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**MITIGATING STRATEGIES TO A PRESSING PROBLEM: HOW TO DEAL
WITH THE SHORTAGE OF OFFICERS IN THE CANADIAN FORCES**

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La présente étude a été rédigée par un stagiaire du Collège des Forces canadiennes pour satisfaire à l'une des exigences du cours. L'étude est un document qui se rapporte au cours et contient donc des faits et des opinions que seul l'auteur considère appropriés et convenables au sujet. Elle ne reflète pas nécessairement la politique ou l'opinion d'un organisme quelconque, y compris le gouvernement du Canada et le ministère de la Défense nationale du Canada. Il est défendu de diffuser, de citer ou de reproduire cette étude sans la permission expresse du ministère de la Défense nationale.

Abstract

Since 2000, the trained effective strength of the Canadian Forces officer corps has fallen further and further below its preferred manning level. Due to the increasing size of the CF, the high attrition rate of officers at the 20 years of service point, and the internal demographics of the organisation itself, the Canadian Forces is going to be dealing with a shortage of officers, and all of the associated problems it causes, for many years to come. This paper proposes options to mitigate this problem.

The paper is broken into four parts. First, the background to the problem and the impact that the shortage is causing are covered in detail. Next, a set of three distinct strategies to deal with the issue are explored. The first looks at how existing personnel in the organisation can be used, focusing on both junior officers and senior non-commissioned officers. Second, a thorough review of how to improve retention of currently serving officers is covered. This chapter makes use of comparisons to policies currently being used by Canada's allies and how their successes could apply to CF. Lastly, how to grow the middle ranks of the officer corps by making use of talent outside the organisation, including personnel with and without military experience, is explored. This paper shows that by adopting a strategy that encompasses all three proposed lines of operation, the CF can mitigate the problems that are being caused by the shortage of personnel within the officer corps much more quickly than by relying on recruiting alone.

Introduction

In 2008 the Canadian Government released the *Canada First Defence Strategy*. That document directed the Canadian Forces (CF) to expand its organizational structure for the third time in ten years.¹ This will bring the overall CF structure from a low point of approximately 55,000 in the late 1990s to 70,000 full time personnel by 2028, with the bulk of that growth (up to 68,000 all-ranks) expected to occur by 2011.² To achieve this size, the CF will have to overcome a number of challenges: it will have to increase the number of new recruits; adjust and respond to demographic changes in Canadian society; and deal effectively with demographic challenges that are currently hollowing out the middle ranks. In many ways the CF is like any other large organization: it needs thousands of people possessing countless skills and abilities in order to accomplish its mission. There is a big difference, however. When IBM needs a new computer engineer, it can advertise widely and ultimately select an individual from amongst the myriad of qualified applicants who submit their resumes. In contrast, the skill sets that the CF needs, in the combinations that it requires, are not easily found outside of the military.³ This means that, generally speaking, the only way to create a senior or non-commissioned officer is to train one from scratch, a process which takes years. As noted by Christopher Ankersen, a retired infantry officer, "Citizens cannot be made into soldiers overnight. Recruits cannot be made into fighters in a day, and leaders cannot be

¹ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2008), 15.

² Canada. Department of National Defence, *2008-2009 Report on Plans and Priorities* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2008), 21.

³ Christopher Ankersen, "The Personnel Crisis" in *Canada without Armed Forces?*, ed. Douglas Bland (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 69.

produced without the seasoning of experience.”⁴ This places significant pressure on military human resources personnel to forecast recruiting requirements well in advance, a challenge which is amplified when the government’s vision of the size of the military is constantly changing. The CF can meet these challenges and achieve the government’s desired endstate of a Regular Force with 70,000 members, but it will take time to do so.

The question is what to do in the interim. In the 1990s, as part of a government program to reduce the budget for the Armed Forces, the CF initiated a Force Reduction Program (FRP), which dramatically reduced the number of personnel in the service. By the year 2000, the country had turned the corner fiscally and was ready to start reinvesting in its military. In 1999 the goal was to maintain the 1994 White Paper’s authorized strength of 60,000.⁵ By 2005 that strength was increased to 65,000 and in 2008 it was increased again to 70,000.⁶ Between the time the Forces starting growing again from 2000 to 2008, the officer corps fell further and further from its preferred manning level (PML). Indeed, in the most recent *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel* the officer corps is reported to be 14% short.⁷ This problem is not restricted to any specific branch or trade within the CF. In comparing the number of officers at each rank, two trends become clear. First, regardless of which officer trade is being reviewed, there are shortages: of the sixteen officer trades in the Navy, Army, and Air Force, the manning levels of eleven of them are classified Red (less than 90% manned), three are

⁴ Ibid, 56.

⁵ Canada. Department of National Defence, *1994 White Paper on Defence* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1994).

⁶ Canada. Department of National Defence, *2005 Defence Policy Statement* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2005), http://www.forces.gc.ca/admpol/newsite/Canada_Defence_2005.htm (accessed 12 January 2010) ; Canada. Department of National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy*, 15.

⁷ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2007 - 2008* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2009), iv.

Yellow (between 90% and 95% manned), and only two are Green (over 95% manned).⁸

Second, the bulk of these shortages exist in the middle level ranks from Captain to Lieutenant Colonel.⁹ This was first noted in the Auditor General's 2002 report on the status of manning in the CF and is still true eight years later.¹⁰ The bottom line is that these shortages cause problems for commanders at all levels and in all environments.

When Director Military Careers, the CF Military Human Resource organization that matches people to jobs, is unable to fill a position, there are few courses of action available to commanders. They normally make the officers that they do have work harder and longer to fulfill the additional responsibilities. This can succeed in the short term, but there are obvious burn out and retention issues if employed for the long term, which compounds the problem. The other solution is for commanders to use their Operations and Maintenance (O&M) budget to hire a reservist to work fulltime in the vacant position. The vacancies to be filled are usually those in the stressed middle ranks where the bulk of the CF's staff officers reside.¹¹ The problem is that for currently serving officers who qualify for an annuity, it is financially advantageous to retire and apply for these Reserve Force positions. In other words, in many cases the reservist that a CO hires has elected to retire from the Regular Force in order to fill that position, which

⁸ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Occupation Status List FY 09/10* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2009), http://hr.ottawa-hull.mil.ca/dgmp/dpgr/engraph/reports/description_e.asp (accessed 29 November 2009).

⁹ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Projected Status Report - Officers - FY 2009 - 2012* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, November 2009).

¹⁰ Office of the Auditor General of Canada, *Chapter 2, National Defence - Military Recruiting and Retention of the May 2006 Status Report of the Auditor General of Canada* (Ottawa: Communications Canada, 2006), 49 ; Canada. Department of National Defence, *Projected Status Report - Officers - FY 2009 - 2012*.

¹¹ As of March 2010 the CF had an officer trained effective strength (TES) of 11,536. Of that number 8,938 were at the rank of Captain or Major. These two ranks represented 1,200 of the 1,369 vacancies within the officer corps. Source: 5 October 2009 Projected Status Report.

in some occasions is the same position from which they just retired.¹² This is a situation which, in addition to the extra financial costs it imposes on the system, only exasperates the CF manning problems. Given this predicament, there must be other options open to the organization to deal with personnel shortages going into the future.

This paper will explore mitigating strategies that the Canadian Forces can use to help deal with the personnel shortages that currently exist, and that are likely going to continue well into the future. The focus will be on the officer Managed Occupational Specifications (MOSID) across the CF because they are currently much worse off than the non-commissioned officer MOSIDs.¹³ Due to the significant differences in duties and responsibilities, it is likely that some of these recommendations will not be suitable for non-commissioned members. Further research could be conducted in the future to develop similar options for those members of the Canadian Forces.

In the research for this paper several assumptions have been made. First, it has been assumed that the actual position specifications as they exist within the CF Human Resource Management System are valid. These positions have been created over time by the Directors of Force Development from each of the elements and subsequently approved by the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff. The paper therefore generally avoids discussion on whether positions are necessary or assigned to the right MOSID. The issue of the assigned rank for a position will be addressed as it applies to Captains, however, as a potential option to reduce the shortage at that rank level. Second, it has been assumed that if the position specification calls for an officer, then it needs an officer and not a

¹² In November 2009 the Army had 659 officers hired on Class B contracts of which 381 of them were on a Regular Force annuity. Source: Army G1 Plans, 21 January 2010.

¹³ According to the 2007 - 2008 Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel, the officer corps was 14% below PML while the NCM corps was only 8% below PML.

DND civilian employee, contractor, or other non-officer. Lastly, it is assumed that the personnel direction contained within the *Canada First Defence Strategy* will not change. Specifically, that the Canadian Government will remain committed to the size of the CF outlined within that document, notwithstanding challenges that may exist elsewhere in the country. These assumptions will therefore restrict the solutions provided in this paper to how to fill the vacancies that exist in the current structure and leave the issue of whether that structure is correct for future research.

There is no single solution to the manning problem that affects the Canadian Forces today. Rather, this paper will argue that by adopting several new strategies and linking them with expanded existing policies, the CF will be able to reduce the stress caused by the lack of trained personnel in its officer corps. Assuming that it is generally not feasible to demote officers to fill a gap behind them, there are three possible strategies: move junior people into the distressed ranks faster; keep those who are already in those ranks there longer; and, lastly, seek out those who possess the sought after skills outside the CF and encourage them to (re)enroll. This paper will begin by outlining in more detail the background of the problem, why the shortage is in fact a problem, why the CF is so short officers and why it will be unable to make up the gap anytime soon. Next, it will explore how some junior officers and NCOs might be moved through the junior ranks more rapidly, as well as the implications of doing so. Third, this paper will investigate what can be done to increase the retention rate of those officers who are already in the distressed ranks. Specifically, why are these officers releasing from the CF? What are some of the dissatisfiers that they have experienced or are experiencing? And how can these dissatisfiers can be reduced or removed with the aim of decreasing

attrition? Lastly, options for tapping into the experience that exists outside the of CF will be considered. This will include those officers who have already left the CF, officers with experience from allied nations, or, in rare cases, civilians who possess relevant skill sets. At the end of each of section the options will be summarized as to how they will help from the perspective of a tactical or operational commander. Combined into a single strategy, these three sets of options should reduce the problems caused by the manning shortages until newly recruited officers work their way through the system and bring the CF's numbers up to their mandated levels.

Background

When commanders are not provided with the officers that they are supposed to have there can be significant impacts on their organization. Colonel Lowell Thomas, past Director Army Training, has stated: "Being short officers meant everyone else had to work harder. It forced me to prioritize all of my tasks and leave those deemed to be less important undone. It also meant not being able to follow up on any new initiatives as everyone was already fully committed."¹⁴ Colonel Dean Milner, past Commander 2 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group, echoed these comments and stated that personnel shortages in his headquarters caused by a deployment into Afghanistan forced him and his staff to work longer to ensure that pre-deployment training was properly conducted and reduced his ability to carry out any training beyond the mandated minimum.¹⁵ Clearly, neither of these situations are desirable, nor sustainable. But with statistics indicating that 86% of all positions are filled, how bad can the situation really be?

¹⁴ Colonel Lowell Thomas, personal conversation with author, 18 January 2010.

¹⁵ Colonel Dean Milner, personal conversation with author, 19 January 2010.

The fact that the officer corps is over 1300 personnel understrength does not fully encapsulate the extent of the problem. Not all organizations are evenly manned. Two additional factors affect the number of officers an organization actually receives. First are the Vice Chief of Defence Staff's (VCDS) manning priorities. The VCDS prioritizes all units into six categories, one being the highest and six being the lowest. Priority One units, such as Special Forces units and Recruiting Centres, have to be manned at 100%, and the percentage goes down with each subsequent level. For example, in the case of the Armour Corps, which was 25% short of Captains in 2008, this meant that by the time the highest priority units were filled, there was literally no one left for the lower units. This forced the Director of Armour to make hard decisions as to where to employ the people that he did have. In 2008 / 2009 only two out of eighteen Regular Support Staff Captain positions within the Armour Corps were filled.¹⁶ These shortages significantly impacted the ability of these reserve units to train.¹⁷ The second factor is deployments. Many officers now deploy as part of composite headquarters created for a specific mission. These positions are not part of the preferred manning level as they are considered temporary. But with many of the current Afghanistan tours now consisting of a nine month deployment preceded by a six month work-up period, officers that carry out these tasks become unavailable to fill 'normal' positions for extended periods of time.

Understanding why the CF is in a situation where it is short, the next issue is how long it will take fix the problem. That the officer corps of the Canadian Forces is short of personnel and not able to fill all of its positions is not a new situation. This has been the

¹⁶ Regular Support Staff officers are posted to reserve units to assist plan and execute training.

¹⁷ Colonel Lowell Thomas, personal conversation with author, 18 January 2010.

case since the end of the Force Reduction Program in the late 1990s.¹⁸ But despite a renewed emphasis on recruitment over the last number of years, the gap between the number of trained officers, known as trained effective strength (TES), and the number of positions for trained officers, known as the preferred manning level (PML), has been growing.¹⁹ And for reasons such as the changing demographic of Canadian society, the demographic of currently serving officers, and the growing size of the Canadian Forces, the gap between what is needed and what is available is not going to disappear in the foreseeable future.

