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STRIKING THE BALANCE TO BECOME AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE: SOLUTIONS FOR A BETTER WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN THE CF

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Striking the Balance to Become an Employer of Choice:

Solutions for a Better Work-Life Balance in the CF

By

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GLOSSARY

- CF- Canadian Forces (the military portion of DND)
- CMP –Chief of Military Personnel- The Commander in charge of Human Resources for military members.
- DND-Department of National Defence-Comprised of both military and civilian employees.
- DOD-Department of Defense- US equivalent to DND.
- DRDC-Defence and Research Development Canada- The body tasked with conducting research for the DND.
- FRP-Force Reduction Plan- A program used to reduce the military in size in the 1990s.
- LWOP – Leave without Pay- When a military member is not on paid strength, but still part of the CF.
- MATA-Maternity Allowance- a benefit that allows mothers to get paid up to 93% of their salary for 4 months after having a child.
- MFRC-Military Family Resource Center- community centres on military bases that support military families.
- MOC-Military Occupation Code- A code system that distinguishes various trades within the military.
- MSC-Married Service Couple- two members of the military that are married or common law status.
- NCR –National capital Region- The military base area in Ottawa, and Gatineau. Comprises of several buildings and various locations throughout the city.
- NORAD-Northern Air Defence- A US/Canada alliance to protect the airspace over North America.
- PATA-Paternity Allowance- a benefit that allows members to get paid up to 93% of their salary for 8 months after having or adopting a child.
- PEOPLESOFT-The Software program that allows the military to track HR issues (pay, courses, postings, etc).

PERSTEMPO-The term used to determine how much time a military member spends away from home.

QOL-Quality of Life- A directorate within CMP that deals with various issues aimed to improve the lives of military members.

SCONDVA-Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs- a parliamentary committee whose aim is to study different issues that affect the lives of the military and ex-military.

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INTRODUCTION

An employer of choice is an organization that outperforms its competition in the attraction, development and retention of people with business required talent, often through innovative and compelling human resource programs that benefit both employees and their organizations alike.¹

In today's society, employers are faced with an aging work force. The baby boomers are fast approaching retirement age and there are not enough of the follow-on generations (commonly referred to as generation X and Y) to replace those that are retiring. This leaves generation X and Y at an advantage on the job market. There is an ever increasing labour shortage, leaving these generations with the flexibility to choose their employer. It is for that reason that a potential employer needs to be the employer of choice in order to attract the best possible individual to fulfill its needs. The competition for talent is fierce and will continue to be so as more and more baby boomers take their retirement. Although the recent economic downturn will no doubt slow the problem for a few years as some baby boomers are putting off retirement while waiting for their retirement plans to bounce back, this phenomenon will only slow or delay the inevitable.

In order to be an employer of choice, the potential employer must look at the employees they want to attract, compare what they offer with other competitive markets and ensure that they offer the best pay and benefits to attract potential employees. The

¹ Kenneth Clark, "What Businesses are Doing to Attract and Retain Employees - Becoming an Employer of Choice," *Employee Benefits Journal* (March 2001), P. 21

Canadian Forces (CF) is no exception.² The CF must offer better benefits and pay than competing employees in order to attract the best recruit it can and prevent unnecessary attrition. Within Canadian society, the CF is rather a unique organization to join. It takes a certain type of individual to join an organization that will ask him or her to put their life on the line (called unlimited liability). So, the CF must be even more attractive to a potential employee than perhaps any other organization in order to convince individuals that it is an organization worth joining, and worth risking their lives for.

This paper will demonstrate that the CF is in a current manpower crisis. It suffered substantive downsizing in the 1990s and has not been as successful in its recruiting efforts in recent years as it had hoped to be. In the same time frame, the CF has lost a great deal of personnel through voluntary attrition. The answer is not just in recruiting new members, but also in targeting retention. In order to be successful in retaining its members, the CF needs to study why people are leaving the CF and come up with substantive plans on how to keep these people from leaving. This paper will examine the reasons why people leave the CF, and it will prove that an overwhelming amount of people voluntarily leave because of the unique demands that the CF puts on the member's work-life balance. By targeting the work-life balance problem through comprehensive policies that ease the work-life conflict, the attrition rate in the CF can be reduced.

The work-life balance difficulties are part of today's society. It seems that more and more people are leading very busy lives, attempting to support a career and a complex personal life. Many books, talk shows, and articles are centred on the stresses of

² The abbreviation CF is for Canadian Forces, the military component of the Department of National Defence (DND). When the term CF is used, it is exclusively for military members, whereas DND refers to civilian and military members of the department.

our every day lives and how to become organized to reduce this stress. Many businesses and public organizations have come up with some solutions in the work place in order to reduce the burden on their employees.

For the CF, that means that potential recruits have an option of choosing an organization that offers them some flexibility in their lives. Potential employees, who know the stress a career in the military can put on them, have the option of choosing a work-place that will be more flexible in accommodating their work-life conflict. So, in order to be more competitive as an employee, the CF must address the work-life conflict, and implement policies that facilitate the member's ability to manage their work-life balance.

By examining the Human Resources (HR) framework within the CF, this paper will demonstrate that the CF has not adequately focused on the external environment from which human resources are sourced. It will manifest that the CF has not reacted to voluntary attrition and demographics in a manner that will reduce this attrition and attract new recruits. This paper will determine that an overwhelming number of people release from the CF because of "family-related reason." Finally, this paper will examine in detail two human resource practices that could reduce attrition and attract new recruits: flexible work arrangements and childcare services.

In comparing the private and public sectors within Canada, this paper will find solutions that the CF can implement to ease the burden that the stress of a military career puts on the member's time through Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) and Child Care assistance. The FWA examined will be based on the Public Service model. Secondly, this paper will examine the US military child care system as an example the CF can

follow in order to add flexibility to the military member's schedule and easing the stress that the family places on the military member's time. It is important to keep in mind that the CF must remain operationally focused in all initiatives. The paper will demonstrate how two family friendly work-life balance policies will enhance the operational effectiveness of military members, reduce attrition and increase recruiting within the CF, making it an employer of choice.

SECTION 1-THE CF HR MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

According to the Conference Board of Canada, a talented management should provide a strategic approach to Human Resources and align their HR strategy and processes with the organizational needs.³ Human Resource Management within the CF aligns itself to the orders it receives from the Government of Canada (GoC). In the most recent order, the *2008 Defence Strategy*, four military capabilities, personnel, equipment, readiness and infrastructure, were highlighted for investment by the government in to allow the department to build a modern, first class military. They are depicted in the following graph:

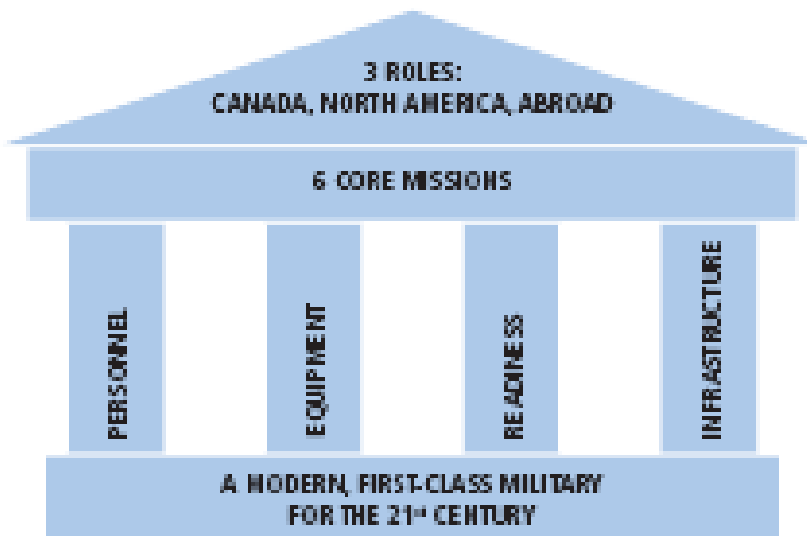


Figure 1: Canada Defence Strategy⁴:

³ Conference Board of Canada, *The Strategic Value of People: Human Resources Trends and Metrics* Conference Board of Canada,[2006].

⁴ Mike Blanchfield, "Army may Need Operational Pause in 2011: General," <http://www.thestarphoenix.com/news/Army+need+operational+pause+2011+General/1370594/story.html>

Under personnel, the government has recognized that “people are Defence’s most important resource,” and that to rebuild the CF into a first class modern military means “recruiting the best and brightest that Canadian Communities have to offer.”⁵ The Defence Strategy has also stated that the CF will be funded to increase its numbers to 70,000 regular force and 30,000 reserve force personnel. As early as 2005, the CF has been mandated by the government to increase its numbers. The 2005 *Canadian Defence Policy Statement* decided to increase the forces by 5,000 regular and 3,000 reserve force members. It further stated that “People remain the greatest strength of Canada’s military. We must ensure that they and their families enjoy the quality of life they deserve⁶.” The Government of Canada has officially recognized the importance of its military human resources and that their families remain a priority.

Within the department itself, the management of these soldiers falls within the realm of the Chief of Military Personal Command (CMP). This HR function ensures that the organization has the right people, at the right time, required to conduct the strategic objectives given to the department by the Government of Canada. Whereas the Government of Canada publishes its strategy in the *2008 Defence Strategy*, within the department, this information is transformed into the *Military Personnel Management Doctrine*. Published in 2008, the *Military Personnel Management Doctrine* is an expression of how the Chief of Military Personnel delivers the human resources of the defence capability under the *2008 Defence Strategy*. It provides the common framework

(accessed, March 13, 2009, P. 3. http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/focus/first-premier/June18_0910_CFDS_english_low-res.pdf).

⁵ Ibid., P.3.

⁶ Ibid.

to guide the CF and help standardize personnel management across all three environments (land, navy and air).

To study the CF framework, a comparison can be made with *The Present Military Personnel Management Framework: Where it Came From* written for the Department of Defence (United States Military).⁷ This report suggests that any military strategic framework must take into account four things. First it must focus on the external environment (demographics, economics and mission). It must allow for a match of policies to intent and desired outcome, given the frequently changing external environment. Second, the framework must work as a system. The entire process of recruiting, training, educating, career management must be viewed as an interlinking system. There must be consistency between all parts to make the system functional.⁸ Third, the framework must be flexible and able to respond to the types of changes required. Fourth, the framework needs to be an active instrument of the overall military strategy for the future.

Based on this analysis, it is evident that the CF framework is structured to match this theory. The current CF HR framework works as an interlocking system (second criteria). The CF HR is based on five pillars: Recruit; Train and Educate; Prepare; Support and Honour and Recognize and is depicted graphically as follows:⁹

⁷ Harry Thie and Jefferson Marquis, *The Present Military Personnel Management Framework: Where it Came From* National Defense Research Institute,[September 2001]., P. 34.

⁸ Ibid., Pgs 34-35.

