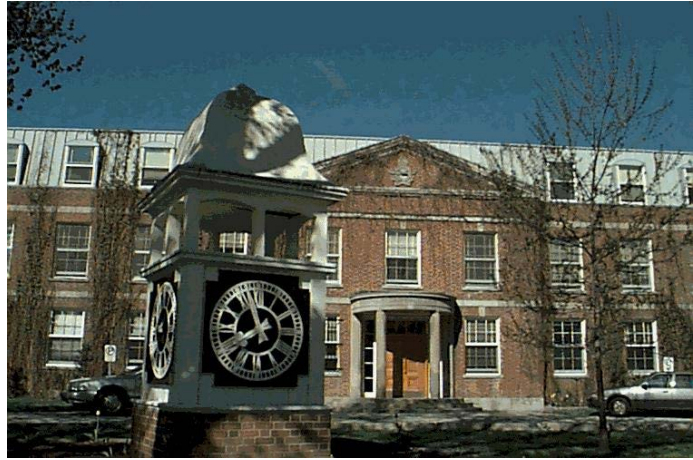


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FORCE GENERATING RESERVE MARS OFFICERS: KEEPING THE “ONE NAVY” READY AYE READY

Lieutenant-Commander Scott Nelson

JCSP 40

Exercise Solo Flight

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SOLO FLIGHT

**FORCE GENERATING RESERVE MARS OFFICERS:
KEEPING THE “ONE NAVY” READY AYE READY**

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Naval strength, is not the growth of a day, nor is it possible to retain it, when once acquired, without the utmost difficulty, and the most unwearied attention.¹
Sir John Sinclair - 1795

INTRODUCTION

The last ten years of combat in Afghanistan witnessed an unprecedented reliance on army reservists to augment regular units, in order to bring them to full strength prior to deploying. Though the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) experienced a similarly increased demand to deploy, in some cases, multiple surface combatants to the far reaches of the world during global war on terror, the navy was unable to leverage the personnel resources of the naval reserve in a similar manner as the army. Though there are many reasons for which reservists were unavailable to augment the regular navy during this time, the main reason is that the RCN's force generation model was and remains unaligned to provide trained personnel who can be employed in major surface combatants.

Maritime Command's (MARCOM) Leadmark: The Navy's Strategy for 2020 states: "The naval reserve does not exist solely as a basis for mobilization. Instead, its value is in the assignment to it of specified tasks within the Total Force, such as port security, naval control of shipping (NCS), manning the *Kingston* class ships and supplementing MCM detachments."² Long standing since the *1987 White Paper*, the idea of assigning niche roles to the naval reserve was at the time popular; however, this orientation is no longer accepted as a sustainable mission set. This ideological change has

¹ Sir John Sinclair, *Thoughts on the Naval Strength of the British Empire*, [1985] Second edition (London: T. Cadell, 1795), 13.

² Department of National Defence. *Leadmark 2020*. (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2001), 115.

become evident with the divestment of all reserve missions³ with the exception of the *Kingston* Class Maritime Coastal Defence Vessels (MCDV), which the reserve is now no longer able to man without regular force assistance. It has subsequently been decided that the Regular Force would instead assume responsibility for Port Security and Naval Control of Shipping whenever needed. Though the MCDVs will remain in service for some time, with no plan to replace them, a future role must be found for the naval reserve beyond that platform's service life.

In order to find such employment, force generation, specifically, Maritime Surface and Sub-Surface Officers (MARS), will have to train and qualify to the same standard as the regular force, thereby meeting the expectations of strategic operational reserve. In doing so, reserve MARS under a "one navy"⁴ construct, would be employable without restriction aboard all surface ships from Officer of the Watch (OOW) to Operations Room Officer (ORO). The idea of Total Force for the RCN, defined by Canadian Forces Publication (CFP) 219 allows a commander who is "cognisant of his missions and tasks to employ whatever mix of Regular, Reserve and Special Force members as necessary to accomplish the objective."⁵ Though the concept of "one navy" is still ill-defined in practical terms, it is becoming clear that it is to be understood as full augmentation across the components. The results of Strategic Planning Meeting II (SPM 2) and the newly reorganized MARS Officer Job Based Specification (JBS), suggest reserve MARS

³ D. MacArthur, *RCN Executive Plan Sub-Objective Force Generation 9 – Strategic Naval Reserve Master Implementation Plan* (NSHQ: 3317-1901-1(D Nav P&T 2-4/RDIMS 319249), January 2014), 4/10.

⁴ Department of National Defence, *Commander's Guidance and Direction to the Royal Canadian Navy: Executive Plan – 2013 to 2017* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2013), 6.