The *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2004-2005* stated that “The officer trained effective strength (TES) has been approximately a thousand personnel below the Preferred Manning Level (PML) for the last five years.”²⁰ In that report the shortage was listed at 8%.²¹ Yet despite a steady increase in recruiting numbers, from approximately 400 officers per year in 1996 to over 1250 officers per year in 2008, the TES of the CF officer corps has hardly changed.²² According to the executive summary of the 2007 – 2008 Annual Report:

The gap between the Trained Effective Strength and the Preferred Manning Level increased again in 2008, as growth in the TES lags the increases in the PML; in fact, there was a small decrease in the TES this year. At the end of the year the officers were 14% below the PML.²³

¹⁸ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2004 - 2005* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2005), 34.

¹⁹ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2007 - 2008*, A-23.

²⁰ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2004 - 2005*, v.

²¹ *Ibid*, 34.

²² Canada. Department of National Defence., *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2007 - 2008*, 23.

²³ *Ibid*, iv.

The most current statistics available are from the *Production Attrition Retention Recruiting Analysis* spreadsheet, which for October 2009 shows the officer TES being 11,497 with a PML of 12,985, for a shortage of 12.5%.²⁴ Therefore even with greatly elevated recruiting levels, the number of trained officers over the last ten years has barely changed. This trend is CF wide and was noted by the Auditor General in her 2006 report: “The Recruiting Group enrolled about 20,000 new members for the Regular Force in the last four years, but the increase in the trained effective strength was limited to about 700.”²⁵ This suggests that there must be other reasons besides recruiting to explain why has the shortage in the number of officers has being growing every year for the last decade.

The government-mandated growth of the Canadian Forces is a major reason why there is such a large shortage of personal within the organization. In the late 1980s, the Canadian Forces was at a Cold War strength of approximately 89,000, all-ranks.²⁶ By the mid 1990s, following the Force Reduction Plan, this number was down to less than 60,000.²⁷ It was from this point that, following an improvement in the country’s financial situation, successive governments began authorizing increases to the size of the CF. Budget 2006 increased manning levels to 68,000 and the *Canada First Defence Strategy* increased that again to 70,000.²⁸ As of October 2009, the CF had a total Regular

²⁴ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Production Attrition Retention Recruiting Analysis (PARRA)* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, October 2009), http://hr.ottawa-hull.mil.ca/dgmp/dpgr/engraph/reports/description_e.asp (accessed 29 November 2009).

²⁵ Office of the Auditor General of Canada, *Chapter 2, National Defence - Military Recruiting and Retention of the May 2006 Status Report of the Auditor General of Canada*, 51.

²⁶ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy*, 15.

²⁷ Canada. Department of National Defence, *1994 White Paper on Defence*.

²⁸ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy*, 15.

Force strength of 65,755.²⁹ For the officer corps, the PML had increased from a low of 11,000 in 1998, the last year in which TES was equal to the PML, to 12,985 in March 2010.³⁰ This represents an overall increase of 16%, but when broken down by rank, the numbers show that most of the increases occurred at the higher ranks.

Table 01: CF officer PML Increases 2000-2010.

	PML 2000	PML 2010	Numeric Increase	Percentage Increase
Colonel	242	309	67	21%
Lieutenant- Colonel	948	1250	302	24%
Major	3174	3907	733	19%
Lieutenant / Captain	6714	7439	725	10%

Sources: Projected Status Report 1 September 2000 and
Projected Status Report 5 October 2009

Ranks that require fifteen to twenty years of training increased by a fifth to a quarter in ten year period. For the CF, which had been shrinking in size throughout the 1990s, making the switch to such rapid growth would prove to be a challenge.

Rapid growth in an organization such as the CF is a challenge to plan and execute. This is especially true when most of that growth occurs in the middle management ranks. These new positions have to be filled with officers already serving in lower ranks, officers who need to meet a number of professional development milestones and time in rank before they are even eligible for promotion, and who themselves then need to be

²⁹ This includes all military personnel being paid by the CF, regardless of their status. Source: PARRA October 2009.

³⁰ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2004 - 2005*, 34 ; Canada. Department of National Defence, *Production Attrition Recruiting Retention Analysis (PARRA)*

replaced. This problem is outlined in the *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2007-2008*:

During expansion, the difference between the TES and PML suffers from a time lag where the positions are created first and then the personnel are allowed to fill them. In other words, the PML must grow first before the TES can grow to fill it.³¹

This issue results in several challenges for the CF. The first is that with the majority of the new positions being created in the middle ranks, that is where the shortages are most acutely felt.³² The March 2010 *Projected Status Report (PSR)* shows the most distressed officer ranks being Lieutenant-Colonels at 12% short, Majors at 15% short, and Captains at 20% short.³³ The second problem is in the training system. The PARRA report shows the total paid officer strength in the CF is 16,089, but of those only 11,500 are trained.³⁴ The remaining are on the Basic Training List (BTL), working their way through the training system for between two and seven years.³⁵ As will be shown, processing these new personnel is resource intensive.

Dramatic increases in the number of recruits going through the training system are difficult to manage. This problem was highlighted by the Auditor General who noted that the increases were causing bottlenecks and stretching the capacity of the CF schools.³⁶ The experiences of the Royal Canadian Armour Corps School over the past decade provide a good example of the problem. The Armour School is currently manned at approximately 90% of its authorized officer structure, a structure that has not changed

³¹ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2007 - 2008*, 39.

³² Canada. Department of National Defence, *Projected Status Report - officers - FY 2009 - 2012*

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Production Attrition Recruiting Retention Analysis (PARRA)*.

³⁵ Office of the Auditor General of Canada, *Chapter 2, National Defence - Military Recruiting and Retention of the May 2006 Status Report of the Auditor General of Canada*, 52.

³⁶ Ibid, 63.

since the mid 1990s.³⁷ However since that time the number of students the School trains annually has increased dramatically. In 2000/2001 the School graduated 245 students. In 2008/2009, the number was 1314. This has resulted in a dramatic increase in the requirement for augmentee staff to help run the courses. When augmentees are not available due to the operational tempo elsewhere, the School is forced to double task its own people, resulting in increased attrition due to burnout and a reluctance among personnel at other units to accept postings to the School.³⁸ Paradoxically then, increased recruiting actually makes the officer shortage worse in the short to medium term due to the increased need for instructors at the training establishments. These challenges delay recruitment, training, and deployment of new officers once the increase to the manning level has been approved.

Another cause of the shortfall in personnel is the combination of the current attrition rate and the demographic trends within the officer corps. In the 1980s the attrition rate for officers was 6.3%.³⁹ In the early 1990s the rate increased to 7.0% and then spiked as high as 12% during the FRP years of the late 90s.⁴⁰ From 2000 to 2005 the rate averaged just above 6% before increasing to 6.9% for the second half of the decade.⁴¹ Looking to the future, Chief Military Personnel modeling is forecasting the

³⁷ Of that 90%, the Armour School has 2 Captains on permanent loan to CTC HQ, and averages 2 Captains gone on parental leave and 1 on the six month long Army Operations Course at any given time, taking their effective officer strength down to approximately 80%. Source: Chief Instructor of the Armour School, 29 January 2010.

³⁸ Major Trevor Gosselin, Chief Instructor Royal Canadian Armour Corps School, e-mail correspondence with the author, 29 January 2010.

³⁹ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Canadian Armed Forces Attrition Data 1 April 1984 - 31 December 1989* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1990).

⁴⁰ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Canadian Armed Forces Attrition Data 1 April 1989 - 30 Nov 1994* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1995) ; Canada. Department of National Defence., *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2007 - 2008*, 28.

⁴¹ Canada. Department of National Defence., *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2007 - 2008*, 42.

rate to fall back to the 6% level by 2013 and then remain constant until at least 2016.⁴²

These rates on their own would seem to indicate a stable workforce from a historic point of view, but there are several additional factors that need to be considered in order to appreciate the challenges that exist when trying to increase the trained number of officers.

The first is the demographic of currently serving officers. Most officers who release from the CF do so voluntarily for a variety of reasons. In 2004 the percentage of officers who left on their own accord was 45%.⁴³ By 2008 that number rose to 58%.⁴⁴ Of significance is when they are choosing to leave. A spike in voluntary releases happens after twenty years of service (YOS), the first year of pension eligibility for most officers (all except those who joined in the last five years). This is a significant change from the period before the FRP. In 2001 the attrition at the 20 YOS was 14.1%, almost double that of the pre-FRP period of 7.5%.⁴⁵ By 2008 the attrition at this point had increased to 20%. The latest *Report on Regular Force Personnel* stated “The 20 YOS point is of particular interest for both officers and NCMs. The 2008 attrition rate at this point was considerably higher than during the pre-FRP period, and then during the recent past to a lesser extent.”⁴⁶ The fact is dramatically evident when displayed graphically:

⁴² Ibid, 42.

⁴³ Other reasons for release include misconduct, unsatisfactory performance, medical, service complete, and death.

⁴⁴ Canada. Department of National Defence., *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2007 - 2008*, 35.

⁴⁵ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2004 - 2005*, v.

⁴⁶ Canada. Department of National Defence., *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2007 - 2008*, 32.

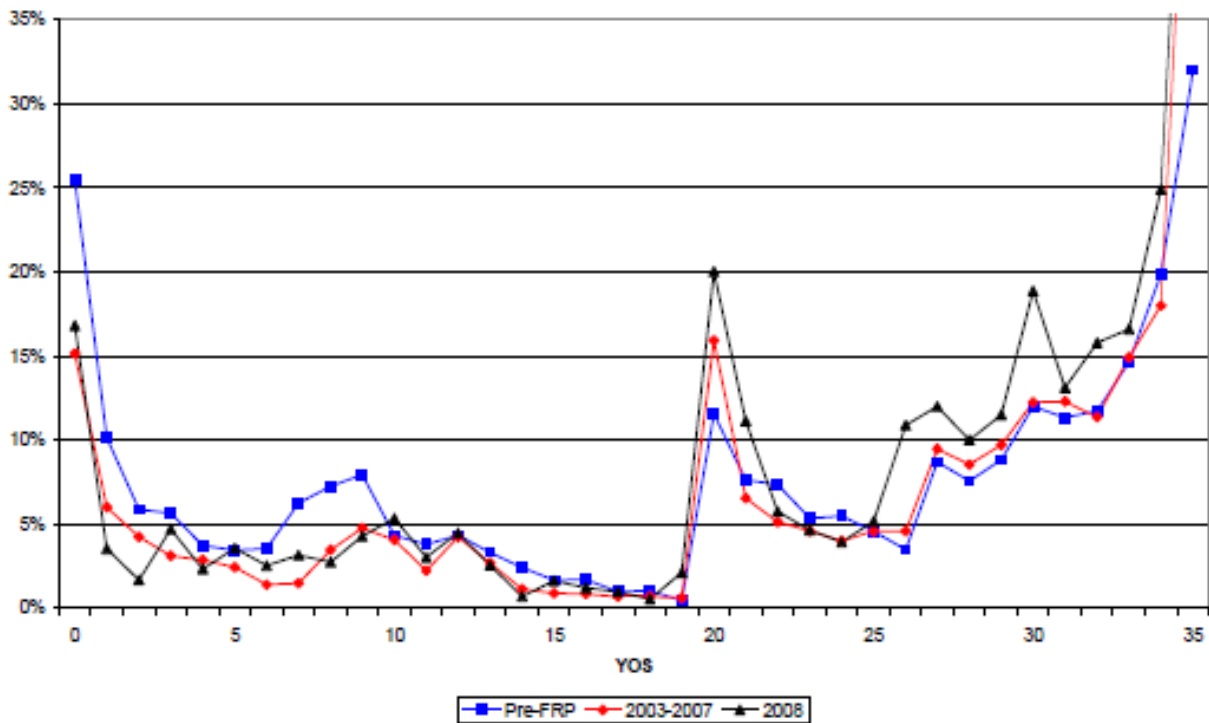


Figure 01: Officer Attrition Rates by YOS.

Source: Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2007/2008

Of note from the graph, the attrition rate remains much higher than the overall average of 6% from the twenty to twenty-two years of service point, where cumulatively almost 40% of the officers in this bracket retire every year. This becomes significant when it is compared to the career demographics of currently serving officers.

