



**UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA**

Supporting Military and Veteran Students



Military and Veteran Friendly Campus (MVFC)



Our Purpose:

To develop an understanding of military culture and to assist campus members in recognizing the unique challenges facing veterans who are transitioning to civilian life, the strengths and benefits that military members and veterans (MMV's) bring to our campus and to encourage a MMV supportive environment.

(What I have learned from the military)

“Perseverance, patience, and resilience. I have never quit anything ... I'll put in my time and I'll put in my effort. There is a level of confidence that, I think, if you have done your time in the military ... nobody can take away from you.

Every time I've walked into a field, a simulated battlefield, it has never been the same. So I know that whatever is going to be thrown at me, I can handle that ... It's that belief within myself that I'll take it head-on.”

Siddarth Tailor (U of A Criminology Student)



Being in Edmonton, the U of A draws students from one of Canada's largest military bases – the CFB Edmonton (3rd Canadian Division).

Members of 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry conduct a live fire trench warfare range during Exercise APOLLO FOUNDATION at the 3rd Canadian Division Support Base Edmonton Detachment Wainwright training area on Oct. 2.

Photo: Corporal Daniel Chiasson



Supporting Military & Veteran Students

We would like to:

- Increase awareness and understanding of military culture and the experiences of MMV's pursuing post-secondary education
- Identify the skills and attributes that MMVs bring to post-secondary campuses
- Become familiar with ways to support success of MMVs pursuing post-secondary education
- Be familiar with trauma informed care

The Canadian Armed Forces



Photo: Corporal Alisa Strelley, Canadian Armed Forces Photo



The Canadian Armed Forces is a division of the Department of National Defence and supports those who serve on the sea, on land, and in the air with the Army, Navy, Air Force and Special Forces to defend Canadians' interests at home and abroad.



STRONG | SECURE | ENGAGED

Components of the CAF

Regular Force

The Regular Force is the main military component of the CAF and employs full-time military personnel.

Regular Force members receive higher pay and benefits than members of the Reserve Force.

Members of the Regular Force can be ordered into overseas or domestic deployments and can be posted (moved) across Canada.

Reserve Force

The Reserve Force is an integral component of the Canadian Armed Forces. While the Reserve Force is primarily part-time service, reservists may volunteer for full-time employment

Reservists come from all walks of life including students, civil servants, labourers, business people, academics and former members of the Regular Force.

Reservists can choose to deploy based on their particular circumstances and can serve Canada from their hometown.

The Core Mission

The core missions of the Canadian Armed Forces are to:

- Detect, deter and defend against threats to or attacks on Canada and on North America
- Lead and/or contribute forces to NATO and to international peace operations and stabilization missions
- Engage in capacity building to support the security of other nations
- Provide assistance to civil authorities, law enforcement and non-governmental partners in responding to international and domestic disasters or major emergencies; and
- Conduct search and rescue operations

The Core Mission

In Canada, the CAF is involved in:

- Patrolling coastlines;
- Monitoring airspace;
- Surveillance and control in the Arctic;
- Leading aeronautical search and rescue missions;
- Assisting civil authorities with disaster relief;
- Supporting major international events in Canada; and
- Support to counter-terrorism.



Sailor 1st Class (S1) Absukh Jhand communicates with the Bridge while Motor Vessel (MV) ASTERIX anchors in Subic Bay, Philippines on 23 September 2023.

