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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE / COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES  
CSC 33 / CCEM 33

EXERCISE/EXERCICE NEW HORIZONS

**Promoting Leaders Versus Managers: Why the Merit System Needs to Be Refocussed**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In 1993 and in 1994, the CF was embarrassed by deployed personnel during operations in Somalia and by a CO of one of its submarines. Both cases were regarded as failures in leadership. In 1998, the Somalia Board of Inquiry released its findings and recommendations which were implemented into the CF appraisal and merit system. This paper contests that the appraisal and merit system is no better at assessing and promoting its best leaders than it was before the Somalia Inquiry. It argues that the system is best suited to promote managers instead of leaders and that this failure needs to be addressed.

The paper recommends that the appraisal system be revised to reflect the current CF Leadership Doctrine as defined in *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Doctrine and Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*. It also recommends that the PER be revised to emphasize leadership skills separately from management skills. Finally, it recommends that a 360-feedback system be used to assess the leadership of personnel from a bottom-up approach in order to support a strong assessment or expose a flawed judgement of the top-down assessment in the PER.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 1993, the Canadian Forces were embarrassed by the behavior of its Airborne Regiment during operations in Somalia. The subsequent inquiry into the incident found that one of the major faults was poor leadership in the Regiment before the deployment as well as during the operation that led to the incident of a Somali national being immorally killed by members of the regiment.<sup>1</sup>

In 1994, the Canadian Navy was duly embarrassed by one of its submarine's commanding officers as he was court-martialed for abusing junior officers and the crew of the submarine he commanded. This CO was publicly described as "the worst example of leadership I've ever seen"<sup>2</sup> and life aboard the submarine, often referred to as the "death boat," was described as a reign of terror.<sup>3</sup>

The CF Appraisal and Merit System was revised in 1998 in consideration of the recommendations made by the Somalia Inquiry. Even so, as recently as 2005, in a matter of 12 months, a certain Wing witnessed one squadron referring to the eventual departure of their Commanding Officer as "The End of the Reign of Terror", another squadron counting down the days to the replacement of their Commanding Officer with the anticipation that it could only be better once he left, and a senior administration officer being stripped of three medals that he had applied for and received without entitlement and who had at least two known harassment charges laid against him by the time he was posted to a new location.

Though this is not to say that all senior officers in the Canadian Forces lack leadership, it is evident that some individuals who attain positions of leadership do not have the defined set of

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<sup>1</sup> Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia, *Dishonoured Legacy: The Lessons of the Somalia Affair Volume 1* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government of Canada, 1997), 343.

<sup>2</sup> CP, "Seaman testifies submarine's commander made life 'a living hell,'" *Calgary Herald*, 12 October 1995, A.17; <http://proquest.umi.com>; Internet; accessed 15 November 2006.

skills and attributes required to be leaders of the men and women in the Canadian Forces. The first two examples became publicly known through the media, the third set of examples has not been made public. It can be surmised that many more examples of poor leadership exist without their being exposed.

Until recently, transition to war was lengthy enough to provide time to relieve large numbers of unfit officers before the campaign began. Now, we can assume that the transition-to-war period will be very short<sup>4</sup> as was evident with NATO in Kosovo and in the war on terror in Afghanistan. In Kosovo, General Wesley Clark, whose career is described as “successful manipulation of appearances: faking the results of combat exercises, greasing to superiors and other practices,” and who never earned the respect of his subordinates<sup>5</sup> almost started WWIII. It was only for the sound judgement of British Commander General Mike Jackson, whose career is balanced with military courses, staff duties and operational tours and who was highly respected by his followers,<sup>6</sup> that prevented this from happening. With the war on terror being projected to continue for several more years, it is important that a merit system successfully promote its best leaders in order to avoid fatal errors in judgement.

The appraisal and merit system presently used in the CF fails to place its primary focus on leadership when determining the promotion list. As it is presently implemented, the current

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<sup>3</sup> Newswire, “Ex-captain of Ojibwa charged with abuse,” *Times – Colonist*, 20 July 1994, 1; <http://proquest.umi.com>; Internet; accessed 15 November 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Lieutenant General Walter F. Ulmer, Jr, “Introduction,” in *The Challenges of Military Leadership*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews and Dale E. Brown, xi-xviii (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey’s International Defense Publishers, 1989), xiii.

<sup>5</sup> Stella Jatras, “Wesley Clark: The Guy Who Almost Started World War III,” <http://www.antiwar.com/orig/jatras12.html>; Internet; accessed 16 April 2007.

<sup>6</sup> The British Army, “General Sir Mike Jackson assumes the appointment of Chief of the General Staff with effect from Monday 3 February 2003,” <http://www.army.mod.uk/news/cgs/>; Internet; accessed 16 April 2007.

system places more weight on managerial skills than on leadership skills. It is acknowledged that possessing managerial skills is important to succeed in the military; however, the leadership skills of a commander at any level remain the key factor in the success or failure of any operation. As the CF continues to be involved in more demanding operations, promotion to command positions must be reserved for those who demonstrate outstanding leadership skills. This will only happen if the CF refocuses its appraisal and merit system to identify and promote leaders rather than managers.