⁹ Department of National Defence, *Canadian Forces Joint Publication (CFJP) 1.0 Military Personnel Management Doctrine* (Ottawa: Government of Canada,[June 2008]). Pgs 4-1 to 4-3

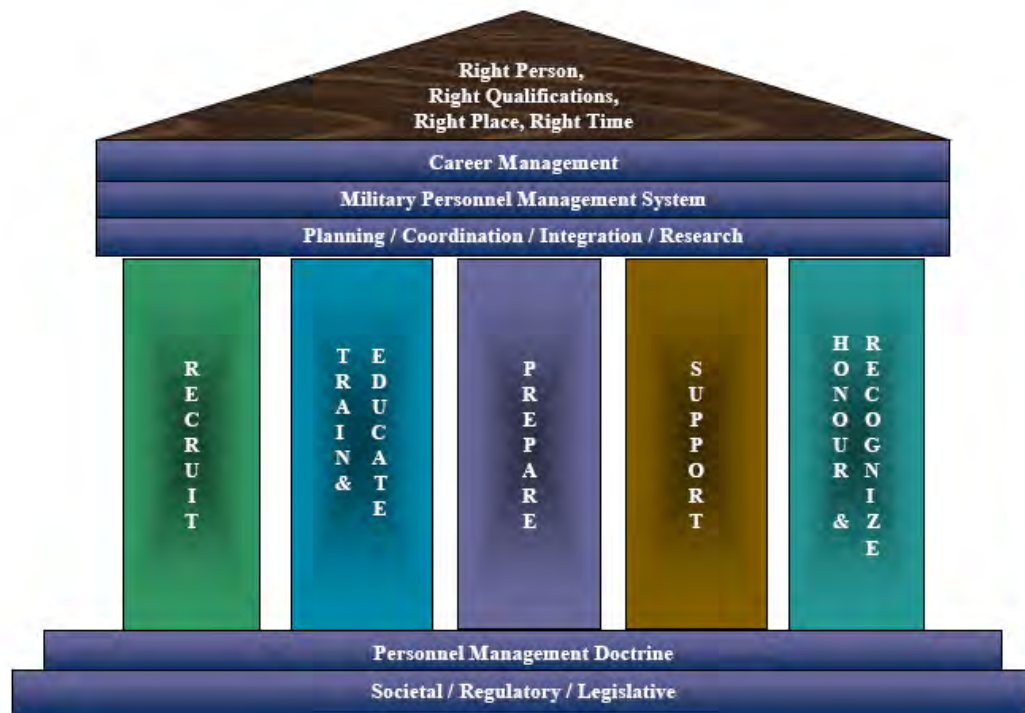


Figure 2: CF Military Personnel Management Conceptual Model¹⁰

This system is based on the Social, Regulatory and Legislative frameworks (acts of parliament, laws, etc) at the base; and the five pillars are interlocked through the coordination, integration and the career and personnel management of the CF members.¹¹ This system is essential in creating the desired outcome: *right person, right qualification, right place, right time.*¹² Looking at the strategic framework of the CF's HR construct and strategy, it appears to be approaching the right direction. It falls into a well organized system that supports the military HR theory discussed above.

The fourth criteria of the theory states that the HR framework needs to be an active instrument of the overall military strategy for the future. The CF HR doctrine links

¹⁰ Ibid. Pgs 4-2

¹¹ Ibid. Pgs 2-4

¹² Ibid. Pgs 5-1

to and is based upon the concepts expressed in *Military Human Resources (HR) Strategy 2020, Facing the People Challenges of the Future*, published in 2002. The Military HR strategic plan is for the CF to make

timely decisions and take effective proactive action to address a continuously changing human resources environment... The establishment and continuous improvement of measurement frameworks... and a strategic HR investment policy will provide the CF with the strategic capability required to anticipate and address future human resource challenges.¹³

Concurrently, the CF HR strategy involves the following strategic objectives: Leadership, Culture, Communication, Consultation, Retention, Recruitment, Professional Development, Transition, Health, Well-Being and HR Systems. The Military HR strategy and the Military HR doctrine combine to form the basis of the Military HR Framework. According the military HR theory in *The Present Military Personnel Management Framework: Where it Came From*, the Canadian HR doctrine appears to meet the criteria; it supports the strategic objectives of the department and is an integral part of the overall strategic objectives of the future. However, what is not clear is how successful the department is at fulfilling their strategic objectives?

To determine HR performance, "HR professionals should judge their performance relative to their firm's own strategy."¹⁴ In the CF, therefore, CMP should assess the performance of the HR strategy as defined in the *Strategy 2020* document relative to the Defence Strategy. The CF's core capabilities are entrenched in the *Defence Strategy: A Modern Military with Clearly Defined Missions and Capabilities*. This document states

¹³ LGen C. Couture, *Military HR Strategy 2020 "Facing the People Challenges of the Future"* (Ottawa: Government of Canada,[2002]), P. 15.

¹⁴ Brian Becker and Mark Huselid, "Measuring HR?" *HR Magazine* 48, no. 12 (Dec, 2003), 56, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=508453691&Fmt=7&clientId=46227&ROQ=309&VName=POD>.

that the CF must remain responsive the Government of Canada to conduct operations. However, as recent as March 9th, 2009, the Chief of the Land Staff (also known as the army commander), Lieutenant-General Andrew Leslie announced to the Senate committee that “by the time 2011 rolls around, a small number of Canadian soldiers will have served on their fifth mission to Afghanistan, while many hundreds will be on the fourth, third and second rotations... attrition and competition from civilian industry are draining away a talented pool of soldiers.¹⁵” The CF’s ability to continue to conduct operations at its current rate is currently in peril. The question remains why? What has failed in our HR strategy and doctrine to put the CF in the position it is in now?

The answer lies in the last two criteria of the theory: the CF framework is not responsive to the outside environment and the framework is not flexible to adapt to the changes required. The next section will demonstrate that the CF has not taken into account demographics into its HR strategy and it has not adapted its policies to reflect these changes.

¹⁵ Blanchfield, *Army may Need Operational Pause in 2011: General*

SECTION 2- THE NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE WORK-LIFE BALANCE PLAN IN THE CANADIAN FORCES

In order to remain competitive, the CF must adapt its policies to reflect the current demographics. According to the Conference Board of Canada, competition for talent in the future will be fiercer than it has been in the past. “Not only is our population aging, but also the supply of skilled labour will be insufficient to meet demand, and there is a shortage of capable talent in the leadership pipeline.”¹⁶ Without essential HR strategic policies to counter the trends of the Canadian demographic, an organization will not be able to maintain its capabilities. Relative HR policies are essential in order to counter the relative threats to human resources. These threats include an aging baby boomer generation that will reach retirement age within the next decade; a reduction in labour force growth from 1.4 per cent in 2006 to as low as 0.2 per cent by 2021 (see chart below) and an increase demand for talented workforce as the complexity of technology increases.¹⁷ The CF HR strategy must therefore work towards countering these tendencies.

¹⁶ Conference Board of Canada, *The Strategic Value of People: Human Resources Trends and Metrics* P. i.

¹⁷ Ibid. Chapter 2, Pg. 7.

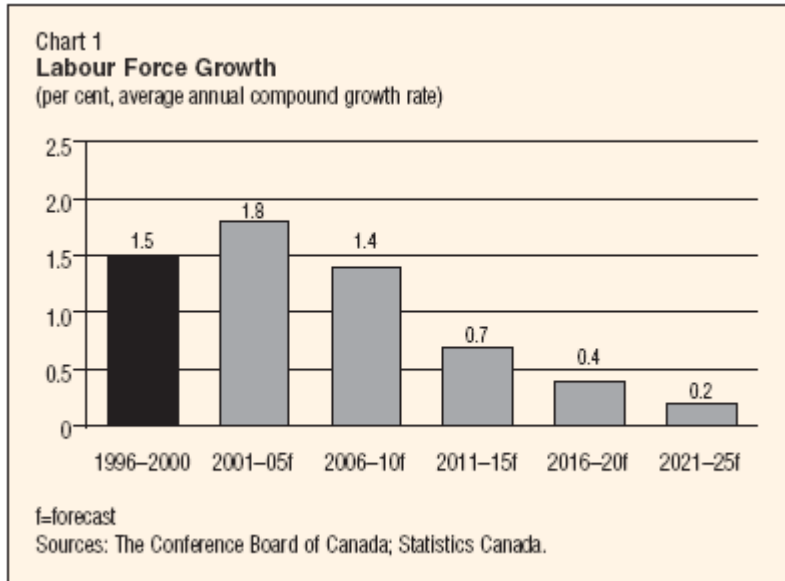


Figure 3: Labour Force Growth¹⁸

The CF, like any other organization needs to be competitive to retain its members and attract recruits. Added to the competition for talent is the need to remain operationally effective and able to fulfill the Defence Strategy mission. This section will demonstrate how the stress of the Work Life Conflict has affected the HR within the CF and has decreased the CF's operational capabilities. The CF must be flexible to these changes and implement policies to reduce this burden.

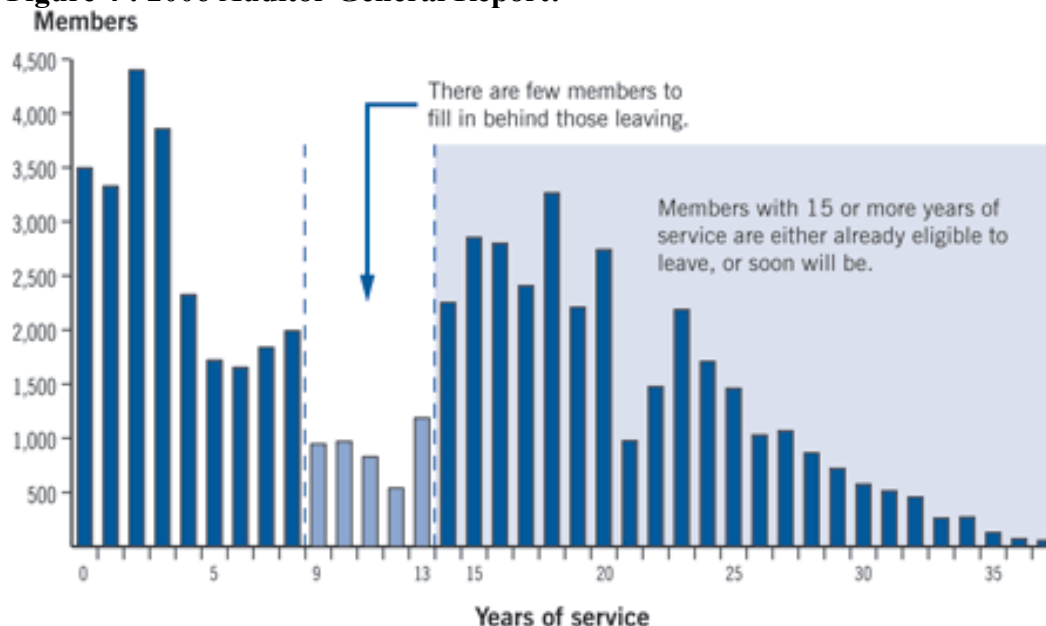
The Current Manpower Crisis In The CF

The CF has been the victim of past government policies that have put it into a current manpower crisis unique compared to many civilian companies. At the end of the Cold War, the Government of Canada was faced with budgetary deficits and turned to the Department of National Defence to reduce its budget in order to help reduce government spending. In the 1994 White Paper, The Department of National Defence's budget was

¹⁸ Ibid. Chapter 2, Pg. 7.

reduced by almost 25%. In order to achieve the drastic cuts to its budget, the CF introduced a Force Reduction Plan (FRP) that targeted certain Military Occupation Codes (MOC).¹⁹ Individuals were offered compensation packages to take early retirement or release. This FRP downsized the forces from 86,000 in 1990 to 62,000 by the end of 1997. This has created a “bubble” of people currently in the 15 year of service mark. The 2006 May Status Report of the Auditor General demonstrated this “bubble” as follows²⁰:

Figure 4 : 2006 Auditor General Report:



This figure (above) was the picture from 2006, many of those people are approaching their 20 year mark in their career, a time when they can benefit from a pension and move on to another career. Demographics, therefore, demonstrate that the CF needs to actively

¹⁹ The FRP was first offered in 1992. It was offered yearly until 1996. In total, 14,000 members took advantage of this programme. (Chief Review Services, 1997), accessed 22 March 2007), 1. Available from http://www.dnd.ca/crs/pdfs/frp_e.pdf; Internet

²⁰ Auditor General of Canada, *2006 May Status Report of the Auditor General* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada,[2006]), http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/aud_ch_oag_200605_2_e_14959.html. accessed 11 Sept 2008

pursue initiatives to retain these members approaching their early retirement options. Is the CF current in its HR strategy to meet the future needs of the CF?