When the attrition rates by YOS are superimposed over a breakdown of the YOS of the entire CF officer corps some worrying trends become apparent:

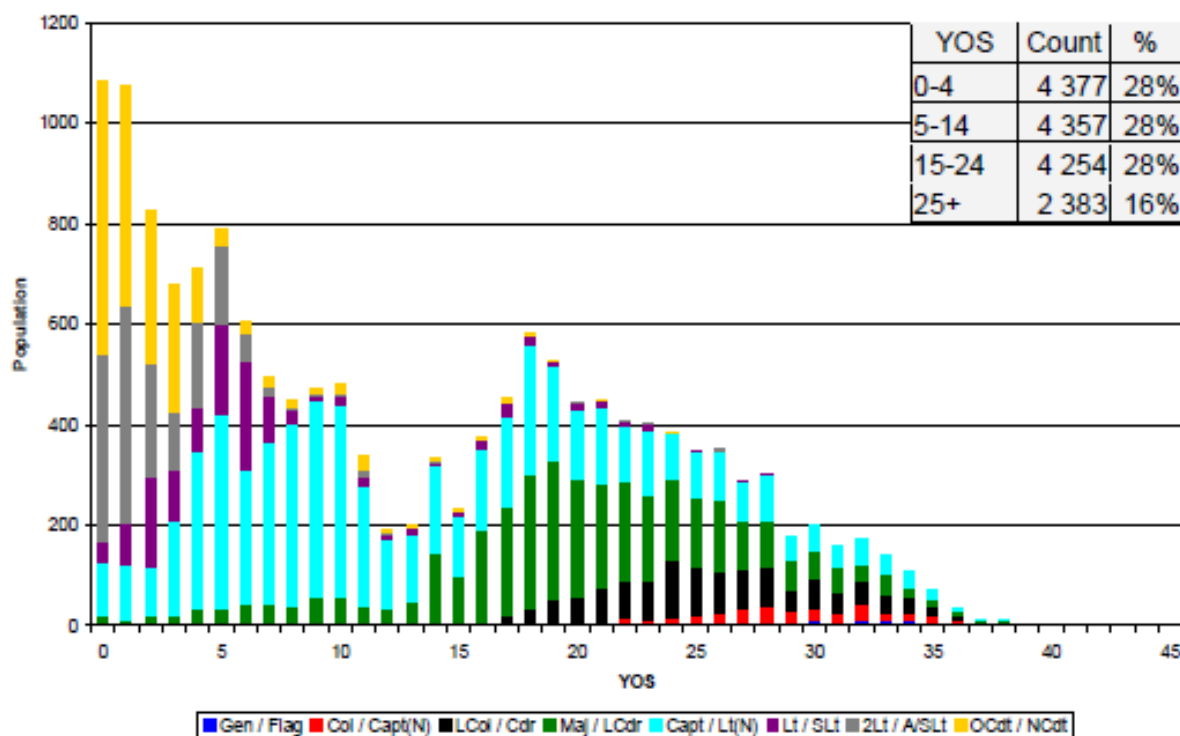


Figure 02: Officer Population Profile by YOS and Rank as of 31 March 2008
 Source: Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2007/2008

The number of officers in the sixteen to twenty-two years of service point of their careers is considerably higher than those from the eleven to fifteen years of service point.⁴⁷ The lower numbers in this second period are the result of the reduced recruiting numbers during the FRP years. The first group, as shown in the graph, represent the majority of the CF's senior Captains, Majors and many Lieutenant-Colonels. As explained above, this group has a much higher attrition rate than any other. According to Figure 01, as the officers in this cohort continue to move through the twenty to twenty-two year point in their careers, almost 40% of them will retire every year. This trend will continue for the next four years, and as it does there will be far fewer officers in the next cohort to serve as replacements, leaving a large experience gap in these ranks.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 6.

The second worrying trend for the CF which the raw attrition rates do not show is the decreasing pool of recruits as a result of the changing demographics within the Canadian population. The attrition rate itself is just a percentage, but with the growth in the CF that was already described, it is a percentage of a bigger overall number. As the PML grows, even a steady attrition rate means more recruits are needed to fill the holes. The Auditor General looked into CF recruiting in 2002 and noted that even prior to increasing in size “DND had problems to recruit people to meet operational demand.”⁴⁸ When she did a second review in 2005, her report stated “Military occupations that were below their required staffing levels in 2002 are still experiencing problems today.”⁴⁹ She went on to say that even though the CF was increasing the numbers of people entering the forces, intake was barely replacing those who were leaving.⁵⁰ Even with the increased numbers, recruiting did not meet the needs of the CF:

We found that in recent years, because of personnel budget restrictions, the targets in the Strategic Intake Plan did not match the stated requirements of the Navy and the Air Force. Furthermore, National Defence has estimated that it will take five years to fill all the positions required for operations.⁵¹

It is worth noting that she made this statement in 2005 and the shortage in 2009 is now greater than it was at that time. This is a problem because the CF has traditionally relied on young, white males to fill its ranks. But, recent Statistics Canada reports have shown that immigration is now responsible for 70% of the growth in population and the majority

⁴⁸ Office of the Auditor General of Canada, *Chapter 2, National Defence - Military Recruiting and Retention of the May 2006 Status Report of the Auditor General of Canada*, 47.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 69.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 69.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 53.

of these immigrants have different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.⁵² Commenting on the overall Canadian population, Statistics Canada states:

The number of the foreign-born in Canada has nearly tripled during the past 75 years, and their share is inching towards the levels in 1911 to 1931. This is a result of the sustained number of immigrants admitted annually to the country and the slow population growth from natural increase (that is, with the relatively low fertility rate, the growth caused by more births than deaths has slowed down). Between 2001 and 2006, Canada's foreign-born population grew by 13.6%. This was four times faster than the Canadian-born population, which increased by 3.3%.⁵³

During that same period the CF grew by 15%.⁵⁴ This means that the CF grew four times faster than its key demographic cohort over the last decade. This is a concern which the Chief of Defence Staff himself identifies and emphasizes in his *Guidance to Commanding Officers*.⁵⁵ This places the onus on the CF to recruit more successfully from other, non-traditional groups, such as women, natives, and visible minorities, in order to fill its ranks. Thus far, the CF has been unable to meet any of its recruiting targets for these groups, and in fact the over numbers for each one have been declining in recent years.⁵⁶ The increased need for recruits combined with the changing population of Canada, will be a challenge for the CF into the future.

The statistics show that there has been a shortage of personnel for some time.

When those numbers are combined with the factors outlined above, it is clear that the

⁵² Statistics Canada, *Immigration in Canada: A Portrait of the Foreign-Born Population, 2006 Census*, 2006), <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-557/p2-eng.cfm> (accessed 10 February 2010) ; This same report indicated that in 2006, 58% of all immigrants came from Asia whereas 16% come from Europe, 10% from Africa, 10% from South and Central America, and 3% from the United States.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ In 2001 the CF authorized strength was 60,000 and by 2008 that number had increased to 70,000, for a net gain of 15%.

⁵⁵ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Chapter 25, Retention of Military Personnel of the Chief of Defence Staff Guidance to Commanding officers* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, [2010]), <http://www.cda-acd.forces.gc.ca/cdsg-dcemd/cha/cha25-eng.asp> (accessed 21 January 2010).

⁵⁶ Office of the Auditor General of Canada, *Chapter 2, National Defence - Military Recruiting and Retention of the May 2006 Status Report of the Auditor General of Canada*, 56.

situation is not going to change soon. The impact of these shortages on commanders and the rest of the Canadian Forces will be either an increased workload for those who remain in uniform or important work not being completed. These options are not sustainable and highlight the need for a plan to manage the problem in the coming years until the military human resource challenges have been met.

Filling the Gaps from Within

The most expedient way to fill a vacancy is to make use of personnel already in the system. The shortages within the officer corps begin at the rank of Captain. Increasing the promotion rate from one distressed rank to another, however, such as Captain to Major, only shuffles the vacancies around without changing the overall situation. As the base of the officer rank structure, a full complement of Captains is a key element to the long term sustainability of the officer corps. It is therefore critical that, as the lowest of the distressed ranks, the Captain positions be the initial priority for the CF. This chapter will therefore focus on methods which unit Commanding Officers and Branches can use to try to increase the numbers at that rank.

At first glance, an obvious method of creating more Captains would be to promote more Lieutenants to fill the vacant positions. Unlike other ranks, for which the CF maintains long lists of merit qualified personnel, however, promotion to Captain is based solely on time in rank and the Commanding Officer's concurrence.⁵⁷ This means that all Lieutenants who meet the requirements contained within the regulations have already

⁵⁷ CFAO 11-6 does state that promotion to Captain is competitive and based on merit. However, this is not the case in practice and the Director General of Military Careers has not run Captain merit boards since the early 1990s.

been promoted.⁵⁸ Also, with just 1200 Lieutenants in the CF and the *Projected Status Report* forecasting a shortage of 1200 Captains in 2010, promoting Lieutenants alone will not solve the problem.⁵⁹

Beyond only officers, another group that needs to be considered is the CF's non-commissioned members. While a number of commissioning programs already exist for NCMs, most of them, such as the Commissioning From the Ranks (CFR) program, focus on the Corporal to Sergeant ranks and commission these soldiers as new Lieutenants, which does not address the problem at the Captain rank.⁶⁰ One program that does commission directly to the rank of Captain is the Special Requirements Commissioning Plan (SRCP), but it is currently open only to Chief Warrant Officers (CWO).⁶¹

Addressing the shortage problem at the Captain rank will require a reassessment of promotion policies for both Lieutenants and NCMs. This chapter will review the strategies for increasing the number of Captains using both options. Once the various options have been considered, the risks of adopting these strategies will be investigated.

Currently, if a CO wishes to promote a Lieutenant early, there is a provision in the regulations to do so. Canadian Forces Administrative Order (CFAO) 11-6 allows for accelerated promotions of Lieutenants, albeit only in exceptional circumstances. The process is subject to a number of restrictions and requires the CO to complete a lengthy submission justifying the request. The paperwork must then be forwarded to National

⁵⁸ Canada. Department of National Defence, *CFAO 11-6 Commissioning and Promotion Policy - Officers - Regular Force*, http://admfincs.mil.ca/admfincs/subjects/cfao/011-06_e.asp (accessed 22 January 2010), 16.

⁵⁹ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2007 - 2008*, C-2 ; Canada. Department of National Defence, *Projected Status Report - Officers - FY 2009 - 2012*.

⁶⁰ Canada. Department of National Defence, *CFAO 11-9 - Commissioning from the Ranks Plan*, http://admfincs.mil.ca/admfincs/subjects/cfao/011-09_e.asp (accessed 22 January 2010).

⁶¹ Canada. Department of National Defence, *CFAO 11-14 Special Requirements for Commissioning Plan*, http://admfincs.mil.ca/admfincs/subjects/cfao/011-14_e.asp (accessed 22 January 2010).

Defence Headquarters in Ottawa, where the Director Military Careers, a Colonel, provides the approving authority.⁶² In Colonel Milner's words "there is too much paperwork" in the current process.⁶³ In 2009, there were 50 accelerated promotion requests approved, which represented a total of 4% of the 1200 Lieutenants in the CF.⁶⁴ This small number can likely be partly attributed to the administrative burden associated with the process. A similar policy exists for accelerated promotion from the rank of Private to Corporal, but in this case the approving authority is the Commanding Officer.⁶⁵ Chief Warrant Officer James Dorrance, the NCO Career Manager for the Armour Corps, states that that program has worked well. It has not been abused by the chain of command; rather, it has reduced bureaucracy and administration by placing responsibility for the decision on the officer who has the information to make the decision.⁶⁶ Unit Commanding Officers have the responsibility for virtually all aspects of their subordinates' military lives and therefore are ideal witnesses to the performance and conduct of all members of their units. Even in large units, where the CO may not personally know every officer and soldier, the chain of command tracks and monitors the abilities of all personnel through the annual Performance Appraisal System. Through this formal process, discussions with subordinate commanders, personal observations, and interactions during social occasions, COs are the officers best positioned to assess

⁶² Canada. Department of National Defence, *CFAO 11-6 Commissioning and Promotion Policy - Officers - Regular Force*, 6.

⁶³ Colonel Dean Milner, personal conversation with author, 19 January 2010.

⁶⁴ Major Steve Kirooulos, Director Military Careers 3 Coord, e-mail correspondence with the author, 22 January 2010 ; Canada. Department of National Defence, *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2007 - 2008*, C-2.

⁶⁵ Canada. Department of National Defence, *CFAO 49-4 Career Policy Non-Commissioned Members Regular Force*, http://admfincs.mil.ca/admfincs/subjects/cfao/049-04_e.asp (accessed 2 February 2010), 4.

⁶⁶ Chief Warrant Officer James Dorrance, Director Military Careers 3-3-2, personal conversation with author, 2 February 2010.

whether a subaltern under their command has gained the necessary skill sets to be ready for promotion to Captain. Given the CO is the one ‘leading his people’ as described in the CF leadership book *Conceptual Foundations*, and in accordance with the concept of mission command outlined in the same manual, approving authority for accelerated promotions to Captain by definition should be delegated to Commanding Officers.⁶⁷

Simply promoting Lieutenants will not always be a solution. There will be situations where a Commanding Officer may believe that subalterns possess the technical or tactical skills to do the higher ranked job, but that they are still not ready for promotion (for instance, they could lack the requisite maturity). In addition, structurally within the CF, most officer positions are allocated to a unique rank, which only an officer who holds that rank may be posted into. Here again the officer corps can learn from the NCM structure. The differences between a Private and a Corporal are similar to the differences between a Lieutenant and a Captain: in most cases, the difference is more time in uniform. All four ranks are considered uncontrolled, which means that the number of people wearing those ranks are not restricted based on a number of positions.⁶⁸ In both cases, the positions of the two higher ranks have a wide range of duties and responsibilities, some that require extra training, experience and knowledge, but many that are little different from those of the lower rank. In the NCM structure this situation has been dealt with by having both ranks assigned to most of the entry level positions. In the Royal Canadian Dragoons for example, the Regiment has 284 positions designated as

⁶⁷ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces, Conceptual Foundations, A-PA-005-000/AP-004* (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy - Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2005), 5 ; Ibid, 130.

⁶⁸ Ms Sonia Latchman, Chief Military Personnel DRPG 4, e-mail correspondence with the author, 5 January 2010.

Private/Corporal and only 45 as Corporal.⁶⁹ This gives Commanding Officers flexibility in how they fill the positions. Clearly, the most senior and experienced Corporals will fill those designated to that rank, but the remainder of the soldiers can be positioned based on their abilities and skills, rather than just the rank on their sleeve. This flexibility also removes any need to accelerate a soldier prematurely.

