and adopted a business model that works extremely well, which is why we have been so successful.

However, whether you want it or not, there's always the question of financial aid. You can go into business from one day to the next with a small federal pension plan and a small provincial pension plan, but it might take several years before you can pay yourself a salary. It's therefore important to know how to manage a budget.

If the Canadian Armed Forces wanted to train entrepreneurs, then they would have to begin by providing mentoring sessions to really show people what entrepreneurship is. The entrepreneurial environment is not a bed of roses; it's difficult, people are often negative, there's a lot of competition, and mutual assistance is hard to come by.

Fortunately, there are more and more mentoring associations or former business leaders who have sold their business and would like, after retiring, to pass on their knowledge. If the Canadian Armed Forces could work with these associations and business leaders, it would be extremely beneficial to our veterans from the entrepreneurial standpoint.

As for reservists, I know that you asked a question...

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Well, it looks like we have just a few seconds left.

I'm just trying to identify what the biggest challenges are for folks who are reservists transitioning into employment. We have no time and I don't want to upset the chair, so if you do have time to write those down and send that information to the clerk, I would really appreciate it.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Tremblay: You could call me on my cell phone, if you wish, and we could talk about it.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

I won't be upset, Ms. Blaney. It's okay.

[Translation]

That's the end of the discussion with the second group of witnesses, whom I would like to thank for their contribution to our study.

[*English*]

On behalf of members, I thank Mr. Harold Davis, President of Persian Gulf Veterans of Canada.

[*Translation*]

I'd also like to thank Mr. Alexandre Tremblay, Chief Executive Officer, Safety and Health, Prévactions.

Once again, thank you very much.

I'd like to tell the committee members that all our witnesses have been confirmed for next week.

[*English*]

On Monday and on Thursday we have full houses, and I invite you to follow our committee.

[*Translation*]

On that note, before ending, I'd like to thank the entire technical team, the clerk and the analyst, who have been with us during the meeting. I would also like to thank the interpreters, who informed us when they were having a little bit of trouble.

Is it the will of the committee to adjourn the meeting?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

● (2040)

The Chair: The meeting is adjourned.

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