According to the Auditor General of Canada, the personal management system within the CF has lacked the foresight and the ability to predict potential personnel problems. In April 2002, the office of the Auditor General outlined a number of problems with the CF human resources system. They included, among other things, a lack of situation awareness on attrition trends and the lack of vision that was exercised by the FRP.²¹ Furthermore, the Auditor General stated:

For several years the Department did not track reasons for leaving, and now it does not have complete or reliable data that would help it to focus retention efforts. Some survey work that has been completed indicates that most military members who leave voluntarily do so for the following reasons: family concerns, for example, stability and the impact of regular moves, spousal employment, or the time spent away from families (personnel tempo).²²

Although the Auditor General noted the impact of family on retention, little has been done by the CF to address this issue.

In addition to the FRP and the poorly managed human resources system, the voluntary attrition rate has increased dramatically (see figure 5):

²¹ Auditor General of Canada, *2002 Report of the Auditor General to the House of Commons- Chapter 5- National Defence- Recruitment and Retention of Military Personnel* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada,[April 2002]), P. 16

²² Ibid.

Year-to-date: Apr - Dec	FY 07/08		FY 06/07		FY 05/06		FY 04/05	
Admin – Misconduct	10	0%	12	0%	32	1%	18	1%
Medical	608	13%	892	21%	796	23%	868	26%
Voluntary	3,455	74%	2,594	62%	1,926	56%	1,746	52%
Retirement Age	271	6%	427	10%	435	13%	472	14%
Unsatisfactory Service	244	5%	194	5%	205	6%	202	6%
Death	54	1%	72	2%	34	1%	36	1%

Figure 5: CF Attrition Rates²³

In addition to an increased attrition rate, the percentages of the releases that are voluntary have increased from 52% to 74% since 2005. This is having a pronounced affect on operations. According to Defence and Research Development Canada (DRDC), Toronto, “it is projected that the Land Combat and Sea Combat MOC groups will have releases more than four times their pre-FRP numbers and that this situation will continue until 2011....Since 2001 attrition at 20 years of service has almost doubled in number compared to pre-FRP.”²⁴ Losing personal at such a rate, especially in the combat trades has a profound effect on the operational effectiveness of the CF.

To add to the burden of the attrition rate, recruiting efforts have fallen short of targets. The CF in 2007 had a recruiting target of 6,864, yet only was able to recruit 4,968:²⁵ By studying the numbers and looking at the demographics, one can understand

²³ CF Personnel Management Presentation available on Defence Intranet

²⁴ Donna Pickering, *The Relationship between Work-Life conflict/work-Life Balance and Operational Effectiveness in the Canadian Forces* (Toronto: Defence R&D Canada,[2006]), Pg. 23.

²⁵ CF Personnel Management Presentation available on Defence Intranet

the manpower crisis that the CF is now in. As early as 2000, the Defence Planning Guidance gave direction to the Associate Deputy Minister (Human Resources-Military), now called Chief of Military Personnel to “develop a recruitment and retention program that better meets future defence team requirements.”²⁶ However, by 2007, the Performance Management Review briefing given to the Defence Management Committee showed that there was still a very serious retention problem. In fact, despite an expansion target of 1,000 members in that year, the CF only increased by 13 people.²⁷

Despite a HR strategy and framework that appears to be well constructed, members are leaving the military at an alarming rate and recruiting is falling behind targets. The question remains: why are people leaving the military and what can be done to prevent this loss of talent? There have been some surveys done as to why people leave the CF. These surveys, mainly done prior to the current war in Afghanistan, suggest that people generally leave the CF for family related reasons. If human resources are the CF’s primary resource, then everything must be done to retain those that are releasing for voluntary reasons.

Attrition Rates – Why Are People Leaving The CF?

According to *Human Resources Strategy: Focusing on Issues and Actions*, there are several complementary activities that support the creation of the HR strategy: they include “an issues orientation that is used to frame human resources and business agendas; and human resources are being treated as people-related business concerns

²⁶ LGen C. Couture, *CF Retention Strategy ADM (HR-MIL) Group Action Plan* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence,[2001]), P. 7.

²⁷ Department of National Defence, *Defence Management Committee Performance Management Review* (Ottawa: Government of Canada,[12 December 2007]).

integral to successful organizational change.”²⁸ The CF has stated that its people are its greatest resource. It must, in order to remain operational and committed to its defence strategy, be able to have the right person at the right time for the right job. How can the CF ensure success? What is missing in the current CF HR strategy to achieve this mission?

According to *Human Resources Strategy: Focusing on Issues and Actions*

The most effective approach for developing HR strategy appears to be a focus on issues... With this approach, businesses are able to be selective by focusing on a few important, actionable concerns and keep a management view, not an HR staff department view, of critical issues and opportunities.²⁹

How does an organization identify the critical HR issues within their organization? Ideally it “sees how employees view HR issues-through focus groups, interviews or surveys,³⁰” and then “by focusing on the issues, firms are able to: “define their desired state and gaps to be filled in or “source(s) of pain”; be selective by focusing on a few important, actionable concerns; develop a sense of urgency and a commitment to action.³¹”

Therefore, to have an effective HR strategy within the CF, it must focus on the issues of concern to its military members. Parallel to the HR strategy for retention, is the HR strategy for recruiting. Reason dictates that any HR strategy that focuses on the issues need to retain an employee will also benefit the organization for recruiting incentives. Therefore, the CF must examine the reasons why people leave the CF, and implement

²⁸ Randall S. Schuler and James W. Walker, "Human Resources Strategy: Focusing on Issues and Actions," *Organizational Dynamics* 19, no. 1 (Summer90, 1990), 4-19, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=9607245395&site=bsi-live>.

²⁹ Ibid., P.10.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

policies that would retain them. Some exit surveys were conducted over the past decade that may give insight into as to why people voluntarily leave the CF.

Between 1994-1996, LCol Patricia Brennan studied why people leave the CF by reviewing the Canadian Forces Attrition Information Questionnaires. Her findings demonstrate that that the work-life balance disrupts employees significantly enough to make them want to leave the CF:

Figure 6: Top Reasons Why People Leave the CF: ³²

Top Reasons Why People Leave the CF		
REASONS GIVEN(May be more than one)	Men %	Women%
Increase Family Stability	21.6	N/A
Don't want to be separated from Family	18.5	27.4
Return to School	14.4	25.4
Spending too much time away from home	13.8	N/A
Stay at Home and Raise a Family	N/A	19.9
More Challenging Work	14.5	18.4
Conflict with Spouse Career	N/A	18.4

Although many people seem to think that the work-life balance is a merely women's issue, by looking at the statistics of LCol Brennan, it is interesting to note that 53.9% of men gave some family related reason for leaving the military (to increase stability, too much time away from home or to not be separated from their family). For women, a full 47.5 % gave family reasons as the top reasons that they leave the military with 20% stating they left the CF to stay home and raise a family. When you look at both men and women, the family impact is the greatest concern of military members who leave the CF.

³² Lieutenant-Colonel Patricia Brennan, "Storming the Rampart: Employment Equity and the Military" (Masters Thesis, University Of Manitoba), P 72.

A 2001 exit survey conducted by Dr. Canto and Dr Kelloway mirrored the reasons given in LCol Brennan's paper. According to their survey, the top reasons people left the military in 2001 were:

Figure 7: Top Ten Reasons Why CF Members Leave the Force:³³

Top Ten Reasons Why CF Members Leave the Force	
REASONS GIVEN	%
Avoid Family Separation	16.0
Back to School	15.5
Want more Challenging Work	14.9
Increased Family Stability (Est. roots in a community)	13.1
Capitalize on Pension	12.5
Better Paying Job	11.0
Too much Time Away from Home	10.7
Offered a Civilian Job with more Responsibilities	10.4
Unlikely to be promoted	6.3
CF Career Conflicts with Spouse's Career	4.6

Looking at these statistics, it is very clear that 39% left the CF in 2001 because of a type of work-life balance that maybe could have been avoided (16% to avoid family separation; 13% to increase family stability and 10% because of too much time away from home). That is almost 40% of the CF work force that have gone elsewhere because of family related pressures.

³³ Dr Victor Canto and Dr Kevin Kelloway, "Comprehensive Analysis of Canadian Forces Attrition Data, 1988-1999," *Report Prepared for Director Operational Research Personnel Operational Research Team and Directorate of Strategic Human Resource Coordination* (2001), p.119.

A further study conducted in the Canadian Forces (CF) for the purpose of revising the Canadian Forces Attrition Information Attrition Questionnaire (CFAIQ) indicated that PERSTEMPO factors (e.g., frequent and long pre-deployment trainings and deployments themselves), quality of life concerns, and work overload were among the reported reasons (or potential reasons) for leaving the CF.³⁴ More specifically, participants indicated family concerns as being one of the most critical factors in the decision to leave or stay in the military. Inability to balance work and family life, problems associated with being absent from home during postings, lack of support services when members were away from home or were deployed, lack of provisions for single parent families, and spouses'/partners' careers being negatively affected by postings emerged as critical issues under this general theme. According to the participants of this study, heavy workload, high tempo, frequent deployments, and long pre-deployment trainings resulted in being away.³⁵

These three studies are somewhat dated, and were conducted prior to the current operational stress that the war in Afghanistan has put on the CF. However, as demonstrated earlier, attrition rates have increased since 2001, when the CF became involved in Afghanistan. Based on past attrition rates and surveys, one can conclude that the increased operational pace has increased the Work-Life Conflict and people are taking their release to avoid the increased stress.

³⁴ J. Dunn and R. Morrow, "Should I Stay or should I Go: Attrition Questionnaire Revision Project-Phase 1 Findings," (2002).

³⁵ Auditor General of Canada, *2002 Report of the Auditor General to the House of Commons- Chapter 5- National Defence- Recruitment and Retention of Military Personnel* http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_200204_05_e_12378.html#ch5hd4a Accessed on the Internet on January 27, 2009, P. 16.