⁵ Vice-Admiral A. Bruce Donaldson, *Primary Reserve Employment Capacity Study (PRECS) Report 15 November 2011* (NDHQ: 1900-1 (CFD), 23 April 2012), 6.

officer training can be modified through the use of technology and distance learning (DL) processes to achieve the same qualification, while economizing on breadth. This type of training is however constrained by the availability of reservists to complete prolonged professional military training and therefore must fit within the allotment of annual reserve training days. The ultimate goal, however is a strategic reserve capable of being employed in class B/C positions at all levels of the navy when there is a need for augmentation.

THE NAVAL RESERVE

Finding its heritage largely in the Battle of the Atlantic, the Royal Canadian Naval Reserve (RCNR) and Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR) were the predecessors of the current reserve force. Throughout the Second World War, both reserve components executed significant missions of “total force” to support the war effort against the Axis. Though the military enrolled heavily into the reserves during the war, its intent was to allow for rapid demobilization following hostilities, not because the sailors originally desired to be principally part-time. Following the war, the RCN did indeed witness significant demobilization with the RCNR and RCNVR returning to that of a strategic reserve of citizen sailors, awaiting orders to be called to service in the defence of the nation. This concept of strategic reserve was significantly changed in the 1983 policy document titled, “The Structure of the CF – A Policy for the 1980s.” Later, in 1985, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) approved new missions for the Naval Reserve:

1. Manning of coastal, inshore and harbour surveillance vessels, and the shore units of the Maritime Coastal Defence Organization (MCDO);

2. Naval Control of Shipping (NCS) Organization;
3. Convoy Commodore Units;
4. Integrate with Regular Force in manning major fleet units;
5. Integrate with Regular Force in manning MCM [Mine Counter Measures] vessels; and
6. Integrate with Regular Force in manning FDUs [Fleet Diving Units].⁶

Recognizing that Canada no longer possessed a MCM capability, the 1987 Defence White Paper gave impetus for the Maritime Coastal Defence Vessels to be manned by the naval reserve.⁷ A follow-on MARCOM rewrite of naval reserve directives resulted in the highest priority for readiness being assigned to that of the coastal defence mission.⁸ After nearly a decade, a Naval Board decision of November 1993 and the associated terms of reference of 17 January 1994 established tasks and milestones to achieve focusing on this mission set. It was agreed to re-model the existing organization into a smaller yet more capable force, recognizing the additional readiness requirement of the then new MCDV project.⁹ The navy would require a significant quantity of resources both at sea and ashore to operate, manage, and sustain the twelve ship fleet; these resources would have to come at the cost of the other missions.

In the early years, this new mission enhanced the image of the reservist, demonstrating both the professionalism of the naval reserve and its role in the defence of the nation. As Commodore Blakely, a former commander of the naval reserve articulated:

⁶ Dale F Turetski, *Revolution in Naval Reserve Affairs* (NAVRESHQ: XXXX-XX (N1), June 2008), 1.

⁷ Bob Blakely, "Chapter 7," in *'This isn't your Dad's Naval Reserve anymore: Sharp-end Missions and Total Force, 1989-2010*, (n.p., 2010).

⁸ Turetski, *Revolution in Naval Reserve Affairs...*, 1.

⁹ *Ibid*, 2.

It seemed readily apparent to Reservists that, unlike the past when they had sailed off in antiquated museum pieces, they were actually perceived by the admirals as being as much “their sailors” as any regular force matelot might be. This recognition gave enormous, but largely unheralded, boost to the feelings of professionalism among the reserve sailors.¹⁰

Despite any perception that reservists were executing tasks equal to that of their regular force counterparts, it was in fact the mission to crew the MCDVs that caused the divergence in force generation practices from total force concept, resulting in the reserves being definitively incomparable to the regular force.

These policies have also led to many unanticipated problems and inequalities in competence for the RCN as a whole. A former N1 of the naval reserve commented: “While the assignment of unique missions and roles has created envy in some environments, it has also created a naval reserve sense of disenfranchisement and isolation from the Navy, CF writ large and, in some cases, vice-versa.”¹¹ He went on to accurately predict that if changes are not made “we will continue to see a degradation of the NR establishment, increasing dissatisfaction and sustained compartmentalization within both the Class A and Class B/C communities, continuing atrophy many of the NRDs, and future irrelevance of the NR.”¹² This disparity amongst the various classes of reserve employment lies at the root of many of the problems. Blakely has remarked: “The first ships [MCDVs] were crewed and commanded by Reservists who took time away from their professional practices or employment, and who performed extremely well.”¹³ Although the performance of reservists in operating the MCDV cannot be called

¹⁰ Blakely, *This isn't your Dad's Naval Reserve anymore...*, n.p..