This same flexibility of employment should be considered for the officer corps. Senior Captain positions such as unit operations officers, adjutants, and sub-unit second-in-commands, clearly need to remain as Captain. But in many of the more junior Captain positions, what is important is the skills that the officers possess, not their rank. This applies to many non-command positions such as training officers, liaison officers, administrative officers and assistant adjutants. Colonel Thomas stated that this could apply to many Captain positions in the unit he commanded and would have helped mitigate the problem of having too many Lieutenants and too few Captains.⁷⁰ Since the CF already groups these two ranks together for most HR purposes, changing the ranks assigned to some of the positions from Captain to Lieutenant/Captain would not cause unintended consequences elsewhere in the human resource system.⁷¹ This simple change would give both the CO and the Career Manager additional flexibility to employ subalterns according to their skills and not just their rank.

Junior officers are not the only source of potential personnel who could help fill out the rank of Captain within the Canadian Forces. Senior non-commissioned officers also need to be considered, which can be done through the Special Requirements

⁶⁹ Chief Warrant Officer James Dorrance, Director Military Careers 3-3-2, personal conversation with author, 2 February 2010.

⁷⁰ Colonel Lowell Thomas, personal conversation with author, 18 January 2010.

⁷¹ The Projected Status Report and PARRA list the two ranks as one category. There is no PML for either rank – only totals for the two combined.

Commissioning Plan (SRCP). The policies for this program are contained in CFAO 11-14, and have been recently amended in CANFORGEN 101/09. The program, which is only open to Chief Warrant Officers with a minimum of three years in rank, offers commissions directly to the rank of Captain with the restriction of no further promotion or additional trade training.⁷² The program is administered similar to the accelerated promotion program for officers and the approving authority remains Director Military Careers at NDHQ.⁷³ In 2009 there were only 42 CWOs who were commissioned as Captains under the terms of SRCP, which represents 7.7% of the 539 CWOs in the CF.⁷⁴ While any number is helpful in addressing the officer shortfall, the policies controlling the program are too restrictive to allow a significant contribution. Further, these restrictions contribute to a loss of many experienced NCMs every year. The program needs to be opened up in a manner which better fits the career paths of the CF's senior Warrant Officers.

Senior NCOs tend to spend the majority of their careers working in the units and schools of their chosen fields. Once they reach the rank of Master Warrant Officer however, opportunities within those fields become much fewer. Many WOs will be promoted to the rank of MWO, but few will be given one of the key command positions in their field. In the Royal Canadian Dragoons for example, there are twenty-six Warrant Officers, of which only six will become Squadron Sergeant-Majors in the Regiment at the rank of MWO, and of those personnel, only one will become the Regimental Sergeant-

⁷² A recent amendment contained in CANFORGEN 101/09 allows for select CWOs who have served in senior appointments to be commissioned directly to the rank of Major. The no promotion and no training clauses still apply.

⁷³ Canada. Department of National Defence, *CANFORGEN 101/09 Changes to the Regular Force Special Requirements Commissioning Plan*, (1 June 2009).

⁷⁴ Major Steve Kiroopoulos, Director Military Careers 3 Coord, e-mail correspondence with the author, 22 January 2010 ; Canada. Department of National Defence, *Projected Status Report - non-commissioned Members - FY 2009 - 2012* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, October 2009).

Major as a CWO.⁷⁵ This creates a challenge for the CF as to how to employ all those who have reached their command potential. If interesting opportunities do not exist, these individuals will leave the force. While this situation applies to everyone at some point, the breadth of employment opportunities outside first line units for an officer are far greater than those for NCMs. This fact is clearly demonstrated by reviewing recent release statistics.

Table 02: CF Senior NCM Demographic Information.

	Average Age	Average YOS	Attrition Rate	Voluntary Release Rate
Chief Warrant Officers	49	30	15%	81%
Master Warrant Officers	47	27	14.2%	82%

Source: 2007/2008 Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel, Annex C

Note: The voluntary release rate is a percentage of the attrition rate and contains all individuals who released in the middle of a service contract for no service reason.

These numbers not only show that a large number of these NCOs are leaving every year in comparison with the overall NCM population (where the average attrition rate is 9.8%), but also show how they are leaving.⁷⁶ The percentage of MWOs and CWOs who voluntarily leave the force every year stands in sharp contrast to the situation for comparable officers, where only 10% of Colonels and 27% of Lieutenant-Colonels took a voluntary release.⁷⁷ As shown in table 2, the average MWO and CWO could continue to serve for many additional years, yet in 2008 almost 300 MWOs and CWOs left the CF

⁷⁵ Chief Warrant Officer James Dorrance, Director Military Careers 3-3-2, personal conversation with author, 2 February 2010.

⁷⁶ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2007 - 2008*, C-12.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, C-16.

voluntarily.⁷⁸ Something needs to be done to try to retain this critical cohort of experience. Short of a complete overhaul of employment opportunities for these ranks, one simple option is to make the SRCP program more flexible.

The current regulations dealing with the SRCP program are explicit, detailed, and leave little room for interpretation. One of the rules is that senior NCMs use the program to become commissioned in the officer MOSID most closely related to their own.⁷⁹ This regulation can be used to try to make the overall program more flexible by using the knowledge of the personnel within that trade. For example, a CWO who is a Crewmen would become an Armour Officer, both of which are part of the Armour Branch. Within the CF each Branch has a full Colonel designated as the Branch Advisor or Director. These officers have many responsibilities, including manning and personnel issues.⁸⁰ Given the detailed understanding that these officers have of their own Corps or Branch, combined with the advice of their Corps RSM, decisions regarding personnel matters within that Branch should be delegated to them. Firm restrictions limiting the program to CWOs with three years in rank should be removed and replaced with a 'Commander's Intent' paragraph outlining the purpose of the program. The execution should then be left to the Branch Advisors and Directors. The program should also be open to both CWOs and MWOs who have reached their full potentials as NCOs and are seeking additional challenges within the CF. The rule preventing promotion beyond Captain for SRCP candidates needs to remain in place due to their lack of the formal professional development training which other officers must take. This means that this program on its

⁷⁸ Ibid, C-16.

⁷⁹ Canada. Department of National Defence, *CFAO 11-14 Special Requirements for Commissioning Plan*, 2.

⁸⁰ Colonel Thomas, a past Director of Armour, stated that establishing manning priorities within the Corps and succession planning were two of his key responsibilities.

own will never solve the officer shortage problem. But by relaxing some of the rigid regulations of SRCP and placing the responsibility for selection with the Branch, some of this military experience can be retained within the CF and at the same time help relieve the shortages within the Captain rank as one part of a larger program.

The Canadian Forces has specific expectations of its junior officers. Before deciding whether to expedite promotions into the rank of Captain, it is important to look at what those expectations are. By reviewing the CF's keystone leadership documents, it is possible to identify the risks of accelerating Lieutenants and promoting senior NCMs into that rank. The CF leadership manual *Conceptual Foundations* states that, "At the lower to middle levels of CF rank and leadership, the primary function of most officers is to develop and execute near-term plans and to solve real-time problems through others."⁸¹ The attributes and competencies developed at these early stages are the building blocks on which the skill sets needed later in one's career will be based.⁸² More specifically, the CF's leadership doctrine breaks the characteristics of a good leader down into five elements: knowledge and skills; cognitive ability; social capacities; personality traits; and professional motivation and values.⁸³ These five characteristics can be grouped into two larger categories: technical skills and ability; and professional conduct and bearing. According to doctrine, to develop these capabilities:

Leadership training and development should start relatively early in every CF member's career and, based on demonstrated potential and increased responsibility, should be continual and progressive thereafter. Leader

⁸¹ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces, Conceptual Foundations, A-PA-005-000/AP-004*, 4.

⁸² *Ibid*, 4.

⁸³ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Leadership in Canadian Forces - Doctrine, A-PA-005-000 AP-003* (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy - Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2005), 19.

development is critical to operational success and the professional health of the CF.⁸⁴

The emphasis is clearly on developing basic leadership skills early, and then consistently adding to them as part of a normal career development program based on one's own potential. The risk, therefore, of advancing too fast would be not fully developing the basic skills before being expected to learn more advanced ones.

The first leadership trait category is technical skills and abilities. Having a high level of proficiency in both technical and tactical areas is clearly vital for all junior officers. The CF Manual *Duty with Honour* amplifies this by adding: "the ordered application of military force requires not only specific knowledge and skills spanning all the combat functions of a professional military organization, but more especially a highly developed capacity for judging its use."⁸⁵ These skills will be acquired through education, training, and experience.⁸⁶ It is this third element, experience, that risks being cut short by moving junior officers through the ranks too quickly. For NCMs, the issue would not be experience, as at the tactical level they have more experience than any Lieutenant ever will. The risk for NCMs comes from the other side of a modern officer's life, administration and education. *Duty with Honour* states that "Overseeing the regulatory functions that operate throughout the profession is a major responsibility of the officer corps."⁸⁷ This is a skill set that senior NCMs may not have and could potentially never have as they would not have completed an officer's formal professional development training. Thus, by moving to the rank of Captain too quickly, both new

⁸⁴ Ibid, 12.

⁸⁵ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada, A-PA-005-000 AP-001* (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy - Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2003), 17.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 10.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 15.

junior officers and senior NCMs could be deprived of the ability to develop part of the requisite professional skills set.

The second leadership trait category is professional conduct and bearing. The CF Effectiveness Framework (contained in the leadership doctrine manual), places military ethos at the centre.⁸⁸ Life in the Armed Forces is unique, and all members are expected to behave and conduct themselves in a specific manner. These expectations are most easily met by living within the organization and experiencing the norms that doing so entails. In the junior ranks, behaviour is externally regulated as it is reinforced or corrected by more senior members. It is expected that junior members are still learning what is expected of them and thus a certain leeway is granted, but as one's rank increases the expectation is that external regulation will evolve to self-regulation. This point is amplified by Colonel Milner who described Captains as "Lieutenants with experience" and added that "as a Lieutenant you were expected to make mistakes," but that "as a Captain those same mistakes would not be tolerated."⁸⁹ Therefore, a risk of promoting an individual too soon is that person has not had the time to fully adopt to the military culture. The importance in fully adopting to the military ethos is explained in *Conceptual Foundations*:

The complexity of many contemporary military operations frequently produces ambiguous and novel challenges that require individuals to act independently and creatively. Values, value-based norms of behaviour, and the processes of internal regulation and control go a long way to providing the guidance needed in such situations.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Leadership in Canadian Forces - Doctrine, A-PA-005-000 AP-003*, 4.

⁸⁹ Colonel Dean Milner, personal conversation with author, 19 January 2010.

⁹⁰ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces, Conceptual Foundations, A-PA-005-000/AP-004*, 17.

With the exceptions of some officer specific norms, understanding the CF culture is not a concern for an NCM who has already served many years in the Canadian Forces. But for new Lieutenants, depending on their enrollment program and how long they have served, there is a risk from not providing them the time needed to adopt the expected CF norms.

Although the various CF leadership manuals use the word ‘experience’ in several places, at no point do the manuals attach a specific timeframe to the process of gaining this experience. Since individuals develop at different rates and have different opportunities, it makes sense that different people would need different amounts of time to gain this experience. Therefore, instead of looking at all people the same, they should be considered as individuals.

There are risks involved with promoting Lieutenants to Captain before they meet all of the prerequisites required in the regulations. The issue is how to best manage those risks. Canadian Forces Administrative Order (CFAO) 11-6 contains the policies for all promotions within the officer corps. For a General Service Officer to be promoted to Captain, one must be qualified within one’s trade and have spent two years at the rank of Lieutenant.⁹¹ It is during these two years, plus the preceding year spent as a Second-Lieutenant, that an officer is expected to gain the experience described in the leadership manuals. Colonel Thomas explains this period for a new subaltern in the context of the Armour Corps: “The first tour is an opportunity for their troop leading skills to develop and be subsequently refined under the tutelage of an experienced Warrant Officer within a Squadron context.”⁹² The time it takes for individual officers to gain this experience will be based on their background, intellect, and the command opportunities they are

⁹¹ Canada. Department of National Defence, *CFAO 11-6 Commissioning and Promotion Policy - officers - Regular Force*, 16.

⁹² Colonel Lowell Thomas, personal conversation with author, 18 January 2010.

given. The differences between subalterns can be dramatic. Some Lieutenants will have already spent four years at a military college where they will have been indoctrinated into the armed forces, some will have been recently commissioned after spending many years as an NCM, and others still will have enrolled under a direct entry program and have only one year experience in the CF. As for practical experience, some officers will get the opportunity to command troops in combat situations while deployed on an international operation in their first year of service while others may never leave their desk during their three year period as a subaltern. Therefore, the process of validating whether or not a Lieutenant has acquired the necessary skills and attributes expected of a Captain must be individualized. This can be achieved more effectively by using the professional judgment of those more senior officers in the chain of command who work with these officers everyday, rather than centralizing all decision making authority in NDHQ.

The options presented in this chapter have focused on those solutions that can be quickly implemented by a CO or Branch, thereby exploiting the in-house talent of individuals already in the CF. If Commanding Officers are short a Captain in their unit, one option available is to accelerate the promotion of one of their Lieutenants, or, if none were ready, to employ a stronger subaltern in one of the junior Captain positions which had been re-designated Lieutenant/Captain. If none were available at the unit, the new rank designation for junior positions would give the Branch Career Manager additional flexibility in trying to find another officer to post into the unit. The third option would be to discuss the matter with the Corps Director or Branch Advisor to determine if there was an MWO or CWO within the Branch who could be considered under SRCP to commission to Captain and fill the position. These three options could be investigated

quickly and then acted upon with little delay. The CF would issue the guidelines for action, and then allow commanders to execute as they see fit in accordance with the concept of Mission Command described in *Conceptual Foundations*.