Photo: Master Sailor (MS) Marilou Villeneuve-Last,
Canadian Armed Forces Photo

The Core Mission

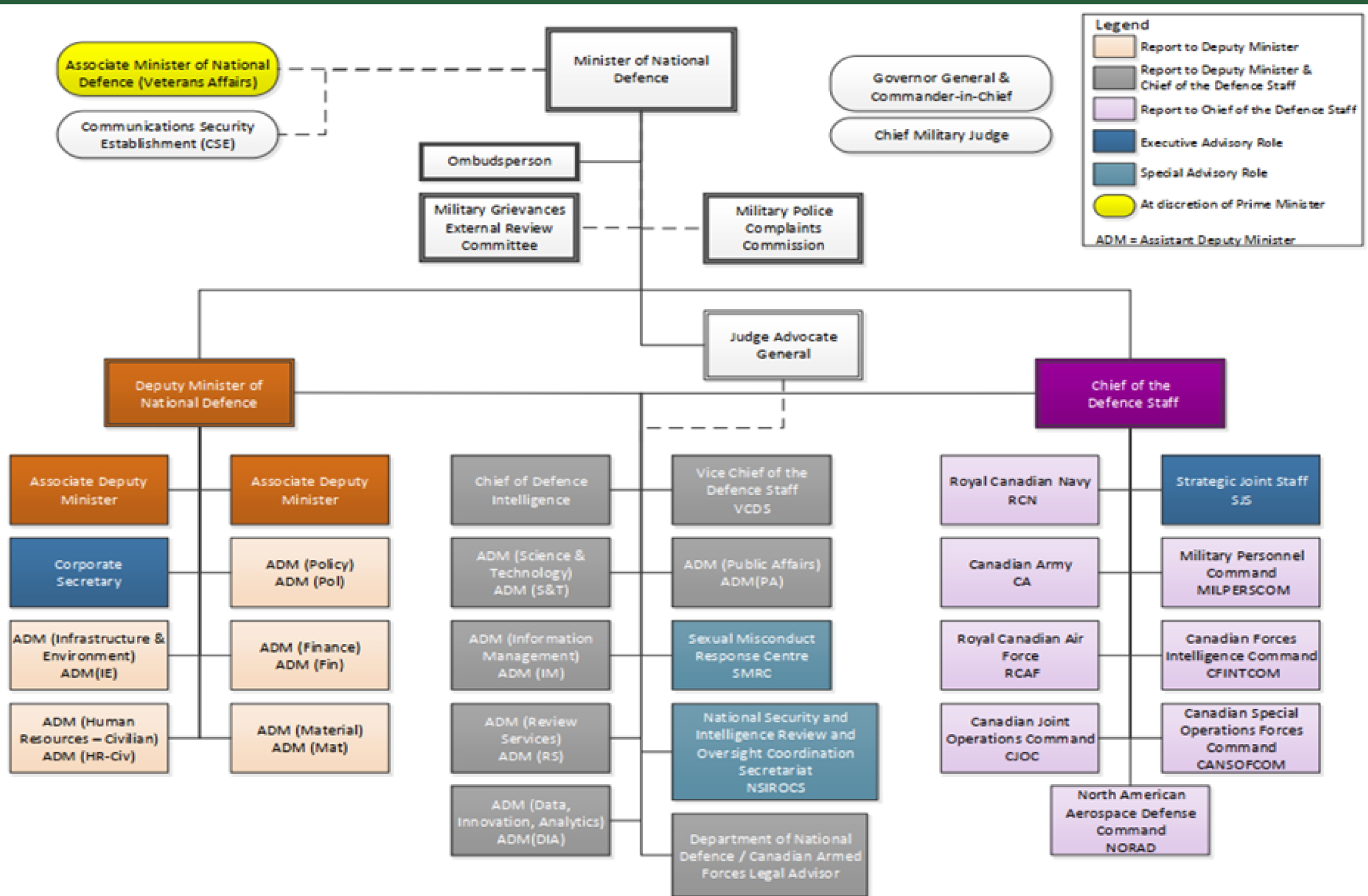
In North America, the CAF is involved in:

- Surveillance of maritime and air approaches in cooperation with the United States; and
- Coordination through North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD).

Abroad, they participate in:

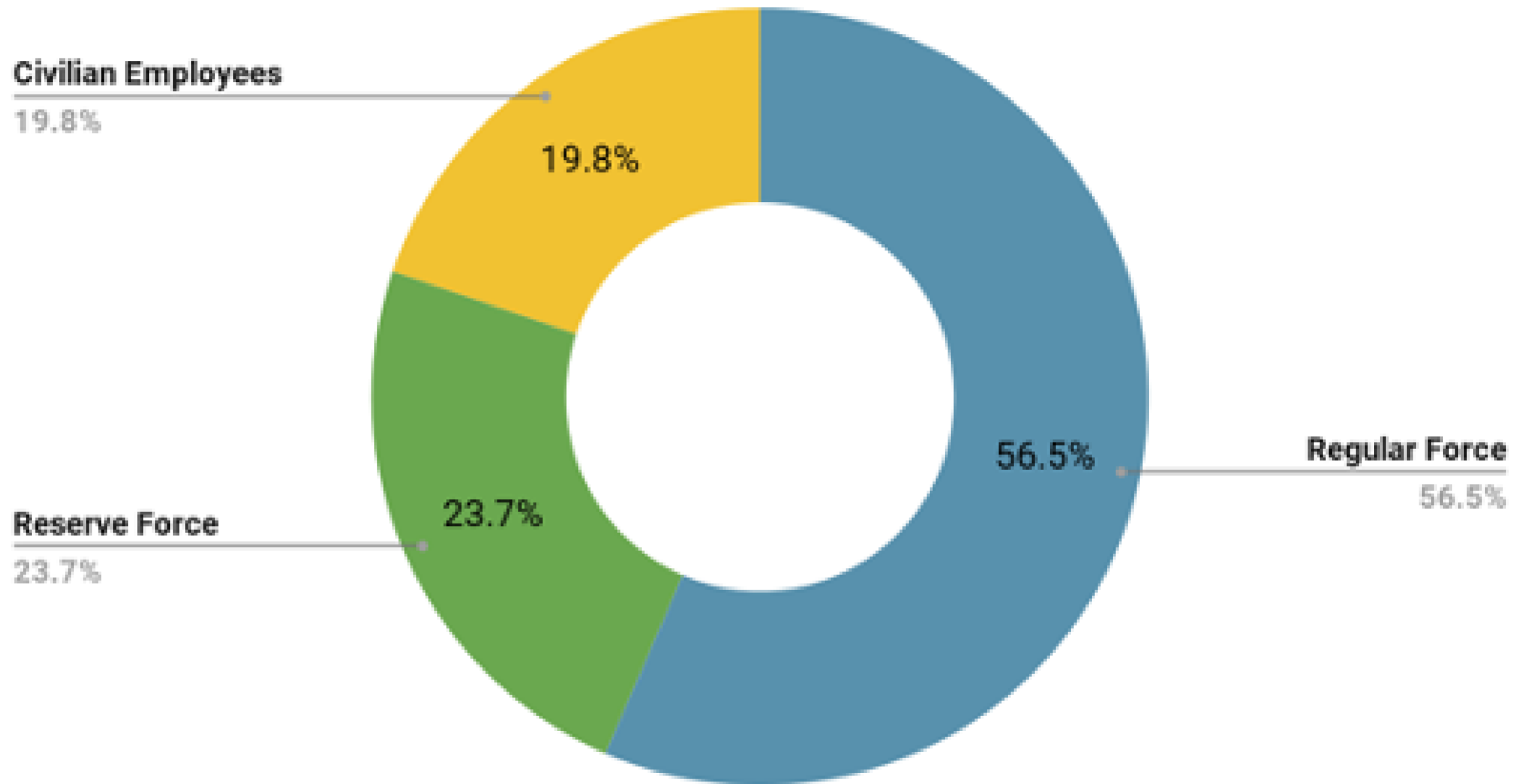
- Combat operations;
- Regional security operations;
- Peace-support and stabilization operations;
- Training and advisory operations;
- Humanitarian operations; and
- Non-combatant evacuation operations.