¹¹ Turetski, *Revolution in Naval Reserve Affairs...*, 2.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Blakely, *This isn't your Dad's Naval Reserve anymore...*, n.p..

into question, Blakely's idea that reservists "temporarily" took time away from their civilian professional practices to crew the ships is fundamentally untrue. In October 2010, nearly 50% of all trained reservists were employed on full-time contracts.¹⁴ With a few notable exceptions and interestingly, contrary to the provisions of the *National Defence Act* (NDA), the majority of reservists crewing the MCDVs have turned the temporary nature of reserve employment into a full-time sea career. The act stipulates: "There shall be a component of the Canadian Forces, called the reserve force, that consists of officers and non-commissioned members who are enrolled for other than continuing, full-time military service when not on active service."¹⁵ This significant imbalance has essentially created two tiers within the naval reserve: *full-time* part-time sailors, and the *part-time* part-time sailors. This has helped cause the predicted atrophy of the NRDs by eliminating the opportunity to learn from the experiences gained at sea, because so few full-time members return to part-time service.

STRATEGIC PART-TIME RESERVE

The intense operational tempo of Afghanistan and the war on terror saw the regular force rely significantly on full-time reservists to augment deploying forces, or to backfill regular positions left vacant due to deployment. This idea of employing reservists on a temporary full-time manner is in keeping with the expectation of a reserve force as outlined by the NDA. With operations winding down, and speculation that full-time reserve positions had become untenable, the Deputy Minister and CDS ordered a full analysis of reserve employment. The Primary Reserve Employment Capacity Study

¹⁴ Department of National Defence. *Powerpoint: Naval Reserve Factoids*, (Quebec City: NAVRESHQ, November 2010).

¹⁵ National Defence Act, R.S.C., c N-5, s. 15(3) (1985).

(PRECS) Report was delivered in Spring 2012.¹⁶ The aim of the study was to “determine the number of full-time reservists that will be required to support the key activities of DND/CF in the post-Afghanistan period.”¹⁷ But it was also premised on the concept that “the primary reserve would continue to be offered rewarding military employment based primarily upon part-time service with occasional opportunities for full time service.”¹⁸ The lengthy analysis concluded that, at \$560 million per annum,¹⁹ “...the current model of a high level of full-time employment is unsustainable...”²⁰ It further warned that the use of reservists on long term contract was simply expanding the regular force establishment without government approval.²¹ PRECS recommended that the number of full-time reserve positions be cut nearly in half to a baseline of 4,500 positions.²² The CDS subsequently published his Primary Reserve Strategic Guidance: Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles in late 2012, which heralded the Primary Reserve as “a critical enabler of CF operational success,”²³ but reiterated that the “CF needs to review the current level of PRes full-time employment in favour of a re-invigorated part-time professional Res F.”²⁴ The idea of the reserve force being a predominately part-time service was echoed throughout the CDS’ guidance, including a vision for the reserves, guiding principles and the manner in which they will achieve their operational output.²⁵

¹⁶ Donaldson, *PRECS...*, 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

²² *Ibid.*, vii.

²³ General Tom J. Lawson, *Primary Reserve Strategic Guidance: Vision, Mission, & Guiding Principles*, (NDHQ 1901-260/0, 15 December 2012), 1/4.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 3/4.

The strategic directive to the environments is to nurture a reserve force based principally on part-time service, including force generation.

The CDS' direction was clearly understood by the RCN, and has subsequently been codified in the Commander's Guidance and Direction to the Royal Canadian Navy: Executive Plan – 2013-2017. In the section detailing how the RCN will support the CDS priority to "Prepare the CAF for Tomorrow," the Commander RCN directs the "realign[ment of] the Naval Reserve towards a traditional model of reserve service."²⁶

The commander goes on to detail exactly what his expectations are for this realignment:

1. at the strategic level, NAVRES is organized to train and prepare reservist to supplement the Regular Force at home and abroad through part-time and full-time service, as well as to strengthen public awareness of the RCN;
2. at the operational level, NAVRES is fully integrated into the RCN's Force Generation and Force Employment processes and structures; and
3. at the tactical level, NAVRES is functionally integrated within the Naval Training System for the purposes of delivering IT&E at the unit level, with Military Occupations (MOCs) centred in development of individuals and small teams with specialized seagoing competencies that are complementary to the Regular Force.²⁷

The executive plan demonstrates the commander's expectation that the naval reserve is to integrate fully their training processes, in order to force generate at the unit level, officers and NCMs for operations in seagoing competencies that are complementary to the regular force. This indicates that they must be able to serve alongside regular force sailors with similar or equal qualifications.