So why should the CF take on the work-life balance issue? After all, is it not a personal problem? A Public Health Report, based on a survey of over 31,000 Canadian employees working for medium to large organizations (with over 500 employees) found that “work demands, rather than demands from outside work, are the key predictors of role overload and work to family interference.”³⁶ People simply have more work to do in a week than ever before. It is therefore the organization that should reduce the burden on the individual.

The CF is in a unique situation compared to other organizations, because the increase demand on CF workers is compounded by the amount of time that they spend away from home. The 2001 Work-Life Balance Study sponsored by Health Canada, including DND and the CF, found that CF members have high travel demands; in fact CF respondents spent twice as many weekday and weekend nights away as all other respondents (DND civilians, other federal public service and private sector employees). This is in addition to the high operational tempo currently placed on CF members.

A survey in 2001 done by DRDC, Toronto suggests that the work-life issue is a factor affecting the lives of members of the military today more than their civilian counter-parts.

Forty-four percent of CF members reported that work interferes with their family as opposed to only 14% of DND civilian employees. Fifty-one percent of CF members reported experiencing negative spillover from their work life to their family life as opposed to 33% of DND civilian employees.³⁷

³⁶ Dr Linda Duxbury and Dr Christopher Higgins, *Report Four: Who is at Risk? Predictors of Work-Life Conflict* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, [2005]), P. xvi.

³⁷ Pickering, *The Relationship between Work-Life conflict/work-Life Balance and Operational Effectiveness in the Canadian Forces*, Pg. 20., <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA473654&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf> accessed on the internet on 2 December 2008.

This data suggests that the military members are facing more challenges to their everyday lives than other employees in the civilian sector. If the military members are facing a greater strain on their families than other employees, then the CF must look at what these challenges are and ways to assist their members with the challenges in order to reduce the burden and continue to attract and retain employees.

Various literary reviews into the area of work-life balance suggest that employee initiatives that help decrease the work-life conflict will “increased job satisfaction decreased turnover and decreased absenteeism.”³⁸ In a 1995 study done by Grover and Crooker, they found that “various family responsive benefits have a positive effect on affective commitment and turnover intention.”³⁹ A more recent study conducted by Beauregard and Alexandra in 2009 found that the “use of a satisfaction with work schedule flexibility has been associated with increased organizational commitment and reduced turnover.. and voluntary reduced hours have been linked to greater job satisfaction, loyalty and organizational commitment.”⁴⁰

Interestingly, such benefits are not solely used by women, and benefit both genders equally. An examination of various work-life benefits done by Lambert in 1995 found that women did not use support any more than men; however women did use a child day camp program more than men, but men used a sick child care program more than women.⁴¹ Therefore any work-life improvements done within the CF would not only

³⁸ James H. Dulebohn and others, "Employee Benefits: Literature Review and Emerging Issues," *Human Resources Management Review* 19, no. 2 (2009), 86-103.

³⁹ As quoted by Peter Berg, Arne L. Kalleberg and Eileen Appelbaum, *Balancing Work and Family: The Role of High-Commitment Environments*, Vol. 42 Blackwell Publishing Limited, 168-188, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sih&AN=9386989&site=ehost-live>, p. 174

⁴⁰ T. Alexandra Beauregard and Lesley C. Henry, "Making the Link between Work-Life Balance Practices and Organizational Performance," *Human Resources Management Review* 19, no. 1 (March, 2009), 9-22.

⁴¹ S. J. Lambert, "An Investigation of Worker's use and Appreciation of Supporting Workplace Policies," *Academy of Management Proceedings* (1995), 136-140., P. 138.

have a positive effect on retention, but have an equally positive effect on the retention of both women and men.

PERSTEMPO-A Unique CF Burden Adding To The Work-Life Conflict

One of the unique aspects of the Canadian Military is that members must spend a great deal of time away from home. Currently the CF faces a high Operational Tempo (with the ongoing mission in Afghanistan and other regions around the globe) and PERSTEMPO (time spent away from home/family for training, deployments, temporary postings etc.) is higher than it has been seen since the Korean War.⁴² Ongoing operations have put a tremendous strain on families. Current deployments overseas are for six to nine months. However, most members going to Afghanistan start the training for deployment (called pre-deployment training) a full seven months prior to departure. A great deal of the training is conducted at central locations, such as Wainwright or Kingston. During the pre-deployment training, little time is given for members to travel back to their families. So, unless the individual who is deploying is from the area where the training is being conducted, the pre-deployment training is time away from their home. That means that for someone deploying overseas, they spend over a year away from home.

The current policy within DND is to have members spend 12 months at home prior to deploying on another mission. However, if an individual is in a trade where there is a shortage of people and a high demand of the service in theatre, then the individual

⁴² Department of National Defence, *D STRAT HR NEWS*, 2004, , http://hr3.ottawa-hull.mil.ca/dstrathr-drhstrat/docs/pdf/DStratHRnewsVol3_e.pdf. on 11 Sept 2007

will come home from tour, spend about six months at home and then start the pre-deployment training for the next rotation into theatre.

The CF has only recently started tracking the PERSTEMPO because of several complaints received both through SCONDVA and different focus groups and exit surveys. One such focus group was conducted in 2001 entitled, *Should I stay or Should I Go?* with regular force members to determine what would cause them to leave the CF.⁴³ Most suggested that the work-life balance and the PERSTEMPO is the main reasons they are thinking of leaving the CF. “In fact, research participants stated that they were being forced to choose between leaving the CF or losing their families because their families were unable to cope with the extent of their absences and overtime.”⁴⁴

To add to the problem, the PERSTEMPO has increased dramatically in the past 18 years. Since 1991, when the CF became involved in the Balkans, deployments overseas have seen as many as 2500 soldiers gone every six months. The following graph depicts how the PERSTEMPO has increase the burden of the CF soldiers.

⁴³ Pickering, *The Relationship between Work-Life conflict/work-Life Balance and Operational Effectiveness in the Canadian Forces*, Pg. 24.

⁴⁴ Ibid. Pg. 25.

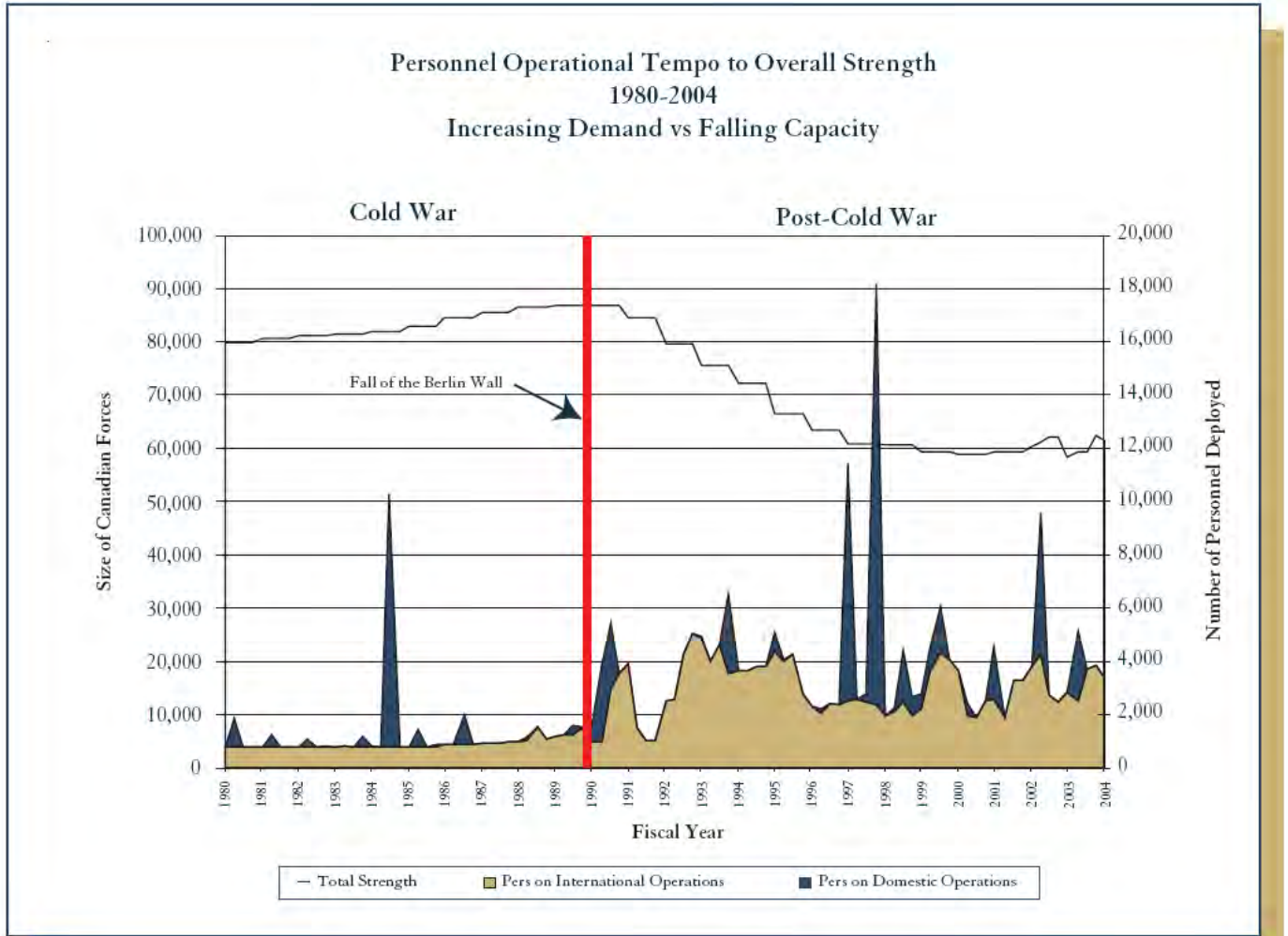


Figure 8 : PERSTEMPO to overall CF Strength⁴⁵

In addition to more deployments, personnel are on repeat tours overseas, which have increased the burden on the CF family. Up until 1995, only 15,000 military members had been on a tour. From 1996-2001, that number increased to 25,000.⁴⁶ Yet, these figures are before the CF became involved in Afghanistan (2001). Since 2001, there have been over 3000 members deployed every six months, adding approximately another

⁴⁵ Government of Canada, *A Role of Pride and Influence in the World: Defence* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, [2005]), http://www.forces.gc.ca/admpol/newsite/downloads/Canada_Defence_2005.pdf. Accessed on Feb 25, 2009.

⁴⁶ Auditor General of Canada, *2002 Report of the Auditor General to the House of Commons- Chapter 5- National Defence- Recruitment and Retention of Military Personnel*

35,000 people to the list of those that have been on a tour to Afghanistan alone. That is over half of the current CF population that has deployed.

The burden of these operational tours on the Canadian Military has indeed stretched its human resources to a breaking point. Canada has surpassed most other NATO countries in its ability to provide people for missions, and this has had an enormous strain on the HR system. “As recently as May 2004, Canada ranked second among NATO nations in the percentage of personnel deployed on multinational operations and sixth in terms of total numbers.” To add to the military burden of deployments, the military member must also attend several mandatory professional development courses. With each change in rank, there is some level of education or professional development required. Each trade is different on the requirements, but some courses required for promotion can last up to a year. These courses are also tracked within the CF’s human resources software on the member’s PERSTEMPO.