This paper will begin by laying out what are acknowledged differences in attributes between leaders and managers. It will then assess the present merit appraisal system against the attributes of managers and leaders to determine which type of individual is favoured. Recommendations of how the system could be possibly improved towards promoting leaders ahead of managers are then discussed.

## **LEADERS VERSUS MANAGERS**

All too frequently, leaders and managers, or leadership and management, are used synonymously or as interchangeable concepts.<sup>7</sup> This has sparked a debate in many organizations around the world with much literature now in print explaining the fundamental differences and perceived similarities between the two concepts. But there is definitely a very distinct difference in both the characteristics and attributes that make a good leader and a successful manager.

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<sup>7</sup> Brian M. Sullivan, "Leadership vs Management," *management-issues at the heart of the changing workplace* 21 Jun 2006; <http://www.management-issues.com/2006/6/22/opinion/leadership-vs-management.asp>; Internet; accessed 15 November 2006.

The following definitions are common in most dictionaries:

Leader: somebody who guides or directs others;

Leadership: the ability to guide, direct, or influence people;

Manager: somebody who is responsible for directing and controlling the work and staff of a business, or of a department within it; and

Management: the organizing and controlling of the affairs of a business or a sector of a business.<sup>8</sup>

The most significant difference that is to be determined from these definitions is that leading is about people and managing is about things or businesses.<sup>9</sup> Though it is often-heard that both managers and leaders have subordinates, this is not true. Managers have subordinates; leaders have followers.<sup>10</sup>

In *On Becoming a Leader*, Warren Bennis makes a point that leaders learn through education and managers learn through training. That may initially seem inaccurate till you consider what the difference between education and training are:

Education: inductive, tentative, dynamic, understanding, ideas, broad, deep, experiential, active, questions, process, strategy, alternatives, exploration, discovery, active, initiative, whole brain, life, long-term, change, content, flexible, risk, synthesis, open, imagination;

Training: deductive, firm, static, memorizing, facts, narrow, surface, rote, passive, answers, content, tactics, goal, prediction, dogma, reactive, direction, left brain, job, short-term, stability, form, rigid, rules, thesis, closed, common sense.<sup>11</sup>

In comparing the two lists, it is easy to see that, according to Bennis, we presently get education and therefore develop leadership through exploration and discovery in life experiences, and get

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<sup>8</sup> Encarta. <http://encarta.msn.com/enenet/features/dictionary/dictionaryhome.aspx>; Internet; accessed 20 November 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Proactive Leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, "Leadership And Management Are Not The Same," <http://www.leadershiphelp.com/introduction.cfm?show=1>; Internet; accessed 15 November 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Changing Minds.org, "Leadership vs. Management," [http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/articles/manager\\_leader.htm](http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/articles/manager_leader.htm); Internet; accessed 16 November 2005.

training or managerial skills through our schooling in a static, predictable and stable atmosphere.

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## **Managers and Management**

A business which is working to be as profitable as it can be will hire the best managers that it can find. The skills that are preferred in managers are those that will enhance the bottom line. These desired skills are administrative, planning and organizational and “downward” communication in nature wherein the manager listens to his superiors and relays instructions to his subordinates.

Hired to be a manager in a business, an individual is in charge of a group of subordinates. This does not in itself make him a leader. The hierarchy of a business is clear to all of the employees, managers and workers alike. They are all given specific job descriptions and are rewarded for completing the tasks assigned in the form of a salary.<sup>13</sup> The manager is the acknowledged supervisor who gives direction and approves the work completed by the subordinates. It is understood by subordinates that failure to complete the tasks assigned can lead to dismissal by the manager. Reaction by the subordinates because of bribery (in the form of a salary) or fear (of dismissal) does not constitute leadership.<sup>14</sup> Beyond this, the relationship between the manager and his subordinates is unimportant to the overall success of the business.

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<sup>11</sup> Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co, 1989), 45-46.

<sup>12</sup> Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co, 1989), 45-46.

<sup>13</sup> Changing Minds.org, “Leadership vs. Management,” [http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/articles/manager\\_leader.htm](http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/articles/manager_leader.htm); Internet; accessed 16 November 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Lieutenant General Walter F. Ulmer, Jr, “Introduction,” in *The Challenges of Military Leadership*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews and Dale E. Brown, xi-xviii (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey’s International Defense Publishers, 1989), xii.

Furthermore, managers are also employees of the business and can be dismissed for poor performance just like his subordinates. Therefore, his focus tends to be upwards to his own supervisors, making sure they are satisfied with his performance. He looks for their direction, tends to ask how and when, and will do things within a set of rules or guidelines dictated by the business.<sup>15</sup> He will perform in accordance with the training he received because that is what is expected of him, why he was hired. He will not take unnecessary risks and will discourage his subordinates of taking risks.<sup>16</sup>

### **Leaders and Leadership**

Leadership is all about people. A true leader will attract followers who will be dedicated to him through the hardest of times. He will display qualities of courage, integrity, determination, honesty, loyalty and responsibility for his people through his actions. His followers will be inspired by the leader and will place all of their trust in him. A true leader always considers his people when planning to take on a task. This is not to say that he will refuse a task because it is not safe for his people; instead, he will consider their well-being when deciding on the best course of action.