²⁶ DND, *Commander's Guidance and Direction to the RCN*, 3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

Two years earlier, SPM 2 laid the foundational work for the commander's expectation for reserve force employment. The three principle outputs of that process were:

1. The Naval Reserve is a strategic reserve primarily based on part-time service;
2. The Naval Reserve is based on sea-going service; and
3. The Naval Reserve will operate within a one-navy concept.

Given the onerous training requirements of a modern professional navy, arguably it might be easier for reservists to fill niche roles only, or exclusively man the MCDVs. This niche role concept was discussed during SPM2, but it was decided that, “the strategic naval reserve will not be assigned niche roles.”²⁸ Instead the reserve will be employed across the navy. The idea of “one navy” integration was made a key deliverable of the Executive Plan sub-objective dealing with the Strategic Reserve, requiring an end-state that “will define how the Naval Reserve will be employed in RCN Regular Force units in a way that is consistent with the roles, missions, and concepts of operations in those units.”²⁹ Augmentation of reservists aboard regular force platforms will reiterate “the role of NR is to support and sustain CF operations and force employment requirements, not to sustain the NR; i.e. the NR is a means to an end, not an end in itself.”³⁰ A US Department of Defence Directive on managing the Reserve Components echoes this sentiment: “...total force policies encourage optimum integration of active and reserve personnel to provide the most efficient training

²⁸ MacArthur, *RCN Executive Plan Sub-Objective Force Generation 9...*, 3/10.

²⁹ MacArthur, *RCN Executive Plan Sub-Objective Force Generation 9...*, 4/10.

³⁰ Turetski, *Revolution in Naval Reserve Affairs...*, 4.

opportunities... and provide the most operational benefits and mission capability.”³¹

Whereas over the last decade the naval reserve focused only on crewing the MCDVs, it left the regular force without a manning pool to draw from when preparing for a deployment. This forced units to seek out personnel from recently returned ships in order to fill positions prior to sailing, elevating the risk of burnout and attrition, ultimately affecting the mission of the navy.

RESERVE MARS FORCE GENERATION

The direction for naval reservists to serve alongside regular force members aboard major surface combatants is clear. However, herein lies the problem. How can a reserve MARS officer be employed aboard a major warship in anything but the most benign position, given the dramatic disparity in the qualification he/she holds compared to the regular force?

Again Commodore Blakely defends the professionalism of the naval reserve: “In personal terms it has entailed reservists getting over themselves and their biases, and overcoming a bias from their regular force partners that suggests reservists are not really qualified to do a job.”³² He goes on to explain how under the direction of Rear-Admiral Zuliani, himself a naval reservist, all reserve basic training became systematized and compatible with that of the regular force. He further posits that this change allowed regular and reserve sailors to complete basic training together thereby toppling the

³¹ Department of Defence. *Department of Defence Directive: Managing the Reserve Components as an Operational Force* (Washington D.C.: Pentagon, October 2008), 3.

³² Blakely, *This isn't your Dad's Naval Reserve anymore...*, n.p..

barriers between the two in creating the concept of a “Total Force Navy.”³³ Arguably, twelve weeks of training at the beginning of a twenty-five year career does not make a “Total Force Navy” nor does it topple barriers of perceived inequality of qualifications. In fact, the only way for reservists to be perceived as equally qualified as the regular force, is to be equally qualified as the regular force.

An examination of MARS human resource documentation demonstrates just how marked this inequality is, but also how it could be aligned with relatively minor adjustments. The first step in any officer’s career is that of basic training. As has already been discussed there no longer exists any difference between the two components, either regular or reserve; both achieve the same qualification. Until recently this training was the first and last qualification that was identical in the professional development of MARS officers, as each had separate platform-based phase training, meaning regulars trained on a frigate, whilst reservists trained on a MCDV. With the release of a new MARS Qualification Standard and Plan (QSP) in 2013, at the beginning of their career, all MARS officers are now trained to the same standard regardless of component.³⁴ This step forward is indeed encouraging in achieving a “one navy” force generation model. Equally encouraging is the idea that both components now complete the same introductory naval operations course as part of MARS IV phase training.³⁵ Prior to this change, there existed a Naval Reserve Operations Course (NROC), based on MCDV operations, taught at Canadian Forces Fleet School Quebec (CFFS(Q)), while regular force officers undertook the Naval Operations Course (NOC) at Canadian Forces Naval

³³ Blakely, *This isn't your Dad's Naval Reserve anymore...*, n.p..

³⁴ Department of National Defence. *Royal Canadian Navy Qualification Standard and Plan, MARS 00207, Maritime Surface and Sub-Surface 00207* (Ottawa: DND Canada, January 2013), 1-1.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, ii.

Operations School (CFNOS) in Halifax. Notwithstanding the similarity of training up to MARS IV, it is after this point that divergence in the profession takes place as it relates to force generation, and unfortunately equality of qualifications.