The PERSTEMPO is a real problem that the CF cannot necessarily address due to operational commitments. That is to say, that the CF must be able to send their soldiers wherever the Government of Canada so desires. The time away from home that a soldier faces is often beyond the control of the military. This is understood as part of the job on the part of the soldier, and the recruit. However, the proposals that will be discussed in section 2 and section 3 can certainly alleviate the burdens placed on employees when they are not deployed, and to some degree, help reduce some of the stress when they are deployed.

Work-Life Balance and Women in the CF

The work-life balance is perhaps most important to women. Although it is evident from the exit surveys that work-life balance affects both men and women and their decision to leave the CF, it is clear from the various statistics discussed above that the work-life balance tends to affect women more than men. Our society still looks towards the woman as the primary caregiver, taking care of both the family and the home. A Canadian study that looked at the household division of labour between parents found that in most dual-income families, the wife had primary responsibility for housework.⁴⁷ In another survey conducted by Human Resources and Development Canada in 1998, 52% of wives employed full-time had all of the responsibility for daily housework, and only 10% of dual-earning couples shared housework responsibilities equally.⁴⁸ Not only do women do more of the household duties, they are also more likely to take care of the children. According to various literature reviews, women who are mothers or part of dual-career couples “are apt to have greater difficulty in balancing their work and family lives than are men, single persons, or those who are married to a full-time homemaker.”⁴⁹

This clearly demonstrates that women continue to bear the main responsibilities for child care and household work. It is because of these reasons; women tend to be under more pressure to perform both roles: careerist and mother. A woman tends to be under a great deal more stress balancing both work and home in order to succeed. It is because of these pressures that the work-life balance affects the attrition rate for women more than

⁴⁷ Human Resources and Development Canada, *Lessons Learned: Gender Equality in the Labour Market* (Ottawa: Government of Canada,[2001]), P. 6.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, P. 6.

⁴⁹ Berg, Kalleberg and Appelbaum, *Balancing Work and Family: The Role of High-Commitment Environments*, 168-188.

men. Therefore, policies that target the work-life balance in the CF on a whole will also improve the retention of women.

The CF currently has 17.2 percent of women in the military.⁵⁰ Although being a soldier is not a traditional role for a woman, the CF is still actively recruiting women in an attempt to increase the numbers of women serving. Part of the reason is to increase its recruit base (up to 50% of the population are women, being an attractive employer to women would increase the number joining the CF) and part of the reason is legislation. In 1989, the Human Rights Tribunal ruled that the Canadian Forces must remove gender based employment barriers. A full ten years later, in 1998, the Chief of Review Service conducted a report on the status of gender integration within the CF to assess how the CF has performed since the 1989 decision. It reported that the CF was still falling behind its targets, as it only managed to increase the percentage of women by less than one percent. It recommended four objectives to be implemented by the department within the next 10 years.

The report gave the CF four objectives that will assist in retaining women in the CF. The 4th objective of the report, *Does a supportive work environment exist for women in the CF?* suggested that the CF needs to change the environment for women, to make it more supportive for them. In order to be considered a successful in this fourth objective, the following criteria had to be met:

1. Women are not leaving because of experiences with discrimination or harassment.
2. Harassment cases dealing with gender issues are properly addressed.
3. The overall culture/attitude is positive and encouraging for women in the CF.

⁵⁰ LCdr Couture presentation to the Command Team Course, on April 7, 2009, Kingston, On.

4. Career and family can be successfully combined for CF women.

5. CF men are aware of, and are sensitive to, gender integration issues.

6. Attrition rates for women are comparable to those for men.⁵¹

It is now 2009, more than 10 years after this report and a full 20 years after the Human Right Tribunal made its inaugural decision. Yet the CF has not been successful in implementing the objective highlighted by the Chief of Review Services. Women still do not work in an environment that completely supports them, they cannot successfully combine career and family, and their attrition rate is higher than those of men because of it.

Although both women and men do leave the military for family related reasons, there tend to be more women than men leaving the CF due to family pressures. Women cannot find the Work-Life Balance needed to retain both a successful career and family life.

The Officer of the Auditor General in her 2002 report stated:

Female attrition has been higher than male attrition. Between 1989 and 2000, the overall rate among women was 7.6 percent; it was 6.9 percent for men. Data on attrition in minority groups are not available. We found few retention initiatives aimed at women or minority groups.⁵²

Retention issues and the lack of supportive policies for women with families have had a significant impact on gender integration. It is difficult to maintain a critical mass of women in the CF if policies do not support their ability to be both a career woman and a

⁵¹ Chief Review Services, *Evaluation of Gender Integration in the CF* (Department of National Defence: ,[1989]), http://crs.dwan.dnd.ca/pdfs/GenInt_e.pdf. Accessed on November 14, 2008. Bold letters put in place for emphasis on the portions of the report relative to this paper.

⁵² Auditor General of Canada, *2002 Report of the Auditor General to the House of Commons- Chapter 5- National Defence- Recruitment and Retention of Military Personnel*

mother. According to the statistics, career and family issues still remains one of the main reasons women leave the military. Although the CF has made some policy changes in recent years that help encourage women to stay (implementing maternity (MATA) and parental (PATA) benefits is one example),⁵³ according to the a 2003 study, 20% of those women interviewed felt that they were “treated unfairly” because of family responsibilities (e.g., child or elder care, pregnancy) and that this was a factor in their decision to leave the CF.⁵⁴ There are many areas where the CF could make improvements in order to allow women to successfully combine their career and family.

The Effect Of Work-Life Balance On Productivity

In any organization, the stress that the high paced tempo of a career and family responsibility places on the individual decreases the effectiveness of the workforce. According to the Conference Board of Canada’s *Survey of Canadian Workers on Work-Life Balance* in 1999, twice as many Canadians reported moderate to high levels of stress as a result of trying to balance their work and home lives, a sharp increase compared to 1989 (46.2 percent in 1999; 26.7 percent in 1989).⁵⁵ These stress levels are reflected in health problems and absences. Respondents who report a high degree of stress in balancing work and family life also report missing an average of 7.2 days of work while

⁵³ Current MATA and PATA benefits (implemented in 2001) allow a mother to take 4 months off after the birth of a child followed by a PATA benefit of 8 months that can be split between the mother and father. This leave is topped up at 93% of salary by the CF. Prior to 2001, mothers were entitled to 4 months MATA at 93% and the PATA benefit was only 2 months with no top up of EI benefits.

⁵⁴ Pickering, *The Relationship between Work-Life conflict/work-Life Balance and Operational Effectiveness in the Canadian Forces*, Pg. 27.

⁵⁵ Human resources Development Canada, "Survey of Canadian Workers on Work-Life Balance in 1999," http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/spila/wlb/16benefits_costs_businesscase.shtml, accessed on 11 sept 2008.

those who report very little stress in balancing work and family have missed, on average, only 3.6 days.⁵⁶

In another study, Statistics Canada found that Canadian workers lost an average of 5.7 days in 1998; women averaged 6.7 days lost, while men were absent for 4.9 days due to family related reasons. The presence of children, especially pre-school children, was a primary indicator of time lost: employees with pre-schoolers lost an average of 6.4 days, compared to 5.6 days for employees without children.⁵⁷ With this information from both Statistics Canada and the Conference Board of Canada, it shows that work-life balance issues also result in time lost for the employer. In an organization such as the CF where the stress of the job is so high, this adds to the absentee rate and affects the operational effectiveness of the CF.

It is evident, that the stress of family rearing can have an impact on a worker. However, the main work force that both civilian and CF employers want to hire is those that are in the child-rearing ages. The majority of CF members are parents (62%)⁵⁸. It is therefore logical that the CF would have policies in place that reduce the work-life conflict and aim to keep their employees healthy and stress free, as much as possible.

According to the DRDC Toronto:

DND employees with high work-to-family conflict reported more stress, burnout, and depression than did employees with low work-to-family conflict. Employees reporting high work-to-life conflict reported seeing a physician and other types of health care professionals more often than employees with low work-to-family

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ According to Intranet CMP report found at:

<http://dhrim04.desc.mil.ca/engraph/stats/output/14589801/D0088r01.htm> accessed on 28 April 2009.

conflict. Individuals with high work-to-family conflict reported using prescription drugs more often and spending more money on them in the past 3 months than did employees with low work-to-family conflict. High work-to-family conflict was also related to the reasons for absences. Compared to individuals with low work-to-family conflict, individuals with high work-to-family conflict were more likely to report being absent because of poor health, mental health reasons, and child-care issues. As well, employees with high work-to-family conflict were absent more days due to poor health and mental health issues than those with low work-to-family conflict.⁵⁹

The CF is losing many days of productivity due to a work-family imbalance. This problem is compounded further: the worker, who is left behind due to an absent co-worker, is left with an increased work-load, stress and extra hours of work. This adds to the burden of members already on sick leave for operational stress and other injuries (such as PTSD, physical injuries, etc).

Although DND tends to be flexible in allowing employees to take time off for family related issues, there are no regulations in place to support family leave scenarios for military members, and such leave is left up to the supervisor to allow it or not. The CF needs to seriously look at ways to improve the work-life balance of its members in order to reduce the stress imposed on the members. Such policies would not only help reduce the attrition rate, but also reduce the loss of productivity and decrease the rate of days lost for family reasons. It is essential, in order to remain operationally effective, for the CF to adopt policies that reduce stress when soldiers are not on operations.

The Financial Case for Work-Life Balance Initiatives

Adopting a comprehensive work-life balance attitude in the military makes financial sense. The CF is an organization that has a fiscal responsibility to the people of

⁵⁹ Pickering, *The Relationship between Work-Life conflict/work-Life Balance and Operational Effectiveness in the Canadian Forces*, Pg.30.

Canada. It invests a considerable amount of money training its employees. Every time an employee leaves the organization, another individual must be recruited and trained to replace him or her. According to *CMA Management*, "The actual cost of losing and replacing an employee is between 50-150% of the salary of the leaving employee".⁶⁰ The CF encumbers a significant financial burden every time it must retrain new employees and fails to keep those it already has.

Since each and every talented, fully-trained and experienced person that can be convinced and encouraged to remain in the CF equals ten people that need to be attracted, enrolled, and trained.⁶¹

There is little doubt that retention is more cost efficient to an organization than recruiting. Although many would argue that work-life balance initiatives are simply too costly to invest in, according to HRDC, this is simply not the case. In addition, studies by HRDC have shown that

family-supportive benefits may enhance commitment to the employer who provides such options, promoting greater tenure and, in turn, greater incentive for employers to continue to make human capital investments in their workers. Family-friendly benefits create the culture of employee support needed to encourage individual investments of time and energy in training and career development. Benefits thereby accrue both to organizations and to individual employees over time.⁶²

Therefore it makes sense from a financial perspective for the CF to implement enhanced work-life balance initiatives. Employees are more willing to remain with the organization. Research into the influence of family-friendly policies have on employees has proven that people who are in an organization that assist in their work-life balance

⁶⁰ Pam Withers, "The Six Secrets to Attracting and Retaining Great Employers," *CMA Management* (October 2001), P.25.