Structure of the Canadian Armed Forces



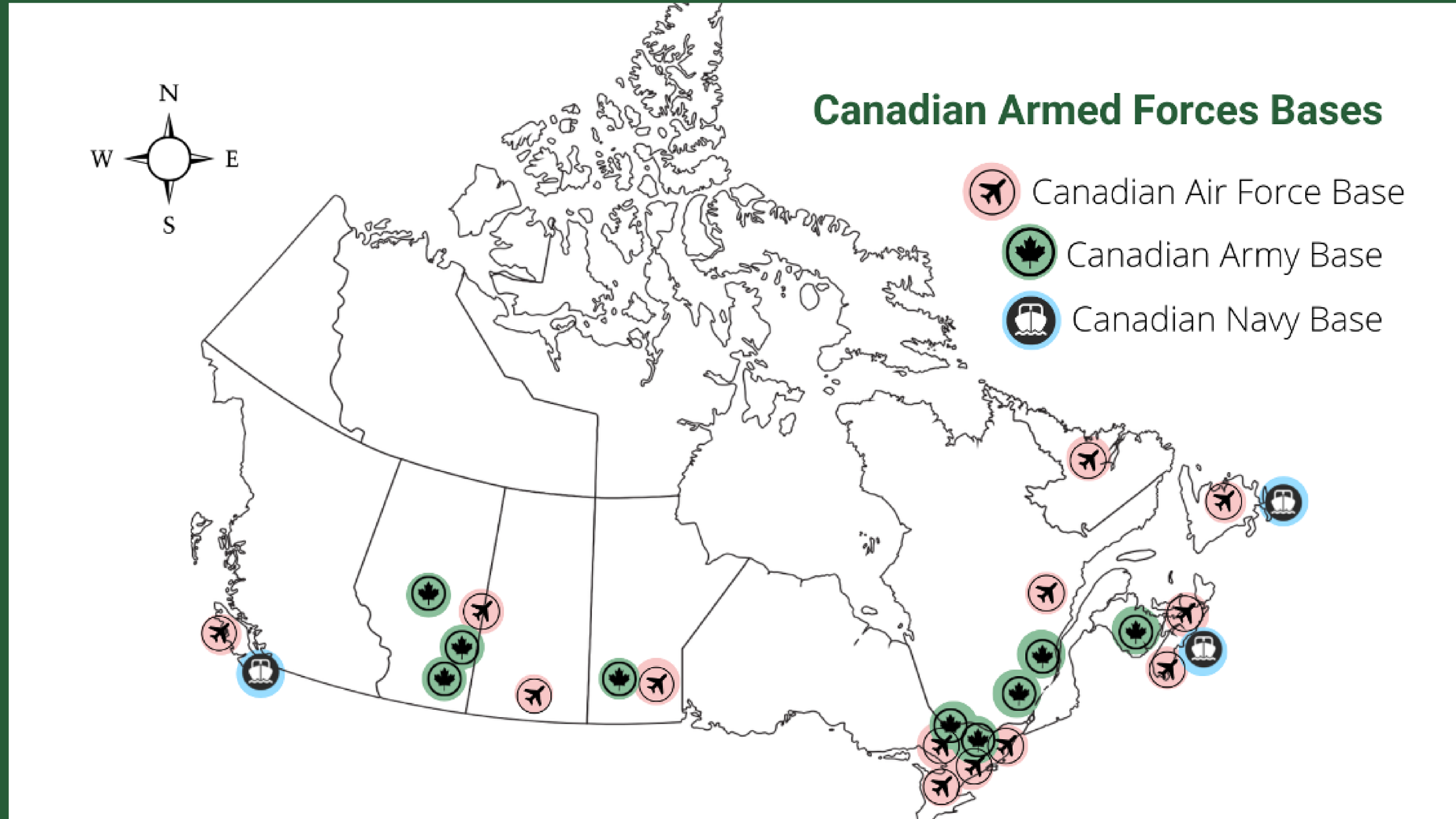
- Hierarchical
- Authority Based
- Chain of Command
- Ranks System

The Canadian Defence Team Personnel



The Defence Team is made up of about 125,000 personnel.

The Canadian Armed Forces Bases



Who is a Veteran?

Veterans Affairs Canada considers **any former member of the Canadian Armed Forces who releases with an honourable discharge and who successfully underwent basic training** to be a Veteran.

According to some former CAF members don't even see themselves as Veterans. Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) wants to change this and is working to ensure CAF Veterans receive the honour and recognition they have earned and so richly deserve.

PEACE75PAIX

Veterans' Week
November 5-11
Semaine des vétérans
5 au 11 novembre

EN FR

Veterans Affairs Canada Anciens Combattants Canada
VETERANS.GC.CA Canada



Canadian Military Culture

Military Culture

Military Culture is the sum total of all knowledge, beliefs, morals, customs, habits and capabilities acquired by service members and their families through membership in military organizations.

(Centre for Deployment Psychology, 2014)

Military Values, Ethics and Morals



U of A Values Statement

- Above all, we value intellectual integrity, freedom of inquiry and expression, and the equality and dignity of all persons as the foundation of ethical conduct in research, teaching, learning, and service.
- We value excellence in teaching, research, and creative activity that enriches learning experiences, advances knowledge, inspires engaged citizenship, and promotes the public good.
- We value learners at all stages of life and strive to provide an intellectually rewarding educational environment for all.
- We value academic freedom and institutional autonomy as fundamental to open inquiry and the pursuit of truth.
- We value diversity, inclusivity, and equity across and among our people, campuses, and disciplines.
- We value creativity and innovation from the genesis of ideas through to the dissemination of knowledge.

Strengths and Barriers

Strengths of Military Students

- Disciplined
- Organized
- Dedicated and Motivated
- Trained Leaders
- Trained team players
- Used to trainings, courses, and education
- Resilient and trained problem solvers
- Life experience and diverse perspectives
- Service oriented and growth-oriented mindset

Strengths and Barriers

Potential Barriers Experienced by Military Students

- Identity management (increased autonomy, societal role shift, communication norms, culture shock)
- Mental and physical health (caused by or aggravated by military service)
- Social connections (isolation and stigma)
- Cultural and Political differences
- Competing demands as mature students
- Increased obligations while going through the release process

For example:

Strengths

- Concise and to the point when speaking to classmates
- Strong work ethic- and highly determined to reach goal in face of challenges
- Team oriented- excels in group project and leadership skills, teaches others well
- Is often early or on time and prepared for meetings and respects people's time

Challenges

- May not know academic social norms and cues
- Different expectations regarding preparedness, information provided in class
- Mission oriented and prefers clear cut direct answers and information
- Values punctuality in others, administrative staff

A large, stylized letter 'A' is the central graphic element. It is filled with a bright yellow color and overlaid with white, wavy topographic contour lines. The 'A' is set against a dark green background that has a subtle, pixelated or mosaic-like texture. The letter is positioned on the left side of the image, partially overlapping a horizontal dark green bar that spans across the middle of the page.