Upon first joining a ship following MARS IV, all junior officers undertake a training package to receive a Bridge Watchkeeping Certification. Granted by a ship's commanding officer, this qualification allows the individual to stand alone on the bridge in the role of Officer of the Watch (OOW). According to the MARS Job Based Specification (JBS), it is at this point that a reservist achieves the Operationally Functional Point (OFP), which in turn removes the officer from the Basic Training List (BTL) and permits promotion to the rank of Lieutenant (Lt(N)).³⁶ In contrast, a regular force officer, who may have completed the same MARS IV as the now promoted reservist, will have to complete a period of nearly two years consolidation time, before being evaluated orally and sometimes in simulation by a Naval Officer Professional Qualification (NOPQ) Board, before achieving their OFP to be promoted.^{37 38} This can sometimes mean a year in which a regular force officer will be subordinate in rank and pay to a former peer, despite the more rigorous demands of service at sea in a major warship. It is with this inequality that the previously mentioned biases are justly formed.

³⁶ Department of National Defence. *Canadian Forces Manual of Military Employment Structure Volume 2 Part 1 Officer Job Based Specification (JBS) for the Maritime Surface and Sub-Surface MARS 00207* (Ottawa: DND Canada, December 2012), 8/22.

³⁷ Department of National Defence. *Military Employment Structure Implementation Plan (MES IP) – Maritime Surface and Sub-Surface Occupation (MARS, MOSID 00207)* (Ottawa: DND Canada, December 2012), 5.

³⁸ DND, MARS JBS, 8/22.

Following the OFP, a regular force officer is expected to complete one of several director level (D-level) courses, each lasting over 100 training days.³⁹ Though reservists have in the past taken the fleet navigating officer (FNO) course, D-level training is not explicitly required by the JBS,⁴⁰ and in reality relatively few challenged it. Though most warfare D-levels cannot be employed aboard a MCDV, there is little reason why other reserve specific courses, such as mine warfare or coastal operations, could not have been developed into a D-level given the permanent nature of full-time reserve service at the time. Moreover, beyond this point in a reservist's career, professional coursing continues to diverge in its comparability to the regular force equivalent, while their requirement for promotion remains similarly less stringent.⁴¹ It is at this very early point in a reserve MARS officer's career, that they are effectively not equal to that of their regular force peers, and indeed serves to fuel the already discussed competency bias demonstrated by the regular force towards the reserve. This incongruence is most pronounced at the D-level, which is the point at which a MARS officer is either selected for the surface command specialty or allowed to continue to progress in the parent occupation.

The question remains, how will the RCN achieve the commander's intent of "one navy", with reserve officers serving aboard major warships, without undermining the credibility of the reserve force? The disparity in qualifications are readily apparent to a ship's company when a reserve Lt(N), acts as a Third Officer of the Watch (3OOW) under the supervision of his not-yet-promoted regular force former MARS IV classmate, exercising charge of a ship. The answer to this question is actually quite simple. At the

³⁹ Department of National Defence. *Royal Canadian Navy Qualification Standard and Plan 00207 – MARS Deck Officer, Qualification Code AEDS* (Ottawa: DND Canada, July 2013), 1.

⁴⁰ DND, MARS JBS, 8/22 – 9/22.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 9/22.

conclusion of SPM 2, Vice-Admiral McFadden published the commander's assessment of the outcomes of that process. Therein he highlighted that "a more flexible crewing approach was necessary" and indicated the need to "open all fleet platforms to both regular and reserve forces."⁴² If reserve MARS officers are to serve in all platforms following their MARS IV training, it should be expected that reservists be required to achieve the same qualifications as regular force counterparts. This would entail challenging the NOPQ in order to reach their OFP, as it is the minimum standard of demonstrative competency for a seagoing officer. This requirement is only logical if a reserve officer expects to be granted a BWK by a frigate captain, as he/she will be required to execute all the OOW functions of warfare associated to that platform, not simply those associated with a MCDV. Given that most reserve MARS officers are recruited while attending university, this training plan should be feasible during summer breaks and perhaps a short full-time contract following graduation to achieve NOPQ, before returning to part-time service.