⁶¹ Christopher Ankerson and Losel Tethong, "Retain Or Perish: Why Recruiting Won't Save the CF," *Strategic Datalink* no. 95 (March 2001), P.3

⁶² Derrick Comfort, Karen Johnson and David Wallace, *Part-Time Work and Family-Friendly Practices in Canadian Workplaces* (Ottawa: Minister of Industry,[2003]), <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/cs/sp/sdc/pkrf/publications/research/2003-000183/71584NO6E.pdf>, Pg. 7.

“are more likely to stay with an organization precisely because they do not have to be work-family conflict that might pressure them to leave.”⁶³ Although many businesses across Canada have implemented various policies to ease the work-life conflict, they do so because of the cost effectiveness of these initiatives on retaining their work-force and reducing absenteeism. Many literary reviews of work-life balance practices tend to look at the various options through a business lens, that is “by offering these practices, organizations attract members and reduce levels of work-life conflict among existing ones, and this improved recruitment and reduced work-life conflict enhances organizational effectiveness.”⁶⁴

From a financial perspective, Work-life conflict has also been linked to productivity decreases associated with “lateness, unscheduled days off, emergency time off, excessive use of the telephone, missed meetings, and difficulty concentrating on the job.”⁶⁵ A 1999 study by Duxbury and Higgins demonstrated that the direct cost in Canadian firms from a work-life imbalance is just under \$3 billion per year.⁶⁶ Although this cannot easily translate into direct HR cost savings within DND, there is little doubt that it would have some impact. Any cost savings would have an influence on DND’s annual budget, allowing the department to use these savings elsewhere.

It must be kept in mind, however, that the CF is not a business and must remain prepared to conduct operations. The CF cannot simply implement policies without

⁶³ Steven L. Grover and Karen J. Crooker, "Who Appreciates Family-Responsive Human Resource Policies: The Impact of Family-Friendly Policies on the Organizational Attachment of Parents and Non-Parents," *Personnel Psychology* 48, no. 2 (Summer95, 1995), 271-288, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=9507106027&site=ehost-live>., P. 276.

⁶⁴ Beauregard and Henry, *Making the Link between Work-Life Balance Practices and Organizational Performance*, 9-22

⁶⁵ Dr Linda Duxbury and Dr Christopher Higgins, *Work-Life Balance in the New Millennium: Where are we? Where do we Need to Go?* Canadian Policy Research Networks, [October 2001]), http://www.cprn.org/documents/7314_en.PDF., P.4.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

consideration of how these policies will affect operations. Furthermore, any policies or programs it implements should not be more demanding on its resources. It is prudent from a retention, human rights, mental health and financial perspective for the CF to look at policies that will reduce the WLC. In the next two sections, solutions will be discussed that will help the CF implement programs and policies to address the work-life conflict issue without compromising operational effectiveness.

SECTION 3- FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS (FWA)

The CF is a unique employer within Canadian society; members must be prepared to deploy on operation for several months with little notice. However, members join the CF knowing this is a part of the reality. The CF can do little to change this fact, as it is responsible to Government of Canada to provide forces ready for operations both domestically and abroad. Despite this fact, the CF can implement policies that could assist their members in alleviating the burden that raising a family and having a career can have on a soldier and target the work-life balance in order to reduce attrition rates, be an attractive employee and most of all increase operational deployability.

In 2004, the Director of Strategic Human Resources for the CF produced a report that looked at what benefits have a positive impact on retention. They were: **Subsidized child care**; travel; Job security/benefits; Maternity/Parental Leave; **Available/affordable child care**; Affordable housing/accommodations; Competency-based merit system and **Part-time/Flexible schedules of work**.⁶⁷ The same report stated that the following challenges impact retention: **Balancing work and family life**; Single parents; **Limited access to childcare**; Lack of career progression; Lack of affordable housing/accommodations; Gender-linked harassment; and Downsizing.⁶⁸ Flexible work schedules and the ability to have affordable and available child care remains a priority for most military members and both areas have a direct impact on retention and recruitment.

⁶⁷ Department of National Defence, Accessed at http://hr3.ottawa-hull.mil.ca/dstrathr-drhstrat/docs/pdf/DStratHRnewsVol3_e.pdf on 11 Sept 2007. Bold letters to emphasize the portions of the report relative to this paper.

⁶⁸ Ibid. Accessed at http://hr3.ottawa-hull.mil.ca/dstrathr-drhstrat/docs/pdf/DStratHRnewsVol3_e.pdf on 11 Sept 2007. Bold letters to emphasize the portions of the report relative to this paper.

It has already been proven that retention in the CF is affected by the PERSTEMPO and the inability for some members to balance their work-family life. From a recruitment perspective, the new generation of potential employees, generation X and Y are more interested in a balanced work-life than their baby boomer parents.

generation X and Y are more insistent than baby bombers are about balancing their professional and personal lives- a potential retention issue, exacerbated by the shrinking pool of skilled talent.⁶⁹

As this prime recruit cohort is insistent about work-life balance, the CF must target this demographic to be successful in its HR recruitment by implementing flexible policies that will reduce the work-life conflict.

According to Workplace and Employee Survey (2003) conducted by Statistics Canada published in the report *Part-time work and family-friendly practices in Canadian workplaces*, there are two areas that workplaces should embrace in order to be ‘family-friendly’: “part-time work and the provision of ‘family-friendly’ work arrangements, such as flextime, telework, childcare and eldercare services.”⁷⁰ In order to be competitive, it is in the best interest of the CF to develop policies that attack the Work-Life Conflict through implementing Flexible Work Arrangements and Child Care services. Child care arrangement will be discussed on its own merit in section three, this section will concentrate on Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) that could alleviate the burden of the work-life conflict in today’s CF and help reduce stress and attrition rates for the CF all while increasing recruiting.

⁶⁹ Sharon Klun, "Work-Life Balance is a Cross-Generational Concern- and a Key to Retaining High Performers at Accenture," *Global Business and Organizational Excellence* 27, no. 6 (Sept/Oct 2008), P. 7.

⁷⁰ Human resources Development Canada, *Survey of Canadian Workers on Work-Life Balance in 1999*

Flexible work Arrangements (FWA)-The Public Service Solution

According to the HRDC report “Flexible work arrangements (FWA), such as telework and flextime allow employees to reorganize work time or place so as to better suit their personal needs.”⁷¹ A report for the Canadian Centre for Management Development surveyed workers and asked what an employer could do to help balance work and family. The following table depicts the top ways that an employer could help balance work and family:

Figure 9: CCMD Survey on ways an Employer can help the work/family balance:⁷²

Responses	Percentages
Flexible Work Hours	23.0
Increased Family Leave	20.0
On-Site Day-Care	18.9
Supervisors understanding of work and family	17.4
Shorter Hours	15.1
Work At Home	14.0
Part-time Job	9.8
Job Sharing	7.5

An overwhelming 23% believe that flexible work hours will help reduce the work-life conflict. Many leading organizations have begun offering flexible work

⁷¹ Comfort, Johnson and Wallace, *Part-Time Work and Family-Friendly Practices in Canadian Workplaces* Minister of Industry 2003. P. 7.
<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/cs/sp/sdc/pkrf/publications/research/2003-000183/71584NO6E.pdf> Accessed on Internet February 9, 2009.

⁷² Catherine Lee, Dr Linda Duxbury and Dr Christopher Higgins, *Employed Mothers: Balancing Work and Family Life* (Ottawa: Report Prepared for The Canadian Centre For Management Development,[2004]), P, 20

arrangements such as flextime, job sharing, and telecommuting; on-site childcare, and fitness programs. Various researches have been done on the advantages of flexible work schedules and their effects on employees. These have “shown that absenteeism, turnover, and job satisfaction are improved when flextime programs are implemented.”⁷³ Flexible work arrangements are not only good for retaining employees, but are also beneficial in other aspects.

Within DND, the public servants enjoy many FWA benefits not currently extended to military members. These benefits could be easily extended to military members without compromising operational effectiveness. The following table lists the Treasury Board approved policies for flexible work arrangement in the Public Service.

Figure 10: Public Service Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA).⁷⁴

Policy/Program	Description
Part-Time Work	Permanent position, but fewer hours/days than a regular work week
Job-Sharing	Full-time position with duties and responsibilities shared among two or more part-time employees
Flexible Hours of Work	Employee works standard number of hours per day, but has some choice in start and finish times
Compressed, or Variable Work Week	Extended hours per day in return for periodic days off
Telework	Work from home on a regular basis, but not necessarily every day

These are approved public service work arrangements, yet none are currently embraced by the military with any formal policy. In reality, such policies would help ease

⁷³ Steven L. Grover and Karen J. Crooker, "Who Appreciates Family-Responsive Human Resource Policies: The Impact of Family Friendly Policies on the Organizational Attachment of Parents and Non-Parents," *Personnel Psychology* 48 (1995), P. 271.

⁷⁴ C. Evans, *Work-Life Balance in the Canadian Forces & Department of National Defence* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence,[2004]), P. 46.

the work-life burden faced by many working parents. In the military, the prime concern for allowing flexible work schedules revolves around operational effectiveness. Military members are expected to be deployable on short notice. In addition, members are expected to train for deployments most of the time that they are in garrison. However, with the increase in PERSTEMPO seen throughout the CF, any amount of flexibility allowed when not deployed or on training, would certainly reduce the work-life conflict that so many CF members have related to in the various surveys discussed in section 1. Using the public service policies as a model, this section will investigate the validity of extending these benefits to the military members, without compromising operational effectiveness.

Part-Time Work

Part Time work is an attractive option for a parent that wants to spend more time at home with their children and reduce the stress working full-time can have on a family. According a HRCO labour force survey,

the majority of part-timers in Canada (73%) claim they work part time by choice... In fact, for the past 30 years, women have consistently represented 70% of the part-time workforce (Statistics Canada, 2000). For women, family responsibilities are one of the most frequently cited reasons for choosing part-time hours; and indeed, research suggests that part-time hours are associated with reduced work-life stress and perceptions of a better balance between work and family life.⁷⁵

For a working parent, the flexibility of a part-time schedule is an attractive option, if they can afford it.

Part-time work is something that is available within the CF, but only to reservists, not regular force members. The CF looks at a military member as either regular (full-

⁷⁵ Comfort, Johnson and Wallace, *Part-Time Work and Family-Friendly Practices in Canadian Workplaces*, Pg.11.

time) or reserve (can be full-time or part-time). In order for a member to go from full time service to part time service, they must component transfer from the regular force to the reserves. This means that they must physically take their release from the regular force and join the reserve forces.

The only flexibility in going from part-time to full-time (or vice-versa) is for reserve force members, as they can opt to take a full time position, if there is one available, or work part-time. There is no mechanism in place for a regular force member to work part time, even if only for a short period to ease a family situation, without taking their release. Although a transfer from the regular forces to the reserves is a fairly simple process (and can be accomplished in as little as 30 days), the reverse is not true. A transfer to the regular force can take several months and sometimes even a year or more. This does not encourage a member who is a reservist to transfer into the regular forces. The CF has recognized this problem and has attempted to streamline the process, however, because of the differences in training, each file is assessed to ensure they meet the requirements before the transfer can occur. The CF is actively looking at having personnel listed as either full time or part time to reduce the component construct that currently exists. The CF must ensure that moving between full and part time service is an easy process. This will allow some flexibility when a member feels that they want to work part-time for a couple of years to reduce the work-family conflict.