A leader will ask why and what, and pertinent probing questions inciting debate and discussion.<sup>17</sup> He will also invite input from his followers into a plan, consider all of their expertise and make them feel like it is the team's plan and that they are a part of it. A leader does not follow a strict set of rules and guidelines. He will show innovation when confronted

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<sup>15</sup> Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co, 1989), 45.

<sup>16</sup> Warren Blank, *The 9 Natural Laws of Leadership* (New York, New York: Amacom, 1995), 16.

<sup>17</sup> Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co, 1989), 45.

with a dilemma and take risks to find a solution.<sup>18</sup> He is not discouraged by failure but learns from his experience and forges ahead.<sup>19</sup> He also encourages his followers to take risks, gives them credit for their successes and takes responsibility for their failures.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore it can be seen that having subordinates does not make one a leader. Leaders have followers; following is a voluntary activity. A true leader motivates and influences his followers to do what needs to be done. A leader must appeal to his followers influencing them to want to follow him enough that they are willing to do things that they would not normally do. It is through his leadership that people look up to the leader, are inspired by him and trust him that they choose to *follow* him even in situations involving a high element of risk.

### **Leadership in the Military**

The differences between leaders and managers noted above are distinct and easily apply to the civilian business sector. But a leader in the military needs even more. In his time, Field Marshall Sir William Slim identified five attributes that were necessary to be a successful commander and leader: willpower or determination, judgment and a willingness to make decisions, flexibility of mind to change a decision, knowledge and integrity.<sup>21</sup> From the same era, General Omar Bradley lists the distinguishing qualities of a leader as knowing his job, getting around and showing interest in what their subordinates are doing, possessing mental and

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<sup>18</sup> Michael S. Wade, *Leadership's Adversary: Winning the War between Leadership and Management* (Huntington, New York: Nova Science, 2002), 3.

<sup>19</sup> Warren Blank, *The 9 Natural Laws of Leadership* (New York, New York: Amacom, 1995), 16-17.

<sup>20</sup> Changing Minds.org, "Leadership vs. Management," [http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/articles/manager\\_leader.htm](http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/articles/manager_leader.htm); Internet; accessed 16 November 2005.

<sup>21</sup> Field Marshall William Slim, *Higher Command in War*, Transcript of 1952 address to the US Army Command and General Staff College, (New York: Brown University Press, 1999), 9-16

physical energy, possessing human understanding and consideration for others, being at times stubborn, having confidence in themselves, possessing imagination and having character.<sup>22</sup>

Today, the Canadian Forces Leadership Doctrine states:

What clearly sets military command apart from management are the unique authorities of military commanders to resort to large-scale lethal force, to compel subordinates to go into harm's way, and to dispense a distinct military justice with substantial powers of punishment.<sup>23</sup>

Chief of Defence Staff, General Rick Hillier further defines effective CF leadership as “directing, motivating, and enabling others to accomplish the mission professionally and ethically, while developing or improving capabilities that contribute to mission success.”<sup>24</sup>

All of the above attributes that best make up a successful military leader are summarized in *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations* which lists five effectiveness dimensions with associated responsibilities:

Effectiveness Dimensions	Major Leadership Functions	
	Leading People	Leading the Institution
Mission Success	Achieve professional competence & pursue self-improvement. Clarify objectives & intent. Solve problems; make timely decisions. Plan & organize; assign tasks. Direct; motivate by persuasion, example, & sharing risks and hardships. Secure & manage task resources. Train individuals & teams under demanding & realistic conditions.	Establish strategic direction & goals. Create necessary operational capabilities (force structure, equipment, command & control). Exercise professional judgment in relation to military advice & use of forces. Reconcile competing obligations & values, set priorities, & allocate resources. Develop the leadership cadre.
Internal Integration	Structure & co-ordinate activities; establish standards & routines. Build teamwork & cohesion.	Develop a coherent body of policy. Support intellectual inquiry & develop advanced doctrine.

<sup>22</sup> Omar N. Bradley, “On Leadership.” In *The Challenges of Military Leadership*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews and Dale E. Brown, 3-9 (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey’s International Defense Publishers, 1989), 5-8.

<sup>23</sup> Department of National Defence. *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Doctrine* (Canadian Defence Academy – Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2005), 7.

<sup>24</sup> General Rick Hillier, “Foreword,” in *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Doctrine*, (Canadian Defence Academy – Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2005), iii.