Retaining Experience

The options contained in the previous chapter deal with how to fill the vacancies at the Captain rank, but this approach only treats the symptom and not the real problem. To grow the CF officer corps, one must address how to prevent those vacancies from being created in the first place. This means focusing on retention at the middle level officer ranks and, more specifically, reducing attrition among those officers who voluntarily leave the Canadian Forces.⁹³

For every officer who leaves the military, another must be recruited and trained. This consumes both human and material resources, a situation which led Lieutenant-Commander GP McCabe to conclude that “recruiting is an expensive alternative to retention.”⁹⁴ The issue of recruiting versus retention was echoed recently by the Chief Military Personnel: “because our recruiting and training systems are operating at or near capacity, CF growth in the next several years must be achieved in part by reducing attrition rather than relying solely on increased personnel production.”⁹⁵ To achieve this will require new policies to stem the flow of highly trained officers leaving the force.

⁹³ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2007 - 2008*, 28.

⁹⁴ Lieutenant-Commander GP McCabe, *Addressing CF Retention Concerns - Improving Job Satisfaction through Job Design* (Canadian Forces College, 2006), 3.

⁹⁵ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Military Personnel Retention Strategy* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2009), 2.

There are a variety of reasons why individuals elect to leave their jobs, which makes the development of a single, coherent plan challenging. However, the failure of an organization to address retention will ultimately cost it more resources in the long term. The issue is best summarized in an article written in the *Academy of Management* titled “How to Keep Your Best Employees”:

There are many reasons why people voluntarily leave organizations. Some are personal: changes in family situation, a desire to learn a new skill or trade, or an unsolicited job offer. Other reasons are influenced by the employing organization: observing the unfair treatment of a co-worker, being passed over for promotion, or being asked to do something against one's beliefs. Turnover is a problem because it imposes extensive costs on both individuals and organizations.⁹⁶

Some of the quantitative costs to the CF are financial: it is expensive to hire and train officers.⁹⁷ Other costs are not readily measured in dollars, as noted by Lieutenant-Colonel Theodore Devlin in a US Army War College paper: “The loss of experience and skills would be difficult, if not impossible, to rapidly replace, especially in the technologically advanced military of today.”⁹⁸ Faced with these two compelling factors the CF needs to develop a strategy to retain the talent of those in uniform today.

The CF has understood the importance of retention for many years, but has failed to implement policies to improve it. *Military HR Strategy 2020*, released in 2002, committed the CF to “engage in systematic, planned and coordinated retention strategies.”⁹⁹ It laid out a twenty year strategy for addressing numerous HR issues,

⁹⁶ Terence R. Mitchell and others, "How to Keep Your Best Employees: Developing an Effective Retention Policy" *Academy of Management* Volume 15, Number 4 (2001), 96.

⁹⁷ Canada. Department of National Defence, *HR 2020 Internal Assessment* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2003), 32.

⁹⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Devlin, "Recruiting and Retention, A Force Planning Dilemma" US Army War College), 31.

⁹⁹ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Military HR Strategy 2020 - Facing the People Challenges of the Future* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2002), 16.

retention among them. Most of the retention objectives were to be fulfilled by 2010.¹⁰⁰ In July 2009, the CF issued a new *Military Personnel Retention Strategy*, which identified new objectives, to be completed by April 2011.¹⁰¹ The new strategy states: “The retention of highly trained and experienced sailors, soldiers, airmen and airwomen is fundamental to optional capability, military professionalism, and therefore must be viewed as a leadership responsibility at all levels.”¹⁰² The problem is that while official CF documents have stated that retention is important and have outlined numerous ideas on how to improve it for over eight years, attrition has continued to rise.¹⁰³ Additionally, the chapter on retention contained within the Chief of Defence Staff’s *Guidance to Commanding Officers* states that retention strategies will focus on recognition, fairness, consideration and support for members and their families rather than making use of monetary incentives.¹⁰⁴ This seems to close the door to an aspect of retention policy that has been widely used to great effect by both industry and other Armed Forces. Given its lack of success so far, the CF needs to revisit its retention strategy and be open to all possible options.

This chapter will provide options to improve CF retention with a view to mitigating the shortage of officers by considering policies currently employed by both civilian industry and other Western Armed Forces. It will begin by outlining the extent of the problem and reviewing the results of the most recent Canadian Forces Exit Survey. Next, the theory of job satisfaction as part of modern organizational behaviour will be

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 38.

¹⁰¹ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Military Personnel Retention Strategy*, Annex A.

¹⁰² Ibid, 1.

¹⁰³ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Annual Report on Regular Force Attrition 2007 - 2008* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2009), iii.

¹⁰⁴ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Chapter 25, Retention of Military Personnel of the Chief of Defence Staff Guidance to Commanding Officers*.

discussed and applied to the results of the exit survey in order to focus the subsequent retention options on the greatest dissatisfiers. Options for how to increase retention will then be proposed with examples of other militaries' successes being provided throughout.

While it is in all organisations' best interests to retain their personnel, in today's high-tech armed forces this is especially true and there can be significant long-term consequences to not doing so. This point was clearly articulated by the United Kingdom House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts in its 2007 report on recruitment and retention within the UK Armed Forces:

The armed forces traditionally "grow their own" recruits which means that it takes a long time for them to acquire the high degree of skill, training and experience needed for these trades. If they leave they are very difficult to replace so the department needs a coherent, long-term strategy for retaining them.¹⁰⁵

The current situation within the Canadian Forces was outlined by retired Army Commander, Lieutenant-General Mike Jeffery, who, in discussing the lack of personnel relative to Canadian Forces commitments, stated: "the problem is exasperated by the growing shortage of experienced officers and NCOs. This is the consequence of an internal demographic imbalance caused by the massive personnel cuts required by government austerity measures in the 1990s."¹⁰⁶ The point to emphasize is the need for "experienced officers and NCOs." It is these individuals who, when they leave after many years of service, take with them the "valuable knowledge and expertise gained through experience."¹⁰⁷ Yet a review of the military personnel planning and management

¹⁰⁵ United Kingdom House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, *Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces* (London: The Stationery Office, 2007), 12.

¹⁰⁶ Lieutenant-General (Retired) Mike Jeffery, "The Competition for People - the Military's Next Big Challenge" *The Dispatch* Volume VII, Issue IV, 2009, [http://www.cdfai.org/newsletters/newsletterswinter2009.htm#The Competition for People – the Military's Next Big Challenge](http://www.cdfai.org/newsletters/newsletterswinter2009.htm#The%20Competition%20for%20People%20-%20the%20Military's%20Next%20Big%20Challenge) (accessed 9 February 2010).

¹⁰⁷ Mitchell and others, *How to Keep Your Best Employees: Developing an Effective Retention Policy*, 96.

document, *The Fight for Today FY 2009 – 2010*, shows that it is exactly this cohort that is leaving the CF.¹⁰⁸ This can be seen graphically in Figure 03, which displays the voluntary officer releases for 2007/2008:

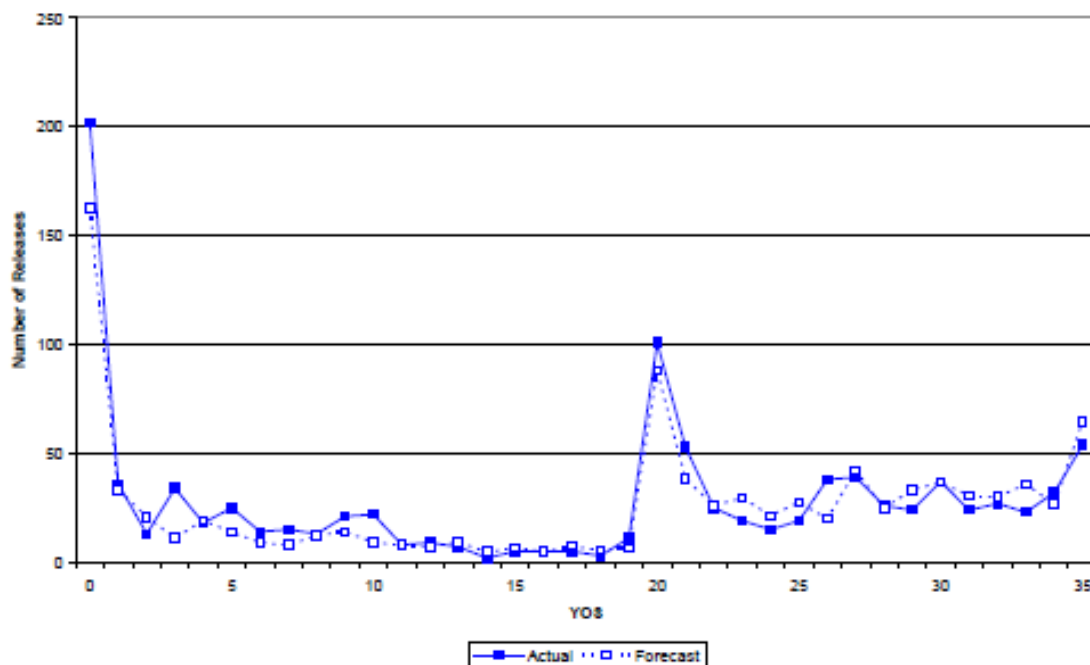


Figure 03: Actual and Forecast Officer Releases for 2007/2008

Source: Annual Report on Regular Force Attrition 2007/2008

The first spike in Figure 03, which takes place within the first year of service, is a result of individuals being unable to make the necessary adjustments to military life and deciding to release rather than carry on. The second spike, which takes place shortly after the 20 years of service point, represents the first point where officers can take advantage of an unreduced annuity.¹⁰⁹ Given the aim of this paper is to search out ways

¹⁰⁸ Canada. Department of National Defence, *The Fight of Today - Military Personnel Planning and Management Document Fiscal Year 2009 - 2010* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2009), 1-7.

¹⁰⁹ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Military Personnel Retention Strategy*, 2.

to deal with the shortage of officers that exists at the mid rank levels, the remainder of this chapter will focus on the second spike.

It should also be noted that this issue is not unique to the Canadian Forces. Other Western military forces have been dealing with the same issues. The House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts in the UK stated “Statistics of personnel leaving early for 2006 - 07 show that voluntary outflow rates for Army and Royal Air Force officers ... are at a ten year peak.”¹¹⁰ In the United States, the US Army in 2005 missed its mid-career reenlistment goal by 4% and was having a hard time in retaining a number of key occupations.¹¹¹ How these two forces are dealing with this challenge will be integrated into the analysis of the rest of this chapter.

Key to understanding the problem the CF has with retention are the reasons why officers are electing to voluntarily release. The primary way to identify these reasons is by analyzing the results of the CF Exit Survey. This survey is designed to provide the Chief Military Personnel and career managers with information as to why members decided to voluntarily leave the CF and how they reached that decision.¹¹² The results referred to in this paper are based on the responses provided by 1537 departing members from the period of 20 June 2005 to 25 June 2008.¹¹³ Table 03, which follows, lists the top three aspects of the Canadian Forces which were identified as being a dissatisfier to life in the armed forces. Table 04 contains the top reasons why members actually made the decision to leave the CF.

¹¹⁰ United Kingdom House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, *Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces*, 7.

¹¹¹ Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Beerman, "Increasing Army Retention through Incentives" (US Army War College), 3.

¹¹² Kathy Michaud, *Attrition and Leadership* (Ottawa: Chief of Military Personnel, 2009).

¹¹³ *Ibid* ; It should be noted that these results are based on returns from all ranks and not just officers.

Table 03: CF Exit Survey Results – Main Dissatisfiers

Ranking	Dissatisfier	Percentage
1	The way the CF deals with poor performers	70%
2	CF promotion and career management system	52%
3	Working life balance and family issues	51%

Sources: Exit Survey: 2005 – 2008 Results
Annual Report on Regular Force Attrition 2007/2008

Table 04: CF Exit Survey Results – Main Influential Factors in the Decision to Quit

Ranking	Influential Factor	Percentage
1	Time available to spend with my family	57%
2	Effects of postings on my ability to maintain family stability	54%
3	Effects of postings on my spouse's employment	54%
4	The career management system	48%

Sources: Exit Survey: 2005 – 2008 Results
Annual Report on Regular Force Attrition 2007/2008

Comparing these two tables side by side offers a great deal of useful information in the development of the CF retention policy. In Table 03, which lists what people do not like about the CF, the first two points deal with normal issues such as how one succeeds in the organisation, while the third is the impact that military life has on one's family. This is different from Table 04, the reasons why people actually quit the CF, where the impact on the family jumps to the top three positions, while issues around one's career fall to number four. Also of interest, pay and benefits are listed as influential in the decision to

leave the CF by only 18% of departing members.¹¹⁴ The CF Exit Survey results lead to two key conclusions. The first is that the points raised on Table 03 clearly need to be addressed, because, as Kathy Michaud, the lead researcher for the survey, notes: “although most of the factors measured in the CF exit survey may not by themselves be sufficient reasons to leave, they create conditions in which satisfaction, motivation, morale, and other important organizational outcomes are greatly affected.”¹¹⁵ For the long term health of the organization, it is in the CF’s interest to try to rectify these dissatisfiers. The second point is that, as seen in the results of Table 04, the main reasons people are leaving the force are family related. Therefore, in order to improve retention, these ‘quality of life’ matters must be the initial focus.