Supporting Military and Veteran Students

Understanding Perspectives and Myths

An individual's cultural background, worldview, perception, and awareness of current events impacts their view of both their country's military and other militaries across the world.

Sometimes, this can make the campus a difficult environment for military and Veteran students. They may not wish to disclose their military experience for fear of being misunderstood or stereotyped by other students, faculty and staff.

Myths and Reality

There are many myths that exist about military members and veterans.

Myths

They join the forces to engage in combat and fighting.

Reality

In reality most missions involve things other than combat. Some examples are: supply drops, responses to natural disasters, training and capacity building, surveillance, peace-keeping, and support for international emergencies. (Government of Canada (National Defence), 2021)

In this day and age, many military members are far removed from the hand to hand combat you witness in the movies.

Myths

Reality

They are emotionless.

The reality is that military members serving and released experience the same emotions that you and I do; in some ways even more so due to the trauma they may have experienced or witnessed.

Military/ Veterans have limited education.

To join the Canadian Forces, you need a minimum of Secondary IV in Quebec or grade 10 education for the rest of Canada. If you wish to join the Forces as an officer, you need to have or be working toward a Bachelor's Degree.

The CAF offers continuous, ongoing training and courses which help members gain the knowledge and skills to excel in their roles.

Myths

Military / Veteran skills are often not transferable to the civilian world.

Veterans are conditioned to follow orders and therefore may lack initiative.

Reality

Having been in the military comes with a large number of skills that are transferable to the civilian world, such as: communication skills, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, organization, technical skills, adaptability, ability to perform under pressure, dedication, and research.

Service members are trained and expected to act on their own initiative consistent with their commander's intent; this empowerment breeds an independence, maturity, and confidence in decision-making that should appeal to any prospective employer.

Be aware of possible barriers to learning

Physical

- Past musculo-skeletal injuries
- Chronic pain
- History of concussion and other brain injuries

Mental Health

- Exposure to high stress
- Survivor's guilt
- Anxiety
- PTSD

Social

- Older than general student population
- Differences in culture and expectations

Communicate and enhance connection

Communication

- MMV students may have different communication styles.
- Allow for students to reach out to you in a 1:1 setting if they have questions or concerns.

Connections

Compassionate, trusting connections with students will increase the likelihood that they come to you when they are struggling or need support.

Recognize strengths and leadership skills



Effective leadership in the Canadian Forces is defined as: Directing, motivating, and enabling others to accomplish the mission professionally and ethically, while developing or improving capabilities that contribute to mission success.

Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada and others inspect the Honour Guard during the Governor General's visit at Ali Al Salem Air Base, in Kuwait on March 23, 2022.

Photo Credit: Sailor 1st Class Anne-Marie Brisson, Canadian Armed Forces photo

Other kinds of support for MMV Students

Flexibility

- Be flexible with students who approach you about mandatory deployments, trainings, etc.
- Be aware that it takes time to collect medical or other documentation from the military

Be familiar with campus and community resources

- Brush up on your knowledge of on campus resources, as well as a few military/veteran specific resources in our community



Medical Technician, Corporal Paquet Pelletier is deployed on Operation IMPACT at Camp Canada, Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait on 25 November 2021.

Photo credit: Sailor 1st Class Anne-Marie Brisson, Canadian Armed Forces photo

Consider adapting your syllabus

- Creating a syllabus that reflects awareness of student veterans as a student group can communicate your interest and respect for their service and success in school.
- One possibility is to include a veteran-friendly statement in your syllabus. This one has been used at a number of different universities: "Veterans and active duty military personnel with special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, disabilities) are welcome and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to the instructor."

Implement principles of Trauma Informed Care: Safety, Choice, Collaboration, Trust, Empowerment

- Provide clear messaging to students about their rights and responsibilities
- Establish and maintain professional boundaries in a respectful manner
- Common areas are welcoming and students feel supported
- Understand how trauma impacts learning

Looking for more information or have questions?

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