	<p>Keep superiors informed of activities &amp; developments.</p> <p>Keep subordinates informed; explain events &amp; decisions.</p> <p>Understand &amp; follow policies &amp; procedures.</p> <p>Monitor; inspect; correct; evaluate.</p>	<p>Manage meaning; use media &amp; symbolism to maintain cohesion &amp; morale.</p> <p>Develop &amp; maintain effective information &amp; administrative systems.</p> <p>Develop &amp; maintain audit &amp; evaluation systems.</p>
Member Well-being & Commitment	<p>Mentor, educate, &amp; develop subordinates.</p> <p>Treat subordinates fairly; respond to their concerns; represent their interests.</p> <p>Resolve interpersonal conflicts.</p> <p>Consult subordinates on matters that affect them.</p> <p>Monitor morale &amp; ensure subordinate well-being.</p> <p>Recognize &amp; reward success.</p>	<p>Accommodate personal needs in professional development/career system.</p> <p>Enable individual &amp; collective mechanisms of voice.</p> <p>Ensure fair complaint resolution.</p> <p>Honour the social contract; maintain strong QOL &amp; member-support systems.</p> <p>Establish recognition &amp; reward systems.</p>
External Adaptability	<p>Maintain situational awareness; seek information; keep current.</p> <p>Anticipate the future.</p> <p>Support innovation; experiment.</p> <p>Learn from experience &amp; those who have experience.</p> <p>Develop effective external relationships (joint, inter-agency, multi-national).</p>	<p>Gather &amp; analyze intelligence; define future threats &amp; challenges.</p> <p>Initiate &amp; lead change.</p> <p>Foster organizational learning.</p> <p>Master civil-military relations.</p> <p>Develop external networks &amp; collaborative strategic relationships.</p> <p>Conduct routine external reporting.</p>
Military Ethos	<p>Seek and accept responsibility.</p> <p>Socialize new members into CF values/conduct system, history, &amp; traditions.</p> <p>Exemplify and reinforce the military ethos; maintain order &amp; discipline; uphold professional norms.</p> <p>Establish climate of respect for individual rights &amp; diversity.</p>	<p>Clarify responsibilities; enforce accountabilities.</p> <p>Develop &amp; maintain professional identity; align culture with ethos; preserve CF heritage.</p> <p>Exemplify and reinforce the military ethos; develop &amp; maintain military justice system.</p> <p>Establish an ethical culture.</p>

Department of National Defence, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations* (Canadian Defence Academy – Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2005), Table 4-1, 48-49.

This table provides an excellent base to assess the leadership potential of a military officer in today's military forces.

### **THE MERIT SYSTEM APPLIED TODAY**

The present merit system in place today has three levels of review: Unit, Base, Wing or Formation (for ease of purpose and familiarity, from here on in referred to as Wing only) and National. The member's unit writes a Personnel Evaluation Report (PER) on the individual.

This PER is forwarded to the Wing merit boards where it is assessed against other individuals of the same rank and trade. Once the Wing signs off on the PER, then it is forwarded to the National level where it is assessed at the National Merit Boards to determine the merit listing. All input to the assessments and ratings are conducted by supervisors with no input from peers and subordinates.

### **The PER**

The PER assesses the individual's performance in his present rank against seventeen assessment factors (AFs) and his potential for promotion to the next rank against six potential factors (PFs). The AFs are further categorized under Leadership, Personal Abilities, Communication Skills and Professional Abilities.<sup>25</sup> Each AF and PF are described in the CFPAS Handbook to help the author of the PER assess the individual in accordance with the desired performance.

Four AFs are associated with Leadership: Supervising, Evaluating and Developing Subordinates, Team Building and Leading Change. Of these, the descriptions of Evaluating and Developing Subordinates, Team Building and Leading Change are all in agreement with the Effectiveness Dimensions listed in *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*. But the description provided for Supervising is more the description one would make of the skills of a manager. In fact, its description, "directing the work of subordinates"<sup>26</sup> is the exact words of those of the definition of a manager cited earlier. As well, "setting and enforcing standards and ensuring completion of work"<sup>27</sup> is a description similarly attributed to a

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<sup>25</sup> Department of National Defence, *CFPAS 2006: CFPAS Handbook* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2006), 302.

<sup>26</sup> Department of National Defence, *CFPAS 2006: CFPAS Handbook* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2006), 302.

<sup>27</sup> Department of National Defence, *CFPAS 2006: CFPAS Handbook* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2006), 302.

manager by Warren Blank, President of the Leadership Group: “They see that orders are carried out, and they control people and systems to ensure assigned duties are completed.”<sup>28</sup> It is a manager who is responsible for "maintaining discipline by ensuring subordinates comply with CF policies, regulations, and orders."<sup>29</sup> If this was written to apply to a leader, it would most probably read, “maintaining discipline by *influencing followers* to comply with CF policies, regulations, and orders.” It requires more than just enforcing rules and regulations to acquire discipline; it requires a leader to set the good example thereby inspiring his men to follow suit and to take pride in themselves.<sup>30</sup> A final note on the description of Supervising, "subordinates" is referred to in three of the four points. As stated earlier, subordinates belong to managers; leaders have followers.<sup>31</sup>

The second category Personal Abilities has five AFs related to it: Working with Others, Problem Solving, Decision Making, Effectiveness under Demanding Circumstances and Initiative. Of the four categories, Personal Abilities, as described in the CFPAS Handbook, is the most in line with a leadership aspect. Working with Others is described as "respecting others" and "contributing to team performance and supporting team goals."<sup>32</sup> Leaders respect that they are not above or better than followers but they work with them to form effective teams in fulfilling the aim of a mission.<sup>33</sup> Problem solving, Decision Making and Effectiveness Under

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<sup>28</sup> Warren Blank, *The 9 Natural Laws of Leadership* (New York, New York: Amacom, 1995), 212-213.