The results of the CF Exit Survey, when compared with the results of similar studies by Canada’s allies, show a marked similarity. In the Royal Air Force, the five major reasons that have been identified as to why officers leave the service are: future job satisfaction, family stability, separation from family, employment opportunities outside the RAF, and expected types of postings.¹¹⁶ In the US Army, the four top reasons for leaving are: quality of life, amount of pay, amount of job satisfaction, and opportunities for promotion.¹¹⁷ This would imply that the retention options employed by the latter two organisations should be considered as potential solutions to the CF.

Current theory on job satisfaction can aid the CF to better understand the main dissatisfiers which the exit survey identified and the impact of not addressing them for the

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Dawn Johansen, *Military and Retention Strategies: United Kingdom* (Directorate of Army Personnel Strategy, Great Britain), <http://ftp.rta.nato.int/public/PubFullText/RTO/TR/RTO-TR-HFM-107/TR-HFM-107-02G.pdf> (accessed 9 February 2010).

¹¹⁷ 12% of departing US Army personnel selected pay as a reason to leave the Army, less than the 18% of departing CF member’s who selected it ; Beerman, *Increasing Army Retention through Incentives*, 3.

institution and its retention policies. Generally, people who are satisfied with their jobs stay, while at some level of dissatisfaction people begin to seek alternatives.¹¹⁸ As Lieutenant-Colonel Theodore Devlin wrote in his US Army War College paper on retention, this fact must form the cornerstone of a retention policy:

A critical aspect of retention is job satisfaction; without it, very few other incentives will be effective in retaining quality individuals. Job satisfaction is comprised of favorable impressions of leadership and knowing that there are ample resources and opportunities for job performance and accomplishment. Poor impressions of these factors by service personnel can lead to greater post-first-term attrition.¹¹⁹

The impacts that low job satisfaction can have on any organisation is substantial. As Susan Meisinger wrote in her recent article on retention in *HR Magazine*, low satisfaction “is associated with higher levels of absenteeism, decreased productivity and increased turnover.”¹²⁰ Whereas, she explained, high levels of satisfaction “translate into increased employee commitment, productivity and retention for organizations.”¹²¹ Therefore, an effective retention policy will focus those aspects which enhance the satisfaction of military life while reducing those which detract from it.

Analysts disagree on the specific factors actually that contribute to job satisfaction. Meisinger states that “surveys show that according to employees their top five aspects of job satisfaction are compensation, benefits, job security, work/life balance, and communication between employees and senior management.”¹²² Robert Dailey, a professor of management at Drake University, lists the main elements of job satisfaction

¹¹⁸ Mitchell and others, *How to Keep Your Best Employees: Developing an Effective Retention Policy*, 97.

¹¹⁹ Devlin, *Recruiting and Retention, A Force Planning Dilemma*, 27.

¹²⁰ Susan Meisinger, "Job Satisfaction: A Key to Engagement and Retention," *HR Magazine* Volume 52, Number 10 (2007), 8.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 8.

¹²² *Ibid*, 8.

as being: satisfaction with work, pay, fellow workers, supervision, and promotions.¹²³ In their study of Command and Control in the Armed Forces, Dr. Ross Pigeau and Carol McCann discuss what they call a ‘balanced command envelope,’ where if a leader is given too little responsibility, this will “induce boredom, low motivation and professional dissatisfaction.”¹²⁴

In all of the above cases, the factors can be broken into two groups: extrinsic rewards, which are those that the company provides the employee (pay, promotions, job status, job security); and intrinsic rewards, which are those that the employee experiences internally (effort exerted, pride in a great job, commitment to the organisation).¹²⁵

Employees make comparisons between the external rewards they are receiving relative to the internal efforts they feel they are making. This comparison is then also made for one of their peers and then the two are compared together as follows:

$$\frac{\text{My extrinsic rewards (pay, raises)}}{\text{My intrinsic efforts and performance}} \quad \text{compared to} \quad \frac{\text{Co-worker's extrinsic rewards (pay, raises)}}{\text{Co-worker's intrinsic efforts and performance}}$$

Dr Dailey refers to this process as equity theory, which states that every employee will try to ensure that both sides of this equation are equal.¹²⁶ This is important to the CF in determining how to apply retention policies. If employees perceive that the equation is out of balance, for example their co-workers are receiving more pay for the same effort, or the same pay for less effort, they will attempt to rebalance the equation by changing the only variable under their control, their own effort and performance. This is a critical consideration for the CF. The attrition spike being targeted is at the 20 years of service

¹²³ Robert Dailey, *Organisational Behaviour* (Great Britain: Pearson Education, 2003), 1/21.

¹²⁴ Dr Ross Pigeau and Carol McCann, "Re-Conceptualizing Command and Control" *Canadian Military Journal* Volume 3, Number 1 (Spring, 2002), 9.

¹²⁵ Dailey, *Organisational Behaviour*, 1/23.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 1/24.

point.¹²⁷ At that point, most officers are Majors or Lieutenant-Colonels and are no longer employed in their own branch, but rather are working in joint units or headquarters. Therefore, offering any kind of retention bonus, monetary or otherwise, to one specific MOSID over another would, according to equity theory, likely trigger a rebalance of efforts amongst those not offered a bonus and increase dissatisfaction. Further, doing so is not required. Most of the jobs at those rank levels are not MOSID specific, but rather are more generic, calling for a 'land officer,' or an 'operational officer.'¹²⁸ What is therefore important to the CF is simply retaining an 'officer' rather than an 'armour officer.' It follows therefore that retention policies must be uniformly applied amongst all officers, not just select MOSIDs.

When the CF considers the equity equation, it must acknowledge the importance of job satisfaction. It appears that regardless of the number of family, pay, and quality of life policies the Canadian Forces implements, if members are not satisfied or challenged in the conduct of their actual jobs, they are not likely to stay. And if they do stay, they are less likely to remain sufficiently committed. Lieutenant-Colonel Devlin of the US Army describes this problem well:

The lack of resources and training dollars have become more than just irritants. To professionals, such shortfalls in equipment, spare parts and supplies are demoralizing and an impediment to excellence. These conditions result in longer working hours, frustration and a sense of dissatisfaction. The lack of adequate resources, when left unattended for extended periods, creates the perception that the chain of command, the Congress, or the nation are not interested enough to support the sacrifices being asked of service members and their families. This loss of faith can translate to a lack of job satisfaction and retention problems.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ This will likely move to the 25 years of service point in the future with the recent change in the terms of service which makes that the earliest point in which to qualify for an annuity.

¹²⁸ The positions which are MOSID specific tend to be the command billets within units, such as Commanding Officers. Retaining the officers who are in these positions, or who are identified within the succession plan for future promotions, is not normally a problem.

¹²⁹ Devlin, *Recruiting and Retention, A Force Planning Dilemma*, 28.

In the current CF environment of ‘managed readiness’ and ‘whole fleet management,’ where a few of the units get most of the resources and most of the units get few if any resources, the situation described above presents a real challenge. This fact needs to be considered from a retention point of view as well as an operational one because ‘employees’ eventually tire of not having the tools they need to do their jobs, which will, as described above, lead them to start looking for alternatives.

Compensation, pay, and benefits are elements that are common to all lists of factors which influence job satisfaction. Therefore, even though they were not at the top of the CF Exit Survey, in order to improve retention through improved job satisfaction, they need to be considered. The manner in which employees are compensated for their work is a complex issue, but there have been many innovative ideas recently developed and implemented in other organisations that have had a dramatic impact on retention levels.¹³⁰

In developing compensation packages, it is important to understand that money alone will not change the long term attitudes of employees and does not overcome job dissatisfiers. In his CFC paper on voluntary attrition in the CF, Lieutenant-Commander Greg Lye wrote: “Consideration of bonuses makes a large assumption that additional pay is what members are looking for to stay in the service, or that pay is the dissatisfier.”¹³¹ No such assumption needs to be made, however, as the CF Exit Survey states that pay was an issue for 18% of personnel who left the force, a high enough number that it cannot be dismissed.

¹³⁰ Lieutenant-Commander Greg Lye, "Voluntary Personnel Attrition in the Canadian Forces" (Canadian Forces College, 2009), 27.

¹³¹ Ibid, 27.

Studies in the US have shown that even when pay is not a dissatisfier, bonuses can still form an effective manner in which to decrease attrition.¹³² Both the US Army and the UK Armed Forces, whose personnel, as indicated earlier in this chapter, have been leaving their forces for similar reasons to those in the CF, have recently implemented retention programs which include financial re-signing bonuses.¹³³ And both organizations have had dramatic increases in retention since the programs were brought into effect.¹³⁴ A key reason is that improvements to compensation can be implemented quickly, whereas some of the other retention ideas take more time to develop and implement. Monetary compensation should therefore be considered as part of a short-term fix that has been shown to have an impact on retention levels and is considered desirable by almost one in five personnel who quit the force. It follows that, notwithstanding the fact that the current retention strategy states that “the use of monetary and other incentives to contain or reduce attrition is de-emphasized,” options for financial incentives should be included in the CF retention plan.¹³⁵

The most common form of compensation used to improve retention is a ‘re-signing bonus,’ or a monetary reward provided to an individual in return for continued service. These retention bonuses have been used by business for sometime.¹³⁶ The US

¹³² Hyder Lakhani, "The Effect of Pay and Retention Bonuses on Quit Rates in the US Army" *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* Volume 41, no. Number 3 (1988), 437.

¹³³ Paul Fiddian, "New UK Bonuses" *Armedforces News*, 20 March, 2008, <http://www.armedforces-int.com/news/browne-announces-new-uk-armed-forces-bonuses.html> (accessed 29 March 2010) ; Jim Tice, "Army Expands Retention Programs" *Defense News*, 5 October, 2009, http://www.defensenews.com/osd_story.php?sh=VSDI&i=3755367 (accessed 29 March 2010).

¹³⁴ Net News Publisher for World News, "British Armed Forces show a Continued Upward Trend in both Recruitment and Retention" *Net News*, 4 March, 2010, <http://www.netnewspublisher.com/british-armed-forces-show-a-continued-upward-trend-in-both-recruitment-and-retention/> (accessed 29 March 2010) ; Tice, *Army Expands Retention Programs*.

¹³⁵ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Military Personnel Retention Strategy*, 3.

¹³⁶ Mitchell and others, *How to Keep Your Best Employees: Developing an Effective Retention Policy*, 98.

military has been using retention bonuses for a number of years with success.¹³⁷ Dr. Hyder Lakani of Cornell University, who studied the effects of retention bonuses in the US Army determined that they work well as they are more flexible than pay because they can be changed over time and targeted to the place the needs it.¹³⁸ The US Army currently offers incentives of between \$3,000 and \$29,000 depending on the length of the service extension.¹³⁹ Since this particular program was brought into effect in September 2007, the US Army has retained 96.7% of the officers that the program has targeted.¹⁴⁰ In the UK, the Armed Forces began offering bonuses in 2008 of up to 15,000 UK pounds.¹⁴¹ In March 2010 the UK Ministry of Defence reported that the number of personnel leaving the force had fallen to its lowest in five years.¹⁴² This tool has clearly had an impact for both organizations.

While a signing bonus is the most obvious form of retention compensation, it is far from being the only one. The US Army has a program called the ‘Army Incentive Model.’ In addition to the Selective Reenlistment Bonus, which is offered only to trades that are considered distressed, the Army Incentive Model is open to all trades and all ranks. Upon agreeing to reenlist, the US Army opens a ‘soldier’s account’ for the individual. The individual then has a list of options from which to select, including the army home ownership plan, the army business fund, the army college fund, and the army mortgage fund. Depending on the new terms of service, an amount of money is then placed into that account until the completion of the contract, at which time it is released

¹³⁷ Beerman, *Increasing Army Retention through Incentives*, 7.

¹³⁸ Lakhani, *The Effect of Pay and Retention Bonuses on Quit Rates in the US Army*, 437.

¹³⁹ Tice, *Army Expands Retention Programs*.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Fiddian, *New UK Bonuses*.

¹⁴² Net News Publisher for World News, *British Armed Forces show a Continued Upward Trend in both Recruitment and Retention*.

for the purpose selected. For example, US Army soldiers who sign and serve a six year contract could have the Army put \$45,000 towards their mortgages under the army home ownership option.¹⁴³ Officers are given the choice of attending graduate school at the Army's expense if they sign an addition three year contract. Although the costs of such a program can be very high, "Army personnel managers say that whatever the individual annual tuition fees they are far less than the cost of training and preparing a new officer."¹⁴⁴ In the UK, the RAF started the LINKUP program under which pilots are refunded up to 10,000 British pounds towards the cost of obtaining their civilian airline licenses if they agree to serve beyond their initial 16 year contract.¹⁴⁵ What both of these programs have in common is that they have determined what the officers to whom they are targeted value and then offered to pay for them as an incentive to continue to serve. In both cases they have determined the cost of doing so is far less than the costs to hire and train a replacement.¹⁴⁶

More money is not going to be coming from the government to pay for CF retention incentives, but a review of the costs associated with hiring and training a new officer shows that more money is not required. According to the internal DND document *HR 2020 Internal Assessment*: "The cost to train an officer to LCol has recently been calculated at over \$1,000,000 for the Infantry, Aerospace Control, Combat Engineers and Artillery MOC's. This does not include the cost of a Bachelor's degree."¹⁴⁷ Studies of civilian businesses have shown that it costs between 50% to 60% of an employee's

¹⁴³ Beerman, *Increasing Army Retention through Incentives*, 5.