The second aspect of the solution is to require all officers regardless of component to complete a D-level at some point in their career. Many would argue that this is impossible; however, as discussed, some reservists have completed the FNO course in the past. In fact it could be argued that it is possible for a reservist to complete any D-level, given a contract sufficiently long for the training and requisite period of experiential time at sea. This exact recommendation was once made by a former NAVRES N1, when he suggested "a fully integrated HR system that incorporates a "full

⁴² Vice-Admiral P. Dean McFadden, *Commander's Assessment of Outcomes of the Second Strategic Planning Meeting at Halifax, 4-7 December 2010* (MSHQ: 3371-1180-1 (DMSC / RDIMS# 209426), February 2011), 5/8.

time” and “part time” service construct that enables Regular and Reservists to move seamlessly between full and part service is essential, especially to the navy.”⁴³ This idea is not at all incongruent with the lengths of contracts currently being given to reservists today, many of which sign route letters for up to three years of full-time employment. This period of time would be more than sufficient to allow for the 4-6 months necessary to complete the D-level course, while allowing the officer 30-32 months to execute that role in a major warship at sea on operations. Upon gaining this valuable at sea experience the officer would be able share this knowledge with the part-time reservists upon returning to his/her home naval reserve division. It must be understood however, that being principally a part-time service, these types of full time contracts would only be given sparingly and based on clear need of the regular force to fill such a billet, and only when they could not do so with a regular force officer.

At the end of 2012, the RCN established an entirely new career model for MARS. It was recognized that “the focus of MARS training, development, mentorship and advancement has been almost exclusively on preparing officers to rise through positions, at progressively higher ranks, that lead to command-at-sea.”⁴⁴ Absent in the career structure was acknowledgement that only 1% of MARS officers ever attained command-at-sea. Following detailed study it was decided that the RCN would create a specialty for surface command, similar to that of submariner, and clearance diver.⁴⁵ Within this new structure it was determined that a MARS officer would initially join the profession in what would be known as the parent occupation. He/she would progress through the

⁴³ Turetski, *Revolution in Naval Reserve Affairs...*, 7.

⁴⁴ DND. *MES IP...*, 1.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

various qualifications up to D-level, at which point he/she would be selected for ORO training and assigned the specialty code for surface command specialty.⁴⁶ Similarly it was decided, “the primary Reserve will follow a comparable model, in which the primary work resides within the parent occupation, and there will be a single sub-occupation, Surface Ship Command.”⁴⁷ This new policy has unknowingly laid the framework to permit perfect alignment of the two components within the new MARS construct, by creating near parallel career structures that could be perfectly synchronized with a few minor changes.

Although some critics may contend that a reservist could never complete the ten months of ORO and associated Command Development Course to transition to the surface command sub-occupation, given the right circumstances, similar to the D-level argument, a reservist could do so with sufficient time permitted in a full-time contract. This way of course would not be the norm, but instead the exception, but in a “one navy” context it is possible. More likely would be that, following a successful D-level tour an officer either regular or reserve, could, while awaiting selection for ORO, be appointed Operations Officer of a Minor Warship. After acquiring sufficient competency in that platform, he/she may successfully challenge the minor warship command board and be placed into surface command specialty (Minor Warship Category). From there the officer could either go on to command a MCDV or undertake ORO training in order to transition to Major Warship Category. Should the RCN decide in the future that reservists be permitted to command the Arctic Offshore Patrol Ships (AOPS), a change in

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

nomenclature of command qualifications would be prudent, perhaps using coastal and combatant, rather than major and minor, to better describe the functions. In implementing the foregoing recommendations, the RCN would effectively create absolute parity in the MARS profession from enrollment until the ORO course, but more importantly it would allow reserve MARS to be looked upon as equals by their regular counterparts, capable of filling jobs as needed in the parent occupation at all levels.

MODULAR/COMPUTER-BASED TRAINING

There are dangers in demanding higher levels of competency. The Royal Australian Navy has experienced issues in retention when expecting more from their sailors in that it "...has become more difficult as many individuals have concluded they cannot meet additional demands of reserve service."⁴⁸ Given the mandate to maintain a strategic naval reserve that is based principally on part-time service, how can the RCN achieve parity in requiring reservists to complete a D-level, while existing predominantly in a part-time (Class A) employment setting? It has already been discussed how professional comparability can be achieved by using periodic full-time employment, but the solution to the part-time issue requires some degree of creativity in order to not exacerbate retention issues at the NRDs.

The key is to adopt a modular based training system that leverages technology in the form of distance learning and computer-based training (CBT). A regular force officer serving as N1 to the naval reserve made this same recommendation in 2008: "The naval

⁴⁸ Department of Defence. *Discussion Paper – The challenges and opportunities associated with achieving the appropriate balance between force structure (Full-Time and Reserve) and operational capability requirements* (n.p., n.d.), 1.

training systems are inefficient, class specific and not prepared to deal with the most massive fleet renewal program in the immediate future.”⁴⁹ He went on to recommend:

...that all naval training, where appropriate, be harmonized and become non-class specific... should move towards the modularization of all training and incorporation of modern distance learning (DL/E-Learning) tools to allow personnel ashore and at sea to complete courses (or parts thereof) without having to commit to long periods away...⁵⁰