<sup>29</sup> Department of National Defence, *CFPAS 2006: CFPAS Handbook* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2006), 302.

<sup>30</sup> Samuel Lyman Atwood Marshall, *The Armed Forces Officer* (S.I.: Marine Corps Association, 1989), 139-141.

<sup>31</sup> Changing Minds.org, “Leadership vs. Management,” [http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/articles/manager\\_leader.htm](http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/articles/manager_leader.htm); Internet; accessed 16 November 2005.

<sup>32</sup> Department of National Defence, *CFPAS 2006: CFPAS Handbook* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2006), 302.

<sup>33</sup> Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: theory and practice* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 2001), 4, 9.

Demanding Circumstances are all described similarly to the Effectiveness Dimension of Mission Success. Initiative speaks of taking appropriate action and being a self-starter, attributes easily associated with a good leader. Initiative means action and people will follow someone who takes ingenious action when faced with a new realm.<sup>34</sup>

The third category, Communication Skills, taken at face value, can usually be associated with either leadership or management. But as they are described in the CFPAS Handbook, they discriminate towards a management perspective. Verbal communication is described as "speaking in different settings" and "understanding and interpreting verbal orders, information, advice and feedback."<sup>35</sup> Written communication is similarly described as "content and quality of writing" and "understanding and interpreting written information."<sup>36</sup> Neither of these descriptions conforms to the Effectiveness Dimensions of Internal Integration or Member Well-being and Commitment. Instead they speak more to how a manager in a business would be assessed by his superiors. To be a capable leader who gets the desired results, it is essential to use clarity, consistency and effective communications.<sup>37</sup> Through their communications, good leaders impart energy and inspire their followers.<sup>38</sup>

In the final category, Professional Abilities, there are six AFs. Of these, Resource Management, Accountability and Reliability all describe the attributes of a good manager than of a good leader. By definition, resource management is purely how to best utilize the resources at

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<sup>34</sup> Warren Blank, *The 9 Natural Laws of Leadership* (New York, New York: Amacom, 1995), 86.

<sup>35</sup> Department of National Defence, *CFPAS 2006: CFPAS Handbook* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2006), 302.

<sup>36</sup> Department of National Defence, *CFPAS 2006: CFPAS Handbook* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2006), 302.

<sup>37</sup> Brian M. Sullivan, "Leadership vs Management," *management-issues at the heart of the changing workplace* 21 Jun 2006; <http://www.management-issues.com/2006/6/22/opinion/leadership-vs-management.asp>; Internet; accessed 15 November 2006.

<sup>38</sup> John Adair, *Great Leaders* (Surrey, England: The Talbot Adair Press, 1989), 122.

hand by “setting priorities, establishing processes, overseeing the execution of tasks and measuring progress against expectations,” all of which defines the role of a manager.<sup>39</sup>

Accountability and reliability, as described, "being answerable for personal decisions and actions and for the decisions and actions of subordinates" and "dependability, consistency, timeliness, quantity, and quality of work"<sup>40</sup> are both describing managerial styles. The description of reliability lists qualities that are suited to maximize production, the bottom-line, which is associated with a manager and not a leader.<sup>41</sup> Conversely, one might argue that the description of accountability is leadership therefore providing a balance with management skills, but “being answerable,” or being able to explain one's decisions and actions is management, “taking responsibility” for ones decisions is leadership. Great leaders of our past were prepared to take and, in failure, took the blame:

“Our landings have failed and I have withdrawn the troops. ... The troops, the air and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault is attached to the attempt it is mine alone.” (General Eisenhower’s prepared press release in case of failure in D-Day landings)

“The blame I take entirely upon my shoulders and I expect to suffer for it. Accidents cannot be helped. As much of the plan as was defective falls justly on me.” (General Wolfe after the failure of his first attack on Quebec)<sup>42</sup>

They were willing to accept responsibility for failure when their followers were unable to achieve mission success.

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<sup>39</sup> James Colvard, “Managers vs. Leaders” *GOVEXEC.COM Outlook* July 7, 2003; <http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0703/070703ff.htm>; Internet; accessed 16 November 2005.

<sup>40</sup> Department of National Defence, *CFPAS 2006: CFPAS Handbook* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2006), 302.

<sup>41</sup> Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co, 1989), 47.

<sup>42</sup> John Adair, *Great Leaders* (Surrey, England: The Talbot Adair Press, 1989), 81.