¹⁴⁴ Thom Shanker, "Young officers Leaving Army at a High Rate" *The New York Times*, sec. U.S., 10 April, 2006.

¹⁴⁵ Johansen, *Military and Retention Strategies: United Kingdom*, 2G-6.

¹⁴⁶ Shanker, *Young officers Leaving Army at a High Rate*.

¹⁴⁷ Canada. Department of National Defence, *HR 2020 Internal Assessment*, 32.

annual salary to complete the process of finding and hiring a replacement.¹⁴⁸ This is in addition to the costs to train and educate them. Redirecting only a small portion of these funds to retention initiatives could actually save the Department money over the medium to long term. Therefore, based on the success that allied nations have had and that the program would save more money than it costs, it is worth targeting the 18% of CF members who have cited money as a factor in leaving by implementing a well-conceived signing bonus system for officers who sign their Indefinite Period of Service (IPS) contracts and agree to serve for a minimum specified period of time.

Money is not the answer to all of the Canadian Forces retention problems.

Terence Mitchell of the University of Washington and his team wrote a clear statement on the impact of pay in the *Academy of Management*:

We know from observing professional sports or CEO succession, for example, that even paying a person millions of dollars a year does not prevent relative job dissatisfaction and lower organisational commitment, or an increased likelihood of quitting. We know from a century of observing collective bargaining, moreover, that the positive effects of more pay are often short lived. Retention cannot be accomplished purely through money.¹⁴⁹

This implies the effect of more money can be fleeting and that it cannot stand on its own, but rather needs to be part of a larger, more comprehensive, package. A study by the UK Parliament into the Armed Forces retention policies confirmed this by stating the following:

Most of the department's measures to improve recruitment and retention have been based on financial incentives. These incentives have been generally successful in the short term but have not addressed some of the key reasons for

¹⁴⁸ Mitchell and others, *How to Keep Your Best Employees: Developing an Effective Retention Policy*, 97.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 104.

leaving such as Service personnel's inability to plan ahead in life outside work and the impact of operations on family life.¹⁵⁰

An effective retention strategy must also address this last point. Time available to spend with one's family, the impact of postings on family life, and the effect of posting on spousal employment, were one, two and three respectively in the exit survey explaining why people decided to leave the Forces.¹⁵¹ The impact of military life on family life is not unique to the CF. In the UK the findings were similar, with the parliamentary committee reporting that frequency of deployments contributed to two of the top three reasons for people leaving.¹⁵² It follows that for any retention policy to be successful in the long term, it must address these quality of life issues.

Civilian companies have been dealing with similar issues as they struggle to find ways to keep their aging baby boomer employees in the workforce. These employees have reached the point where they are free to walk away with whatever benefit package they have earned and thus need to be enticed into continuing to work, not unlike the situation of officers who have reached 20 years of service. The solutions that have been implemented within the civilian workforce include an enhanced package of benefits that are only open to these senior employees. In the CF, the equivalent would be the officers who are serving on their Indefinite Period of Service contract. Stephen Miller discussed how widespread this has become in a recent article in *HR Magazine*. He noted that 61% of US companies have developed, or will develop, programs to retain targeted near retirement employees and 47% have some type of phased retirement arrangement

¹⁵⁰ United Kingdom House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, *Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces*, 11.

¹⁵¹ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Exit Survey: 2005 - 2008 Results* (Ottawa: Chief of Military Personnel, 2009).

¹⁵² United Kingdom House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, *Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces*, 7.

available now.¹⁵³ These arrangements offer what are often referred to as ‘cafeteria-style benefits,’ where the employer provides a list of benefits from which the employees are able to select the ones that are most important to them.¹⁵⁴ The aim is to provide a flexible enough program that all employees are able to find what is important to them and that acts as a strong enough incentive for them to continue to work.

In order to provide their near retirement employees with the benefit options that they seek, civilian companies have developed numerous ideas which fit the phased retirement criteria. One option is allowing employees to design their own flexible schedules where they can match their own preferences.¹⁵⁵ There are a number of variations of to how increase freedom for the employee to decide where and when to work. One option, known as ‘flextime,’ is “a system of assigning hours for work that permits employees to choose, within specified limits, the hours that they will be at their place of employment.”¹⁵⁶ Another option is allowing employees to work a compressed work week of four ten hour days, which helps reduce the stress of dealing with traffic and commuting problems.¹⁵⁷ A third variation is telecommuting, an arrangement by which people work at home using the computer or telephone transmitting work material to their business office by means of a modem and telephone line.¹⁵⁸ And finally, there is the

¹⁵³ Stephen Miller, "Phased Retirement Keeps Boomers in the Workforce," *HR Magazine* (2009), 61.

¹⁵⁴ Dailey, *Organisational Behaviour*, 4/25.

¹⁵⁵ Mitchell and others, *How to Keep Your Best Employees: Developing an Effective Retention Policy*, 106.

¹⁵⁶ Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 6th Edition, *Reference Entry - Flextime* (Columbia University Press, 2009), <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=39006649&site=ehost-live> (accessed 25 November 2009).

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 6th Edition, *Reference Entry - Telecommuting* (Columbia University Press, 2009), <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=39035516&site=ehost-live> (accessed 25 November 2009).

option of providing part-time employment year round as a method of retaining the knowledge of an employee who might otherwise opt for full retirement.¹⁵⁹

Clearly, these options would not work for officers serving in the field force in deployable units. But as a retention tool for older, primarily staff officers who would otherwise leave, there is potential for their use. For many staff officers in various headquarters, exactly when and where they do their work is not important, just that it gets done. Providing those officers who continue to serve past twenty years with increased flexibility in how their work is scheduled would help address some of the key quality of life issues identified in the exit survey. This is because these measures have been found to improve issues surrounding work-family balance, as reported in a study by Jeffery Hill printed in the journal *Family Relations*:

Perceived job flexibility appears to be beneficial both to individuals and to businesses. Given the same workload, individuals with perceived job flexibility have more favorable work-family balance. Likewise, employees with perceived job flexibility are able to work longer hours before workload negatively impacts their work-family balance.¹⁶⁰

Options providing increased workplace flexibility should be provided as a retention tool for officers who sign their IPS as long as they serve in static staff positions where these options can be employed effectively.¹⁶¹

Other Armed Forces have implemented similar type policies in order to deal with their own retention issues. Australia, New Zealand and Belgium offer reduced work weeks and job sharing options in order to meet family commitments or simply reduce

¹⁵⁹ Miller, *Phased Retirement Keeps Boomers in the Workforce*, 61.

¹⁶⁰ Jeffrey Hill and others, "Finding an Extra Day a Week: The Positive Influence of Perceived Job Flexibility on Work and Family Life Balance" *Family Relations* Volume 50, Number 1 (2001), 49.

¹⁶¹ This arrangement should not cause any divisions between those officers in command positions and those in staff positions. Command is a privilege granted to a select few who are well aware of the demands that it imposes. Retaining these officers is not usually a problem, and for those who may decide that the personnel costs of command are too high, they always have the option of electing to forgo command and take a staff position, at which time they will benefit from these new arrangements as well.

their workload.¹⁶² In Belgium, France and Denmark, long service members are allowed to take extended leave periods to acquire new skills or just recharge their batteries before carrying on with their duties.¹⁶³ Another idea, which both the UK and US offer, is the option to be posted to a preferred location upon signing a new contract.¹⁶⁴ The small size of the CF would restrict how this could be used in Canada, but as family stability and spousal employment were two of the primary factors listed as why personnel quit, decreasing or eliminating postings past the 20 YOS mark would address both with one change. The use of these policies by other Armed Forces, their pervasive use in the civilian sector, and in some cases in other Federal Government departments, means that they should at least be attempted on a trial basis as part of the CF retention policy.

One option which the Canadian Forces does have, which works completely counter to its retention strategy, is the Class B reservist.¹⁶⁵ A military HR report in 2003 stated that “A significant number of those who leave state that they wish to take advantage of the possibility of combining their pension with a civilian salary.”¹⁶⁶ The Class B system allows them to do so while remaining in uniform. Within the Army, in November 2009, over 50% of the 659 Class B officers were drawing a Regular Force pension.¹⁶⁷ Recent newspaper articles, citing access to information reports, have claimed that there are dozens of senior officers within the CF serving as full-time reservists

¹⁶² Canada. Department of National Defence, *HR 2020 Internal Assessment*, 41.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 41.

¹⁶⁴ Johansen, *Military and Retention Strategies: United Kingdom*, 2G-6 ; Shanker, *Young officers Leaving Army at a High Rate*.

¹⁶⁵ A Class B Reservist is a member of the Reserve Force who works fulltime in the CF at 85% of the pay of their Regular Force counterparts.

¹⁶⁶ Canada. Department of National Defence, *HR 2020 Internal Assessment*, 32.

¹⁶⁷ Lieutenant-Colonel Francois Casault, Army G1 Plans, e-mail correspondence with the author, 21 January 2010.

despite drawing a pension.¹⁶⁸ Under the terms of this program, the reasons seem clear. Officers can often transfer from the Regular Force to the Reserve Force, where they start collecting their pensions while continue to draw 85% of their former pay. The Canadian Forces is therefore giving officers between a 25% and 55% pay raise to quit the Regular Force. And while these officers do remain in uniform, as reservists they are not deployable (unless they volunteer), they are not movable, and they receive a mandatory 30 day break each year. The Class B program basically addresses all of the reasons people quit the CF listed in the exit survey, but at an extraordinary cost. Regular Force personnel are obviously finding the benefits of this option appealing and therefore the CF should adopt some of these benefits for its retention strategy. Reduced postings and fewer deployments are two benefits which directly relate to the exit survey and could be offered to officers who sign their IPS. As long as the Class B system remains in place, however, it will continue to overwhelm any retention policy which the CF might develop. The Class B system should therefore not be open to any individual receiving a Regular Force pension.

Retaining the officers already serving in the Canadian Forces has the potential of being the most effective method in addressing the shortage of officers that the CF is facing. Since the shortage of officers in the middle ranks lines up with the career point where many officers are retiring, this is where retention policies should be focused. As Lieutenant-Commander McCabe wrote in his CFC paper on retention: "Canadian Forces retention initiatives should concentrate on building high retention rather than trying to

¹⁶⁸ Kathleen Harris, "Double Dipping Double Time," *Toronto Sun*, sec. News, 17 November, 2009, <http://www.torontosun.com/news/canada/2009/11/17/11771441-sun.html> (accessed 17 November 2009).

buy low attrition.”¹⁶⁹ While this is certainly true, if the end state is to convince more Majors and Lieutenant-Colonels to decide to serve beyond 20 years, then a strategy which addresses both is going to be more successful than one that does not. High retention will come from policies that address quality of life issues, such as reduced posting frequencies, fewer deployments, and flexible work schedules. Low attrition can be achieved through financial incentives, such as retention bonuses and funds for academic upgrading. By combining both aspects, the UK Armed Forces and US Army have had success in increasing the number of personnel who have elected to remain in uniform.¹⁷⁰ The CF must also ensure that it does not counter its own retention efforts by actually offering incentives to leave, such as is the case with the current reserve Class B system. While there are costs involved in implementing these options, they are a fraction of the costs of recruiting and training a replacement.¹⁷¹ Therefore, developing a retention program that focuses on both monetary and non-monetary benefits, such as those discussed in this chapter, represents the most effective manner in which to keep the officers already serving and mitigate the problems caused by personnel shortages.

Hiring from the Outside

In addition to promoting select individuals more quickly, and enhancing the CF's retention strategies, another option involves focusing on a third group of individuals who exist outside the Regular Force. Given the number of personnel needed to fill all the vacant positions within the officer corps, in some cases it may make sense and be

¹⁶⁹ McCabe, *Addressing CF Retention Concerns - Improving Job Satisfaction through Job Design*, 7.

¹⁷⁰ Shanker, *Young Officers Leaving Army at a High Rate*; Net News Publisher for World News, *British Armed Forces show a Continued Upward Trend in both Recruitment and Retention*.

¹⁷¹ Canada. Department of National Defence, *HR 2020 Internal Assessment*, 41.

practicable for the CF to hire individuals with the skill sets that it needs from outside the organisation. These potential recruits can be divided into two categories: those with military experience and those without. Those with military experience include officers who have previously left the CF for a variety of reasons, officers serving in the Reserve Force, and officers who have served or are serving in one of Canada's allies' forces. There are also people outside the CF who have no military experience, but possess technical or specialized skills that are in demand. Although these people would not have the military leadership skills or experience to ever occupy command positions, with basic military training they could function in specific technical or staff roles and thus free up other personnel for positions requiring the experience gained from years of military service. All of these personnel would represent actual additions to the institution: people who, with a minimal amount of training, might quickly move into key mid-level vacancies and reduce the stresses and burdens caused by the shortages that exist within the CF today.

There are many former or part-time military officers who possess the leadership skills and attributes that the CF is looking for but are not in the Regular Force. The challenge will be establishing a system that allows them to be found, vetted, and, if they are suitable, offered a contract to serve in a timely fashion. The CF needs to develop a method of targeting the three groups already mentioned for direct enrollment into the mid-ranks of the officer corps.