In doing so the navy could export its training to satellite classrooms anywhere in the country or abroad, that could be challenged by any part-time reservist based on individual availability. The same officer astutely remarked: “The CFC [Canadian Forces College] supporting a DL version of the JCSP over two years is a testament as to what can be achieved with the proper support, stated desire and need.”⁵¹ JCSP is normally a yearlong programme, of ten courses comprising hundreds of individual activities, requiring students to participate in various activities. If distance learning can work here, it could be employed virtually anywhere. In fact, the army and air force both use DL and E-Learning extensively. Nearly 50% of the Army Operations Course is conducted by DL,⁵² while the RCAF’s Air Force Officer Development (AFOD) Programme is also done largely online.⁵³ Additionally, prospective students are expected to complete a 30-

⁴⁹ Turetski, *Revolution in Naval Reserve Affairs...*, 6.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Canadian Army Command and Staff College, “CACSC Army Operations Course,” last accessed 27 Apr 2014, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/training-establishments/command-staffcollege-aoc.page>.

⁵³ Major Jamie Davidson and Major Rainer Wosnitza, “The Air Force Officer Development Program: What’s it all About?,” *The Canadian Air Force Journal* 2, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 57.

day online pre-instruction package before commencing the Space Operations Course at the CF School of Aerospace Studies in Winnipeg.⁵⁴

This very idea forms part of the Commander RCN's Executive Plan direction, whereby two aspects of the RCN's support to CDS key efforts include: "advance renewal of the Navy Training System in support of CAF Individual Training & Education (IT&E) reform"⁵⁵ and "support/leverage enhanced use of simulation for training and experimentation."⁵⁶ As an example of what technology is capable of providing, the US Navy (USN) employs computer-based training methods as a means of teaching complex multi-threat warfare for its Tactical Action Officers (TAO), the US equivalent to the RCN's ORO. Although admittedly, a completely separate training model than the RCN's, TAO training is completed in only three months at their Surface Warfare Officers School (SWOS) in Rhode Island,⁵⁷ compared to nearly seven months at CFNOS in Halifax.⁵⁸ In renewing their naval training system, the US Navy (USN) has realized an unanticipated benefit to their new training tool. While attending SWOS, officers utilize the TAO Intelligent Tutoring System (TAO ITS) "to improve training through more active simulations without increasing the instructor to student ratio, thereby reducing overall costs without reducing training effectiveness."⁵⁹ Furthermore, "when the TAO ITS is sent to the fleet, the ships will be able to create/tailor scenarios specific to each

⁵⁴ Canadian Forces School of Aerospace Studies, "Space Operations Course," last accessed 27 April 2014, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/training-establishments/cf-school-aerospace-studies.page>.

⁵⁵ DND, *Commander's Guidance and Direction to the RCN*, 4.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁷ Richard H Stottler, *Tactical Action Officer Intelligent Tutoring System (TAO ITS)* (San Mateo CA: Stottler Henke Associates Inc., 2006), 3.

⁵⁸ Department of National Defence. *Royal Canadian Navy Qualification Standard and Plan, MOSID 00207, Maritime Surface and Sub-Surface Operations Room Officer Course, Qualification Code AEEU* (Ottawa: DND Canada, June 2013), 7/146.

⁵⁹ Stottler, *Tactical Action Officer Intelligent Tutoring System...*, 3.

ship's mission... giving commanding officers another tool to help fine tune skills and procedures..."⁶⁰ The second generation of TAO ITS called PC-based Open-architecture Reconfigurable Training System (PORTS TAO ITS), presents the user with a three dimensional multi-player virtual world complete with avatars and real-time communication amongst the users.⁶¹ This form of training could be highly useful in not only the reserve context but also the RCN writ large. It could be employed by those class A reservists in the pursuit of D-level training or by fleet operators to prevent skill fade, all the while making financial savings by not requiring custom built simulators such as Naval Combat Operator Trainer (NCOT), or requiring significant numbers of instructors.

In the reserve context, the idea of "bringing the training to the sailor through the creation of satellite training classrooms..."⁶² was one of the key outcomes of SPM2 in 2011. In the case of the Naval Reserve Divisions spread across the country, except in a few rare circumstances, each have a full time regular force MARS officer assigned to it, who could act as a facilitator for D-level training.⁶³ These regular force staff officers are all at least D-level trained, and in some cases are ORO qualified, making them more than suitable to assist students in understanding surface warfare theories and skills. Once a student's online learning is completed, the officer would be required to spend a period of time on the coast or at sea to have his/her competency validated by CFNOS' tactics division staff. An added benefit to the regular force of this form of training would see

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶¹ Ludwig, *et al.*, Interservice/Industry Training, Simulation, and Education Conference (I/ITSEC) 2010, *Integrating an Intelligent Tutoring System for TAOs with Second Life* (San Mateo CA: 2010 Paper No. 100087, 2010), 3 of 9.