The CF should continue their current efforts to allow members to work part-time when they feel it is most advantageous to them. However, members should not be allowed to work part-time when operational effectiveness would be affected. Currently, reserve soldiers can be “asked” to work full time when operationally required, and can be

fully mobilized when the Government of Canada so declares. Reserve soldiers in the past have actively “volunteered” for operations when they were most needed. During the 1998 Ice Storm and the 1997 Winnipeg Floods, thousands of reservists volunteered to assist in these disasters. So, there is a sense of duty on part-time soldiers to work full-time when they are needed. Considering that people join the CF out of a desire to serve their country, there would likely be no shortage of people willing to work full-time when required. There is no operational reason for the CF not to embrace a part-time and full-time construct, and allow flexibility for members to work either full-time or part-time based on choice.

Job-Sharing

Job sharing allows an employee some flexibility in the amount of time they work and is very similar to part-time work. The CF currently does not allow people to job share. Job sharing would be beneficial to the CF and would be relatively easily to put into place. Currently you can hire a reservist either full time or part time (maximum of 15 days in a row), but, you cannot hire two reservists to do one job. There is no mechanism to hire two members into the same position number. However, if the CF made a change to current policy and allowed supervisors to hire two reservist into one position (when they both want to job share), the CF would benefit from a full-time employee and the employee would benefit from a job-sharing environment, giving her or him more flexibility with their work-life balance. This would allow members to work part time, allow the employer to have a “full-time” staff and save the CF the cost of benefits.⁷⁶ It could be a win-win situation for all and one that is fairly easy to implement.

⁷⁶ Part-time reservists are not entitled to benefits such as medical, dental unless they are employed on a full time contract over 180 days. This information is available on the Intranet (DWAN) Health Services website

Flexible Hours of Work

Flexible hours of work are often called Flextime which is defined as “a work arrangement wherein employees work a certain number of core hours, but can vary start and stop times provided a full complement of hours is worked.”⁷⁷ In the Public Service of Canada, flexible hours are viewed as a flexible start time and end time of work, provided the employee works their 7.5 hours work day.

The CF as a whole is reluctant to allow their employees to work flexible hours. There is no policy in place to support such arrangements. However, employers sometimes locally allow their employees some flexibility for family related reasons. This is completely dependent on the supervisor and the unit. In the National Capital Region (NCR), there are flex-time orders that support such arrangements.⁷⁸ Yet, outside of the NCR there seems to be little flexibility. National directives that support flex hours would give supervisors the “legal basis” to allow their employees to work flex hours. Such arrangements would have to be authorized by the commanding officers, so that operational effectiveness of the unit (such as training time) would not be affected. However, Commanding Officers would need to embrace the policy and understand that flextime is beneficial to the organization as a whole.

A literature review of flextime options demonstrates that such initiatives are “linked to decreased physical and psychological symptomatology and decreased work–family conflict.”⁷⁹ A multivariate analysis of time flexibility with over 1500 workers

at: <http://hr.ottawa-hull.mil.ca/health-sante/pd/pol-res-eng.asp?keyword=KEY0131&sort=T&type=S&descriptive=Reserves>

⁷⁷ Ibid., Pg. 32.

⁷⁸ According to the routine orders published in the National Capital Region available on the Defence Wide Network.

⁷⁹ Dulebohn and others, *Employee Benefits: Literature Review and Emerging Issues*, 86-103

found that “gender or having dependent children was not significant⁸⁰” in determining how effective time flexibility affected the work life balance. Furthermore, the ability to control working hours was deemed to be the most effective method of controlling work-life balance. It would be beneficial to the CF to implement a flex-time option throughout the CF, as this would benefit all members, not just parents.

Compressed, or Variable Work Week

A compressed or variable work week is almost the same as Flextime in its essence. The difference, for the Public Service, is that in a compressed or variable work week, employees can work their core hours in four days (by working a few extra hours each day) and take a day off to compensate for the extra time worked. The CF does not allow employees to compress or vary their work week. Yet, many employees certainly work extra time on a weekly basis and would merit a reduced work week.

Some supervisors will give a Friday afternoon off from time to time, but this is dependent on the supervisor and their attitude towards the job. Often this will only occur before a long weekend, and even then, comments are sometimes made about people “slacking off” if they leave too early. People are perceived to “not be dedicated” if they are not spending 50 hours or more at work each week. This only increases the burn out rate of our employees and their stress levels. National policies that allow compressed work weeks when operationally feasible could reduce the work-life conflict and allow commanding officers to let their members work on a flexible schedule, when operationally feasible.

⁸⁰ Takao Marujama, Peter Hopkinson and Peter James, "A Multivariate Analysis of Work-Life Balance Outcomes from a Large-Scale Telework Programme," *New Technology, Work and Employment* 24 (2009), 76-88.

In their analysis, Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright, & Neuman (1999) found that both flexible schedules and compressed work weeks were related to increased job satisfaction and productivity.⁸¹ If the CF were to implement a variable work week, it could help reduce the work-life conflict.

Telework

Telework is defined as: a work-at-home arrangement wherein employees work at least some of their regularly scheduled hours at home and for pay.⁸² In the modern era of blackberries, internet and video conferencing, telework is a relatively easy way for businesses to allow their employees some flexibility in their own schedules. The CF does not allow its employees, as a norm, to work from home. There is an attitude in the military that if your boss does not see you are the office, you are 'slacking off.' However, with the quantity of work being done via the intranet, most of the work could be accomplished easily through an internet connection from home. Such an arrangement would be very cost effective for the CF.

The CF currently has an office space problem in the NCR and on many bases across the country. Yet, the majority of people in the NCR work behind a computer most of their day, which could easily be accomplished from their home. This would allow employees the flexibility of starting their day when it is more convenient. As they would be travelling less to go to work, they would actually save time (and money) in their normal daily routines. In reality, we could ask employees to only come to the office once a week (or twice a week) and reduce our office footprint in the NCR by half. Employees

⁸¹ Borris B. Baltes and others, "Flexible and Compressed Workweek Schedules: A Meta-Analysis of their Effects on Work-Related Criteria," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 84, no. 4 (08, 1999), 496-913, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=12130391&site=ehost-live>.

⁸² Comfort, Johnson and Wallace, *Part-Time Work and Family-Friendly Practices in Canadian Workplaces*, Pg. 32.

would be given tasks or projects to complete and would be assessed on how these projects are completed. Note that this initiative would also reduce other related costs such as those related to office space requirements and employee stress.

The CF has already done some telework, albeit by accident or circumstance. To increase the throughput on the Army Operations Course at the Canadian Land Forces Command and Staff College, the college started a Distance Learning program where students work from home for 7 weeks and then work in residency for 10 weeks.⁸³ The college managed to increase the throughput from two courses per year to four. At no time has someone suggested that these students on DL are “slacking off” at home since they have a very detailed schedule of on line discussions and lectures and specific academic assignments and due dates. It is a very demanding 7 weeks and most students find it to be very challenging. Yet this DL option has been a very cost effective method of increasing students qualified on this course.

Due to the shortage of personnel, some “offers” are being made to reservists to make flexible work arrangements in order to be more convenient to the individual. A major hired by an Ottawa organization was allowed to work in Kingston, where he lived, rather than in Ottawa.⁸⁴ However, because he was doing all of his work via intranet, he could have easily done this same work from home, saving office space in Kingston. No such arrangement would be made for a regular force individual.

In two separate cases (in 2005 and 2006), a member was posted out of country and their military spouse had to take Leave Without Pay (LWOP) for the two years of the

⁸³ The distance learning construct began in 2000 and is currently ongoing. The Canadian Forces College started a distance learning program for reserve students in 1998. However, this option was extended to regular force students in 2008.

⁸⁴ Major Grant McNally, a PPCLI officer in an interview with the author, summer, 2008.

postings.⁸⁵ Both military spouses were refused to continue to work. One of these spouses was an engineer officer (major) who offered to work on a project and fly to Ottawa as required in order to continue to work full time while his wife was posted to the Military School in Leavenworth. During this same time frame, the CF complained about a shortage of engineers and project managers, but no one allowed him to complete either job, and he remained un-employed (on LWOP). The other officer was also a major. She was in Europe when her husband was posted to the NORAD headquarters where there was also a shortage of personnel. She remained on LWOP for three years. Both of these majors wanted to continue to work and with the modern era of communication could have easily done so, if at least through a telework option. However the CF is still very rigid in its policies and approach to its workforce.

There are many civilian companies that have embraced telework as a cost effective way of doing business. SunLife Canada is one company that offers some of its employees the opportunity to conduct their work from home. Their case workers are set up with an internet connection in the comfort of their own home. This allows them to conduct all work needed on their schedule. There are no clocks to punch, or time sheets to fill in. Employees are paid a salary commensurate with the case-loads they work on.⁸⁶ If the CF allowed their staff members (those that work behind a computer all day) an option of tele-work, there would be a huge cost savings for DND while offering a flexible work arrangement that could be beneficial to a working parent.

⁸⁵ Major Lefancois, and engineer officer had to take LWOP to accompany his wife to her posting in the United States. Major Fleury had to take LWOP to accompany her husband to Brussels. Both were willing to work, but were refused to work either on site at the place of posting or via tele-work. Both members were interviewed by the author in the summer of 2008.

⁸⁶ According to Brigitte Boucher, SunLife employee (nurse) in an interview with the author on December 25, 2008.

The results of various studies in the area of telework surprisingly do not necessarily decrease the work-life conflict. According to various literatures, those who work from home, often work longer hours or more days of the week than their counterparts.⁸⁷ This is normal, as people are more apt to check their emails at night and weekends if they can access them from home. However, there is some improved work-life balance since those at home reduce their commuting time, spend more time with their families and are able to deal with some household chores during the day.⁸⁸ Telework does improve organizational performance in areas, such as “reduce overheads in the case of employees working from home, improved productivity among employees working at their peak hours.”⁸⁹ As discussed earlier, this could certainly reduce the office shortages that DND face, while saving the department millions of dollars.

These flexible work arrangements presented are ones currently offered to the Public Service Employees. The CF could easily embrace these arrangements, allowing members who are not on training or operations to be more available to their families, thereby reducing some of their work-life conflict. Some of the arrangements such as telework and job sharing would actually be cost effective for the department and have the potential of saving millions of dollars in infrastructure and benefits costs. Furthermore, because members would have more flexibility in their lives, there would be reduced mental stress injuries and an increased retention rate, which would increase operational effectiveness.

⁸⁷ Marujama, Hopkinson and James, *A Multivariate Analysis of Work-Life Balance Outcomes from a Large-Scale Telework Programme*, 76-88

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Beauregard and Henry, *Making the Link between Work-Life Balance Practices and Organizational Performance*, 9-22

SECTION 4-CHILD CARE

“The only people who climb this corporate ladder are men, or childless women”⁹⁰.