The most obvious group are those who left recently. They have the necessary training and experience, as well as a thorough knowledge of the organization. Trying to hire back some of the large number of officers who left at their 20 years of service point

would help the rank levels which are suffering the worst shortages. The current economic situation, combined with the proposed improvements to the quality of life within the Armed Forces, could potentially make the CF an attractive option for them again. To facilitate this, the CF needs to, first, make the changes mentioned, second, advertise these changes to the target audience, and finally, make the re-enrollment process as simple and efficient as possible. In fact, the need to improve reentry procedures for former members was identified as far back as 2003.¹⁷² The CF has gone a long way in addressing these challenges in a new policy that was released in April 2009 which streamlined the process of returning to fulltime service.¹⁷³ A campaign to inform these former members of the changes that have occurred since they left combined with the fact that they can now return at their former ranks needs to be conducted if this program is to achieve its maximum potential.

Another group that should be targeted for employment in the Regular Force are officers serving in the Reserve Force, specifically those serving in Class B positions. These officers often complete the same, or at least very similar, training as their Regular Force counterparts, and in many cases have more operational experience. Those who are employed in Class B positions have already shown a willingness to serve fulltime in the CF and represent a group who may be enticed to serve in the Regular Force. The CF does have a Component Transfer program in place that allows personnel to switch from one force to the other, which, as of 15 January 2010, 86 officers had taken advantage of

¹⁷² Ibid, 41.

¹⁷³ Canada. Department of National Defence, *CANFORGEN 072/09: CF Retention Strategy - Improved Procedures to Return to Regular Force Service* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2009).

in FY 2009/2010.¹⁷⁴ By restricting the number of Class B positions and highlighting the advantages to serving in the Regular Force many more may be convinced to make the switch. In the Army alone there are over 650 officers serving in Class B positions, so across the CF these personnel represent a large pool of talent which can be drawn on.

The third group of officers which should be specifically targeted, although with some diplomatic tact, are former or currently serving officers in allied nations. Other Western nations often have similar structures and training as the CF, which allows their personnel to transfer to the service in Canada with minimal impact to themselves or the CF. The CF Recruiting Group does have a program now which allows officers from other countries to join the CF. The program usually recruits between 10 and 15 officers per year at the Major and Lieutenant-Colonel ranks, with the Chief of Defence Staff having the authority to waive Canadian citizenship rules.¹⁷⁵ Given the current economic situation in many countries, there is the potential to increase the scope of this program in the coming years. In a recent defence review, the Royal United Services Institute in the UK stated “The growing costs of UK defence capabilities, combined with cuts in the ministry of defence budget as a result of the nation’s fiscal crisis, will make it impossible to preserve current numbers service personnel.”¹⁷⁶ It goes on to estimate the UK Armed Forces will be reduced by 20% over the next 5 years, a reduction of almost 40,000 personnel.¹⁷⁷ Given the historic and ongoing similarities between Armed Forces of Canada and the UK, this large group of soon to be redundant military personnel

¹⁷⁴ Captain Chris Otis, D Mil C 7-5 Component Transfer, e-mail correspondence with the author, 26 January 2010.

¹⁷⁵ Captain Graham White, CF Recruiting Group HQ R5 Plans 2, e-mail correspondence with the author, 29 January 2010.

¹⁷⁶ Royal United Services Institute, *RUSI Future Defence Review* (UK: RUSI, 2010), <http://www.rusi.org/news/ref:N4B4C60CD6E4DE/> (accessed 27 March 2010).

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

represents a large pool of qualified individuals which could be targeted by the CF to fill critical vacancies. While Canada does not want to be seen as trying to poach another country's serving military personnel, a policy focusing on attracting former British officers could actually prove advantageous to both countries.

In addition to seeking out people who possess military experience, the CF also needs to consider employing individuals without any military experience in certain circumstances. The concept of enrolling individuals directly into midgrade officer ranks is not new and is known as lateral entry. The *HR2020 Internal Assessment* completed for CMP in 2003 described lateral entry as "allowing the forces to obtain the skills of very specialized individuals. Individuals would enter at a rate level commensurate with their skills, assuming that such skills were more important than their military skills."¹⁷⁸ The challenge will be determining what those skills are and what MOSIDs they should apply to.

The US Armed Forces use lateral entry in very limited areas. Currently, most Medical Corps, Medical Specialty, Veterinarian, Dental, and Judge Advocate General Corps officers enter the US Army via lateral entry. Once they are enrolled, these officers then "serve in duties focused upon the provision of professional services and not as leaders of troop units."¹⁷⁹ The US Department of Defense is currently looking at ways to increase the use of lateral entry in the future, which has led to several reports on the advantages and disadvantages.¹⁸⁰ The issue is succinctly described in a paper written for

¹⁷⁸ Canada. Department of National Defence, *HR 2020 Internal Assessment*, 41.

¹⁷⁹ Casey Wardynski, David S. Lyle and Michael J. Colarusso, *Towards a US Army officer corps Strategy for Success: Retaining Talent* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2010), <http://www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil/> (accessed 3 February 2010), 61.

¹⁸⁰ RAND Corporation, *Evaluating Options for Expanding Lateral Entry into Enlisted Military Occupations* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defence Research Institute, 2004).

the Strategic Studies Institute by three retired senior US officers who are now all professors at the United States Military Academy in West Point:

A 35-year-old project manager at Microsoft, for example, may possess an abundance of the general skills demanded by the Army in its core talent segment of field grade officers. He or she will not, however, command the specific knowledge and behaviors required to plan a battalion hasty defense, effectively represent the Army to the news media, predict enemy courses of action, or care for the family of a fallen comrade. Nor will he or she immediately acculturate to a profession unlike any in the private sector, one that employs deadly force within a moral ethical framework as sanctioned by responsible civil authorities. The officer ethos is honed across a series of progressive entry-level experiences, allowing the Army to observe the degree to which its junior leaders embody it while the scope of their authority is still relatively narrow. Therefore, whether the Army seeks to expand lateral entry in some areas or not, it is clear that there will always be significant limits on its ability to buy talent from outside.¹⁸¹

Clearly, lateral entry officers will not have the skill sets to be fully employable within the CF. They would not be eligible for employment in command billets or positions that included direct supervision and assessment of subordinates. However, within the CF that still leaves a large number of staff and advisor positions open as possible places where a lateral entry officer could be employed.

How to decide which MOSIDs to open lateral entry up to is described by Karen Tyson in her report on Lateral Entry of Military Personnel for the Institute of Defense Analyses. In determining if a trade is suitable to lateral entry Tyson notes: “If the military has virtually all the people who are in an occupation, such as infantry, then clearly there can be no lateral entry. The opportunities for lateral entry in an occupation expand as the number of civilians in that occupation expands.”¹⁸² This criterion would have to be balanced with where the needs exist, and even then in only limited numbers.

¹⁸¹ Wardynski, Lyle and Colarusso, *Towards a US Army officer corps Strategy for Success: Retaining Talent*, 3.

¹⁸² Karen W. Tyson and Stanley A. Horowitz, *Lateral Entry of Military Personnel* (Alexandria, Virginia: Institute for Defence Analyses, 1992), 17.

For example, the CF is short of logistics officers. A senior supply manager from Walmart or from Purolator Courier, who is an expert in organizing and moving large quantities of supplies from point A to point B, could bring the CF new skills which may be lacking internally, as well as teaching serving officers the current 'best practices' from the civilian world. This combination provides a win-win scenario for the CF. This also holds true for lawyers, doctors, dentists, public affairs officials, and other support trades. While the CF would need to continue to generate many of the officers within these trades internally to fill key command and control positions, the 20% to 30% that these trades are short could be made up through a lateral entry program.

The success of such a program would be dependant on three factors, two of which are outside the CF's control. Tyson makes the point: "A necessary condition for lateral entry in the military is the existence of a civilian market in the particular occupational specialty. In a slack market, it will be relatively easy for the military to recruit specialists. In a tight labor market, it will be more difficult."¹⁸³ Therefore the greater the number of individuals qualified in a specific field and the poorer the overall economic state of the country, the greater the number of applicants a lateral entry program would likely attract. The CF has no influence over either of these points. The third factor, which the CF can influence, is compensation. In their research for the US Department of Defense, the RAND Corporation states: "Crafting an appropriate incentive structure can be central to the success or failure of a lateral entry program."¹⁸⁴ The CF has experience offering enrollment bonuses to individuals with specialized, in demand skills, such a

¹⁸³ Tyson and Horowitz, *Lateral Entry of Military Personnel*, 12.

¹⁸⁴ RAND Corporation, *Evaluating Options for Expanding Lateral Entry into Enlisted Military Occupations*.

medical doctors and engineers. Such a bonus may be required again if a lateral entry program is to be successful.

Given the lack of military culture and experience these individuals would have, where they are employed and the numbers in which they are hired must be closely controlled.¹⁸⁵ But, as identified in a report by the RAND Corporation to the US Department of Defense, filling gaps in personnel profiles is a valid goal for which lateral entry could be considered.¹⁸⁶ Given the gaps the CF is currently experiencing, combined with the high unemployment rate due to the current economic situation, it is an option that should be considered now.

The Canadian Forces needs to recruit more skilled people directly into the stressed ranks of the officer corps. Promoting from within and retaining the people currently serving are key elements to reducing the problems caused by shortages, but the only way to actually grow the net numbers of serving officers is to look outside of the organization. The options presented in this chapter do that. The CF already has programs that allow reservists to component transfer to the Regular Force, allow former serving officers to re-enroll, and allow officers from allied nations to join the Canadian Forces. By making the changes recommended to increase retention, the CF will in fact be making the military more appealing to these groups currently outside the organization as well. The CF should also consider using lateral entry as a means of decreasing the vacancies within select support and advisor trades. Enrolling limited numbers of people directly into the middle ranks of these MOSIDs will help alleviate the short term stresses

¹⁸⁵ Wardynski, Lyle and Colarusso, *Towards a US Army officer corps Strategy for Success: Retaining Talent*, 60.

¹⁸⁶ RAND Corporation, *Evaluating Options for Expanding Lateral Entry into Enlisted Military Occupations*.

caused by a lack of personnel while at the same time bringing valuable skill sets into the organization that will only help in the long term. The numbers of people who might take advantage of these options increase when combined with the economic difficulties currently being experienced in Canada and other Western countries. In combination these measures can collectively make a solid contribution to solving the problems within the officer corps.

Conclusion

Since 2000, the trained effective strength of the CF officer corps has slowly fallen further and further behind its preferred manning levels. These shortages are most strongly felt in the middle ranks from Captain to Lieutenant-Colonel. In the past, sufficient numbers of qualified junior officers existed to fill these vacancies through internal promotions. However, this time several issues are preventing that from being possible. First, these ranks represented most of the growth in the officer corps over the past decade, increasing the overall numbers of qualified personnel needed. Second, the officers currently serving in these ranks are leaving the Forces in record numbers once they qualify for an annuity, decreasing the number of serving officers in the organization. Finally, due to the demographics of the CF caused by the Force Reduction Plan of the 1990s, the cohort of officers at the 12 to 17 years of service point is far smaller than that at the 17 to 20 years of service point, meaning there are not enough qualified officers in the CF to replace those who are leaving. Due to the length of time it takes to achieve the rank of Major or Lieutenant-Colonel, these three points collectively mean that regardless

of how many new officers are recruited by the CF, it will be many years until the officer corps is able to achieve its PML at all rank levels.

Not having a full complement of officers is causing a number of problems for the organization. The duties of the vacant positions must be reassigned to other officers, increasing their workloads. The focus then becomes managing today's problems and other initiatives or projects get postponed or cancelled. Commanders, desperate to improve the situation, often try and hire a Class B reservist as a temporary measure, and in doing so actually convince an officer to quit the Regular Force to apply for the Class B position, making the situation worse. Deployments, courses, augmentee tasks, and parental leave, cumulatively add to the vacant positions, making the situation for many organizations that are lower on the VCDS manning priority list very difficult.

Given the impact of the problem and the likely time for recruiting alone to solve it, a strategy needs to be developed in order to mitigate the issue in the short to medium term. As there is no single solution to the problem, an effective strategy needs to address the issue from multiple directions. First, increased promotions from within the Forces can help alleviate the problem at the Captain rank level. By expanding programs to accelerate the promotions of Lieutenants and increase the number of MWOs and CWOs eligible for SRCP, as well as delegating responsibility for these programs to Branch Advisors and Unit Commanding officers, more effective use of existing personnel can be made. Next, a comprehensive strategy to increase retention of those eligible to depart with an annuity needs to be developed. By focusing on the quality of life issues raised in the CF Exit Survey and implementing a re-signing bonus, the reasons why many are leaving at the 20 years of service mark can be addressed. Lastly, talent outside the

Regular Force needs to be recruited directly into the stressed ranks. Current Class B reserve officers, retired Regular Force officers, and officers from allied countries, all possess the military skills and qualifications that make it possible to enroll them into the middle ranks. In some cases, civilians with specialized skill sets should be considered for lateral entry into those same ranks in specific MOSIDs. Combined, these three strategies will have the effect of reducing the number of vacant officer positions within the CF over a much shorter time period than solely relying on recruiting.

The Canadian Forces needs to be ready to undertake any operation which the government gives it. To be ready to execute this mission, people are the CF's most important element and personnel shortages impact its ability to perform. By increasing promotions of those below the stressed ranks, retaining more of those who are in them, and bringing in more people from outside to fill them, this problem can be mitigated. For this reason, the CF should adopt these strategies to deal with the shortage of officers and the problems that a lack personnel cause the organization.

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