⁶² McFadden, *Commander's Assessment of Outcomes of SPM2...*, 5/8.

⁶³ Lieutenant-Commander Cheryl King, MARS Career Manager, email message to author, April 15, 2014.

junior officers remain aboard for as long as possible, while completing pre-course instruction, before being sent to D-level courses. Those officers would reap the benefits of additional time at sea, which is fundamental to an officer's success in sea-going positions.

If this training approach is found too cost prohibitive or the proper security measures cannot be put in place at the NRDs to safeguard classified tactics and procedures, another alternative exists. Up until recently, deck officers of major warships were officers who had already completed a D-level, and were awaiting selection for ORO. For several reasons, in 2013, the RCN decided to restructure the deck officer course and position, establishing it as a D-level. An examination of the deck officer QSP demonstrates that the course is largely the same as the legacy, with the addition of Naval Boarding Party (NBP) and Force Protection (FP) Training.⁶⁴ A sizable portion of this course remains academic, amenable to DL format, with practical components that could be validated by the coastal Sea Divisions over short periods of reservist availability, over the summer or March break. The NBP and demolitions officer qualifications remain standalone courses taught at the fleet schools on either coast. In its current form, the deck officer QSP could be modularized in such a fashion that a class A part-time reservist could complete the majority of the course by DL, while accepting short term contracts to validate theoretical learning, or undertake the stand alone NBP/demolitions courses over a two year period. Nothing related to the deck officer's responsibilities is classified, and could therefore be easily trained at a NRD far from Canada's coastal formations. There, the students could make use of the NRD's organic small boats and Deck Department in

⁶⁴ DND. *MARS Deck Officer QSP*, 4.

concert with the training regime. This simple low cost solution permits any reservist to achieve a D-level using principally part-time employment. Furthermore it permits an officer to assume the responsibility of a deck officer on any platform in the RCN.

CONCLUSION

When SPM 2, was held on 1 Nov 2010, the naval reserve counted only 279 trained reserve MARS officers of the authorized total of 414, with an additional five releases in progress. In comparing other reserve officer professions, astonishingly, at the same time, Sea Logistics was authorized 102, with 92 filled and only one release in progress, while Intelligence Sea had 143 trained officers despite only being authorized for 133 positions.⁶⁵ From these figures it is not hard to assert that the current system of reserve MARS officer force generation is manifestly broken; it is only able to fill 66% of billets of the foundational officer profession of the RCN, and incidentally the only sea-going officer profession in the reserves.

In her study of the US Naval Reserve, Lieutenant Commander Gail A. Emow of the Naval Postgraduate School remarked how “Reservists often complained of boring, irrelevant, repetitive classroom training, obsolete equipment, and make-work assignments in the Reserve Center. The reservists called for more hands-on training with active forces.”⁶⁶ Similarly, a British study has also found that reservists leave because they find it “...no longer a challenge.”⁶⁷ It can be assumed that Canadian reservists, if

⁶⁵ DND. *Powerpoint: Naval Reserve Factoids*.

⁶⁶ Gail A. Emow, A Comparative Analysis of Naval Surface Reserve Force Training and Relevance of the training and administration of reserve (TAR) program.

⁶⁷ United Kingdom. National Audit Office. *Ministry of Defence: Reserve Forces* (London: The Stationery Office, March 2006), 2.

asked, would put forward similar complaints. It will only be through the full integration of reserve MARS officers into a “one navy” construct, that the RCN will achieve a truly operationally relevant strategic reserve force. Demanding parity of qualifications for both regular and reserve will bring manning flexibility to the fleet, whilst providing part-time reservists challenging training and employment opportunities in stimulating sea going positions.

The present naval reserve force generation model for MARS officers is not fulfilling its mandate of supplying officers capable of working alongside the regular force in a principally part-time strategic reserve context. The current system is unsustainable and incapable of functioning in the strategically mandated “one navy” concept. These issues can, however, be remediated in order to create professional parity of the naval reserve with the regular force, that is congruent with the newly established MARS JBS. This approach will require some enhancements to training opportunities for reservists both in a full-time and part-time setting. Training practices such as course modularization, DL, and advanced simulations offer not only added benefit to training the strategic reserve, but also to the regular force in reducing skill fade alongside, while minimizing the overall cost of training to the institution. With a few, albeit not insignificant changes to the manner in which the naval reserve generates its MARS officers, it will be ready to augment the regular force when operations such as those during the war on terror threaten to overstrain the RCN. In doing so the reserves will be as identical a partner in the defence of the nation as any equal could be.

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