The CFPAS Handbook measures Applying Job Knowledge / Skills as “performing duties and tasks in accordance with applicable NCM, officer, and MOS specifications.”<sup>43</sup> This is not enough to be a leader; an individual must excel in order to truly lead his followers. They must be inspired to become as good as he is, not just average. In the words of Xenophon, the great Greek leader of 400BC, “human beings are most willing to obey those whom they believe to be the best.”<sup>44</sup> But beyond his own personal knowledge and skills, he must also have knowledge in all aspects of the duties of their followers; through this, he truly gains the respect of those he leads.<sup>45</sup>

The final two AFs in this category, Ethics and Values and Conduct On or Off Duty can be said to support both managers and leaders. It must be noted that it is only till AF16 Ethics and Values that we find reference to the characteristics most often said to be important in a strong leader, “integrity, loyalty, courage, honesty, fairness and responsibility.”<sup>46</sup> All six of these qualities are grouped under one AF, receiving the same weight in the assessment as the sixteen other AFs and could be interpreted as less meaningful, being listed next to last. Yet, integrity, loyalty and courage are looked upon as three highly important values for the profession of arms.<sup>47</sup> It is also important to note that before 1998, Integrity, Loyalty and Courage were individual items in the PER under Professional Attributes thereby carrying more weight in the overall assessment.

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<sup>43</sup> Department of National Defence, *CFPAS 2006: CFPAS Handbook* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2006), 302.

<sup>44</sup> John Adair, *Great Leaders* (Surrey, England: The Talbot Adair Press, 1989), 17.

<sup>45</sup> Omar N. Bradley, “On Leadership,” in *The Challenges of Military Leadership*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews and Dale E. Brown, 3-9 (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey’s International Defense Publishers, 1989), 6.

<sup>46</sup> Department of National Defence, *CFPAS 2006: CFPAS Handbook* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2006), 302.

<sup>47</sup> Department of National Defence, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada* (Canadian Defence Academy – Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2003), 30.

The potential section of the PER lists six Potential Factors (PFs): Leadership, Professional Development, Communication Skills, Planning and Organizational Skills, Administration and Dedication. Instructions on the completion of the PER direct that these be assessed with respect to demonstrated "**potential for promotion to the next higher rank only**."<sup>48</sup> Of these six, Leadership is the only one that singularly emphasizes leadership potential. Dedication can be said that it is both for managers and leaders alike; just as the military wants individuals dedicated to its beliefs of protecting rights and freedom, a business wants its managers to be dedicated to the company, concentrating their efforts to the good of the business. But the other four PFs all describe potential demonstrated as a manager.

Professional development is mostly about furthering one's education and, with the added emphasis placed on university education in the national level merit boards (to be discussed later), this is even more so the focus. Unfortunately, educational facilities such as universities are better at training than at educating an individual. As indicated, Warren Bennis finds that a manager is trained through schooling; a leader is educated through experience.<sup>49</sup> This finding is shared by the military services of United States as:

*The winning of battles is the product of the winning of men. That aptitude is not an endowment of formal education, though the man who has led a football team, a class, a fraternity or a debating society is the stronger for the experience which he has gained. . . . But in the military services, though there are niches for the pendant [formal education], character is at all times at least as vital as intellect, and the main rewards go to him who can make other men feel toughened as well as elevated.*<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Department of National Defence, *CFPAS 2006: CFPAS Handbook* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2006), 303.

<sup>49</sup> Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co, 1989), 45-47.

<sup>50</sup> Samuel Lyman Atwood Marshall, *The Armed Forces Officer* (S.I.: Marine Corps Association, 1989), 87.

It is also assessed that courses in the CF tend to teach management practices even though they present it as leadership training.<sup>51</sup>

Communication Skills again makes no reference to communicating with followers, an important ingredient to strong leadership. Planning and Organizational Skills also makes no reference to leading personnel and is purely a management skill. The Spartan General Clearchus is a perfect example of an individual who had great planning and organizational skills but fell far short in leadership. He had subordinates whom only obeyed through fear of punishment.<sup>52</sup>

Administration reads as a reference in how to run a successful business emphasizing “administrative conscientiousness ... develop knowledge of administration and logistical systems ... accuracy, timeliness and thoroughness of administrative activities and resource management.”<sup>53</sup> Yet history shows that:

There have been great and distinguished leaders in our military services at all levels, who had no particular gifts for administration, and little for organizing the detail of decisive action either within battle or without. They excelled because of a superior ability to utilize the brains and command the loyalty of well-chosen subordinates.”<sup>54</sup>

Therefore the PER can be assessed as rating the performance of an individual as about even between being a manager and being a leader but the potential weighing heavily towards the manager with four of the six PFs clearly being management skills and only one PF being solely about leadership. With this emphasis, the CF will have a large cadre of its senior officers being better managers than they are leaders.

### **Wing/Base Merit Boards**

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<sup>51</sup> Peter Bradley, “Distinguishing the Concepts of Command, Leadership and Management,” in *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral*, ed. Bernd Horn and Stephen J. Harris, 105-120 (St. Catherines, Ontario: Vanwell Publishing Limited, 2001), 107.

<sup>52</sup> John Adair, *Great Leaders* (Surrey, England: The Talbot Adair Press, 1989), 22.

<sup>53</sup> Department of National Defence, *CFPAS 2006: CFPAS Handbook* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2006), 304.

<sup>54</sup> Samuel Lyman Atwood Marshall, *The Armed Forces Officer* (S.I.: Marine Corps Association, 1989), 87.

“I know what your guy has done, but I am not prepared to support an individual who is unilingual and does not have a degree.” BGen (then Col) Gaston Cloutier, W Comd 8 Wing 1998-2001 at Wing-level Air Navigator Captain merit board.

The conduct of Wing merit boards vary in the process they follow. At one end of the scale, one wing merit listed their members only from the assessment of the individuals PERs. At the other end of the scale, two wings not only assessed the PERs but also factored in second language abilities, post-secondary education, courses, secondary duties and community involvement, experience, fitness and an overall assessment (“gut feel”) as part of their merit list process.<sup>55</sup>

The wings that merit list their personnel taking everything into consideration as does the national merit board cause double effect for these items. For example, with everything else being equal, an individual who has second language abilities gets rated higher than another individual who does not have a second language profile. When these two PERs are again merit listed at the national merit boards, the individual with the second language will again receive points for his second language that the other does not. Therefore, twice in the overall process will the individual benefit over his peer for the same factor.

This double effect has been seen for all of the other factors that these wings use in their merit boards. The author has personally experienced PER scores adjusted at the Wing board to score the PER of the individual who has most of these separate factors, higher than his contemporaries who have performed better and have demonstrated greater potential to succeed at

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<sup>55</sup> Information acquired through survey of six Wings/Bases in 2006. It should be noted that of the six Wings/Bases contacted, only two responded. Information was acquired on a third location because one responding individual had just come from a different site. It would be interesting to investigate if the same lack of response from senior officers would be seen should CMP conduct a similar information request.

higher rank. This double effect unjustly penalizes individuals who were assessed by their units as being the best and most promising leaders in their unit through their outstanding performance.

### **National Merit Board**

At the national merit boards, scores of sixty points are awarded for performance (based on PER evaluation), thirty-five points for potential (based on PER evaluation, experience, learning capability, and employability) and five points for second language ability (based on member's current profile).<sup>56</sup> There is allowance for classifications to apportion two points in the performance score towards the level of fitness attained by an individual. Totals determine the merit listing or promotion list for individual classifications.

The sixty points awarded for performance is straight-forward and does not need much further analysis. It has already been seen that the performance portion of the PER is almost even between leaders and managers. But, if physical fitness is scored as it is in some trades, it is at the expense of leadership. Therefore, it is easy to conclude that an individual can receive more points for being physically fit than he can for each one of the highly recognized leadership attributes of integrity, loyalty, courage, honesty, fairness and responsibility, all included in one AF that receives at most 3.6 points or, further broken down, 0.6 for each individual one. This clearly emphasizes the misplaced importance that the merit system should be placing on leadership qualities.

The potential points are divided by individual merit boards to take into consideration leadership, experience, education/professional development, employment and overall potential. Some merit boards only score on three of these criteria and others use all five of the criteria. A

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<sup>56</sup> Department of National Defence, A-PD-229-001/AG-001 *Canadian Forces Selection Board Guidance Manual* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2006), 2-3 to 2-5.

review of the 2006 merit board instructions for various classifications indicated that the weight for each criterion varied from board to board. Leadership varied from as low as eight points to a high of eighteen points, experience varied from five to twelve points, and education/professional development from three to twelve points. Employment and potential, though not used by all boards, varied from six to thirteen points.

Without considering the analysis of the Potential block of the PER, one would first surmise that the weight given to leadership and experience would indicate a potential to promote the better leaders. But when the analysis of the potential block is taken into account, proving that it is more a measure of managerial potential than leadership, the points translate into seventy percent management. Include with this the education points that are heavily weighted to management skills and one soon concludes that this portion of the merit board gives a decisive edge to promoting good managers instead of strong leaders.

The final five points awarded for second language ability has no bearing on what kind of a leader one might be. Though it does allow an individual to communicate with more people, it does not mean that more people will be willing to follow him. One might argue that this can also be said in regards to a manager, but a manager who can communicate in more than one language is more attractive to a business. Therefore these five points favour management skills.

It can therefore be seen that, when taking into consideration the emphasis placed on the different AFs and PFs of the PER, the method Base/Wing merit boards are conducted and the points awarded by the national level merit boards, the present merit system is more effective at promoting good managers than good leaders. Findings of the Somalia Inquiry stated that “In the present system, physical fitness has as much bearing on leadership as does courage or loyalty;

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verbal facility has as much as loyalty.”<sup>57</sup> It is unfortunate that with the changes made since the Inquiry, it can now be said that physical fitness and verbal facility have even more bearing on promotion than do loyalty and courage.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

What can be done to improve the appraisal system and better promote personnel who are strong leaders? To begin with, the PER and the CFPAS Handbook needs to be amended to reflect the current Leadership doctrine. Secondly, it is recommended that the PER be revised to emphasize leadership skills separately from management skills. And finally, it is recommended that the appraisal system utilize the 360-feedback tool to assess the leadership of personnel and its results be reviewed during the merit process.

AFs in the performance section must mirror the Effectiveness Dimensions listed in *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*. Instead of Leadership, Personal Abilities, Communication Skills and Professional Abilities, the performance categories should be Mission Success, External Adaptability, Internal Integration, Member Well-Being and Commitment and Military Ethos which are all focused on leadership. The AFs of each category must then be reflective of the responsibilities listed in the manual. This section should also have a requirement to mark the PER as performance observed in Leading the People or Leading the Institution. Many positions in the CF do not allow for a member to demonstrate skills in both areas of leadership. For example, positions on operational units do not allow for members to

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<sup>57</sup> Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia, *Dishonoured Legacy: The Lessons of the Somalia Affair Volume 2* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government of Canada, 1997), 373.

Lead the Institution while many staff positions in NDHQ provide little opportunity to Lead the People. It is important that a member be observed in both aspects.

“Military men are expected above all else to be leaders.”<sup>58</sup> If leadership is the most important key to success in the military, then it must be better emphasized in the PER. As seen, the present PER mixes leadership and management AFs and PFs in both sections of the PER with more AFs and PFs representing management skills, especially in assessing potential. The same weight of importance is placed against each AF and PF. It is recommended that a third section be incorporated to assess leadership skills. PFs in this block would be Integrity, Courage, Loyalty, Honesty, Fairness and Dedication. This section would garner the highest value of the three sections. Only PERs assessed outstanding in the leadership section would be merit listed. This would guarantee that anyone making the promotion list would have been assessed as a capable leader.

Finally, as verification to the assessments completed by supervisors, a 360-degree feedback system should be used to gain a second perspective from the bottom-up. As seen, the present system only has a top-down viewpoint of an individual’s leadership skills yet the people best suited to assess whether they would follow someone into high risk situations are his peers and his followers. The PER completed by one’s supervisor does not always reflect the opinion of those that need to work with or for him. The worst thing the CF can do is to promote individuals who do not command the respect of the followers, especially when it is involved in a high risk mission. A 360-feedback, completed regularly at two to three year intervals, would either endorse strong assessments or expose flawed ratings. Also being considered for use in the U.S. Army evaluation process, the 360-degree feedback would enable,

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<sup>58</sup> Omar N. Bradley, “On Leadership,” in *The Challenges of Military Leadership*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews and Dale E. Brown, 3-9 (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey’s International Defense Publishers, 1989), 3.

A review of each officer's record would quickly identify what type of an individual he or she has become: One who pleases superiors at any cost; one who angers superiors because he or she dares stand up for peers and subordinates, or one who contrives to be popular with all, but an ineffective leader.<sup>59</sup>

Often, the failings in leadership and the ethical misbehavior of an individual is most obvious to his peers and his subordinates.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, the need for both openness to feedback from peers and subordinates, and a system for providing it, is important.

## **CONCLUSION**

The CF appraisal and merit system lends itself to placing too much importance on managerial skills. In doing so, it fails to place its primary focus in identifying and promoting its best leaders. Modifications made to the system in recent years have only exacerbated this fact. If changes to the system that emphasize leadership over all else are not initiated soon, cases similar to those described earlier will continue to occur. With CF Doctrine on Leadership now published and a solid foundation on what skills are required to be a strong leader, the appraisal system must be revised to reflect this doctrine. The assessment system must also go one step further by introducing into the system a method of rating an individual's leadership abilities by those who experience it, an individual's followers.

There are numerous other areas of study that should be undertaken in order to refine the appraisal and merit system. The systems of our allies, notably the U.K., Australia and New Zealand, could provide useful insight on different methods of assessing military leadership. It

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<sup>59</sup> Donald E. Vandergriff, "The New Officer Corps: '360-Degree Evaluations'" *Military.com* December 10, 2003; [http://www.military.com/NewContent/0,13190,Vandergriff\\_121003,00.html](http://www.military.com/NewContent/0,13190,Vandergriff_121003,00.html); Internet; accessed 09 June 2006.

<sup>60</sup> Lieutenant General Walter F. Ulmer, Jr, "Introduction," in *The Challenges of Military Leadership*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews and Dale E. Brown, xi-xviii (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, 1989), xvii.

could also be considered whether the level of education and the second language ability should factor in the appraisal system or should be reserved as qualifications required to enter certain classifications or fill certain positions.

The value of leadership today can not be over emphasized. “Today’s followers have less toleration for poor leadership than did their grandfathers, yet they seem to blossom at least as well under good leadership.”<sup>61</sup> The system itself has proven that it is less than perfect through the experiences in the last twenty years. If we continue to err in promoting the wrong type of individuals, our most valuable resource, the people, will be lost.

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<sup>61</sup> Lieutenant General Walter F. Ulmer, Jr, “Introduction,” in *The Challenges of Military Leadership*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews and Dale E. Brown, xi-xviii (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey’s International Defense Publishers, 1989), xv.

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