“Child care is an important readiness and retention issue for military families: readiness because single parents and dual service couples must have access to affordable and quality child care if they are to perform their jobs...; retention because family dissatisfaction with military life – and particularly the inability of many spouses to establish careers or obtain suitable employment – is a primary reason trained military personnel leave the military.”⁹¹

In 1998, the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veteran’s Affairs (SCONDVA) made several recommendations to the CF in an attempt to improve Quality of Life and the retention issue. SCONDVA specifically noted that child care and family leave was an issue to serving members.⁹² Furthermore, the SCONDVA report stated that

Military readiness is usually associated with the level of training of personnel in combat units and the state of their equipment, but many other factors influence it, including the availability of child care services. It may seem strange to link something like child care to military readiness, but the most powerful armed forces in the world, those of the United States, have no hesitation to do so.⁹³

Child care, therefore, is an essential portion of the deployability of CF members. Child care in the CF is important in order for the CF to remain an “employer of choice.” It has been demonstrated that Child Care remains a priority for CF members and is particularly important for women in the CF who have families. As was discussed in

⁹⁰ Dr Linda Duxbury, Dr Christopher Higgins and Donnal Coghill, *Voices of Canada: Seeking Work-Life Balance* Human Resources Development Canada,[Jan 2003]), Accessed on Internet <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/lp/spila/wlb/pdf/Voices.pdf> on 1 Dec 2008, Pg 15

⁹¹ Summary report of the US house of Representatives Armed Service Committee Proceedings Nos 101-121 (1989)

⁹² Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, *MOVING FORWARD:A Strategic Plan for Quality of Life Improvements in the Canadian Forces*,[October, 1998], <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=1031525&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=36&Ses=1>.

⁹³ Ibid.

Section 1, women tend to leave the CF in order to take care of their children. In order for the CF to attract and retain women, they must actively seek methods to allow women to have affordable, reliable and available child-care. According to the HRDC report:

Women's increased and sustained labour force participation means that many employees are coping with workplace change in the context of growing pressures from the home domain and the need to redistribute the unpaid household and caring work traditionally assumed by women. Today's employees have a wide range of commitments outside of the workplace, including not only the care of dependent family members, but also volunteer pursuits, education, and personal development⁹⁴.

Many companies and business across the country have recognized this problem and it has prompted these organizations to examine their human-resources policy in order to attract and retain their employees. The CF must follow suit in order to remain competitive.

The CF is a unique organization as was noted by the SCONDVA committee. It noted that although military families are not the only ones in Canada that need child care service, "they have to deal with some unique situations that could intensify and complicate the child care situation for these families."⁹⁵ Military families are unique in that the service individual is often asked to deploy, without their families, on short notice. This creates a stress on military members not felt by their civilian counterparts. Probably the biggest stressor for military families when they are posted is finding good quality child care. With the PERSTEMPO at an all time high, more and more military families are faced with child care issues that are forcing them to leave the CF in order to provide

⁹⁴ Comfort, Johnson and Wallace, *Part-Time Work and Family-Friendly Practices in Canadian Workplaces*, Pg. 30.

⁹⁵ Directorate of Military Family Services, *An Assessment of the Need for Licensed Group Child Care for Canadian Forces Families* (Ottawa: Centre for Research and Education in Human Services, [November 8, 2004]).

adequate care for their children. Yet, so much can be done to alleviate the stress of child care for a working parent.

Parents who have access to quality, affordable childcare suffer decreased levels of stress, tend to be healthier and are more productive in the workplace. They generally take less time off work to deal with family-related problems. Those with flexible childcare arrangements are better able to respond to irregular work hours and other unusual work-related requirements.⁹⁶

Over half of all CF members have children, over 45% of service women have children, and there are over 78% of single parent families in the CF that are men.⁹⁷ According to PEOPLESOFT,⁹⁸ there are over 40,000 children of CF military members. Of those children, over 3,500 are children of a married service couple (MSC) and over 3,000 are children of a single parent family. Although it is unsure how many of these parents need child arrangements, however, due to the increases in dual earning couples, and the fact that most military members do not live near a relative who can assist with childcare, it can be assumed to be fairly significant.

Figure 11: Number of Children aged 12 and under in CF families: ⁹⁹

	Married		MSC		Single		Common Law	
	<i>Child 0-5</i>	<i>Child 6-12</i>	<i>Child 0-5</i>	<i>Child 6-12</i>	<i>Child 0-5</i>	<i>Child 6-12</i>	<i>Child 0-5</i>	<i>Child 6-12</i>
Male	10,194	18,180	742	1041	753	2,062	2111	2174
Female	333	549	713	978	215	517	225	287
CF Total	10,527	18,729	1,455 (742)*	2,019 (1041)*	968	2,579	2,336	2,461
Total children 0-5	14,573		Total children 6-12		24,810	Total Children		39,383

⁹⁶ LCol Brigid Dooley-Tremblay, "An Opportunity to Lead the Way: The Requirement for Equitable Access to Quality, Affordable Child Care Throughout the Canadian Forces" (Canadian Forces College), P. 1.

⁹⁷ Ibid., Annexe A

⁹⁸ The CF human resources software is called PEOPLESOFT

⁹⁹ Figures from: DHRIM Ad Hoc Statistical Report (*PeopleSoft*), compiled 14 March 2001.

In 1998, Land Forces Western Area did a survey of their members to see how the area would be affected by childcare problems when faced with operations (See Figure 8). Although this is a limited survey, it can be assumed that it is representative of the CF population. It demonstrates that childcare problems can directly affect the deployability of CF members.

Figure 12: Summary of LFWA Study (1998)¹⁰⁰

May have childcare problems if....	Single *5.7%	MSC *12.7%	Married (spouse works) *50.1%	Married (spouse home) *30.1%
Go on major deployment	61%	53%	26%	13%
Deploy on emergency operations (48 hours notice)	56%	51%	25%	13%
Go on TD, exercises, courses, etc...	48%	38%	20%	13%

** Designates the percentage of survey respondents that fall into each category*

It would be prudent, from an operational perspective to have adequate child care available on all bases. Not only would it ease the burden of the work-life balance, it would equally ease the stress associate with postings and deployments. Overall, the CF would be more operationally effective if there was an adequate child care system on all bases. The question remains: what type of child care is needed on order to fully support CF families?

In 2004, the Director of Military Family Resources Centres (MFRC) conducted a survey across all of the 34 MFRCs in the country. It found that, among other things, there is:

very little evening and weekend child care available to families, and virtually no overnight care. The restrictive hours of care are not flexible enough to meet

¹⁰⁰ Land Forces Western Area HQ, *Land Forces Western Area Childcare Support Survey 1998 and Data Analysis Report* (Edmonton: HQ Land Forces Western Area,[1998]).Slide Presentation Package, Slide No. 30 entitled “Summary of Marital Parental Status Comparisons”

the unique needs of CF families in terms of shift-work, non-traditional work hours, and deployment¹⁰¹.

These hours of operations simply do not augment or assist the operational effectiveness of military members.

Literary reviews in the area of employee retention deem that some form of corporate child care has a positive affect on an employee's decision to stay. "Two early studies showed that availability of day care and use of day care increased retention rates in the short term."¹⁰² A number of studies have found that employees who benefit from childcare centres, referral services and other family-supportive practices report higher levels of commitment to the organization. Grover and Crooker (1995) found that "parental leave childcare information and referral, flexible work hours, and financial assistance with child care predicted both increased affective commitment to the organization and decreased turnover intention among all employees, not just the users of the practices."¹⁰³ A 1992 study (Kossek and Nichol) suggests that "child care benefits are more likely to significantly effect employee attitudes and membership behaviors such as recruitment and retention than performance or absenteeism."¹⁰⁴

Further studies, including the Berg, Kalleberg and Appelbaum study (2003) found that gender is not significant in response to work-life balance initiatives, and such

¹⁰¹ Directorate of Military Family Services, *An Assessment of the Need for Licensed Group Child Care for Canadian Forces Families*, P. 5.

¹⁰² Rosemary Batt and P. M. Valcour, *Human Resources Practices as Predictors of Work-Family Outcomes and Employee Turnover*, Vol. 42 Blackwell Publishing Limited, 189-220, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sih&AN=9386988&site=ehost-live>, p.

¹⁰³ Grover and Crooker, *Who Appreciates Family-Responsive Human Resource Policies: The Impact of Family-Friendly Policies on the Organizational Attachment of Parents and Non-Parents*, 271-288, P. 282.

¹⁰⁴ Ellen Ernst Kossek and Victor Nichol, "The Effects of on-Site Child Care on Employee Attitudes and Performance," *Personnel Psychology* 45, no. 3 (09, 1992), 485-509, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=9608140373&site=ehost-live>.

initiatives would benefit both men and women.¹⁰⁵ Child care is “viewed as creating a favorable climate conducive to enabling good performance by alleviating problems and allowing employees to focus on their jobs.”¹⁰⁶ So a fully implemented child care program in the CF would increase retention and recruitment, be beneficial to both men and women, and increase operational effectiveness. It should be the CF’s number one priority to improving the work-life balance of CF members.

In order for the CF to be a true employer of choice it must attack the child care need head on. This section will explore several avenues of approach in regards to child care that the CF can adopt to decrease the work-life conflict and to increase the deployability of its members. After reviewing a child care support model used by different business in Canada and by studying an allied military child care plan, this section will demonstrate how the CF can adopt a comprehensive child care system to increase operational effectiveness and reduce employee stress.

CHILD CARE SUPPORT OPTIONS

According to Celia Moore, an expert in Work-Life balance, there are ten support options that could be used to by businesses to increase support for working parents. They are¹⁰⁷:

1. On-site or near-site child care centers
2. Child care subsidies
3. Emergency Care
4. After-school or summer camp programming:
5. Sick child care
6. Information and referral :

¹⁰⁵ Berg, Kalleberg and Appelbaum, *Balancing Work and Family: The Role of High-Commitment Environments*, 168-188, P.184.

¹⁰⁶ Kossek and Nichol, *The Effects of on-Site Child Care on Employee Attitudes and Performance*, 485-509

¹⁰⁷ Celia Moore, "Families, Employers and the Community Benefit from High Quality Child Care: Ten Emerging Workplace Support Options," <http://www.worklifeharmony.ca/files/PDF/Interactionchildcare.pdf> (accessed December 2008).

7. Flexibility
8. Parental networks
9. Family care leaves
10. Extended and flexible maternity leaves

Using Celia Moore's model, and by using the US Department of Defense military child care system as an example as to how this model can be implemented within a military context, this section will demonstrate how the CF can adopt a plan that will be effective in easing the burden that child care puts on military members.

On-site or near-site child care centers

Currently DND does not offer complete on or near-site child care centers. There are some day care options within the Military Family Resources Centres (MFRC), however these sites are privately run, and rules vary from base to base as to requirement, so as not to compete with the local economy. Currently, MFRCs do not receive the funding or the mandate to provide licensed day care on bases and only 72% of the bases offer licensed child care services.¹⁰⁸ In Gagetown, for example, the day care can only be used for a "drop-in" service and no full time day-care is allowed. In Valcartier, the day care has a full-time day care service, but has a waiting list of approximately 4 years, which is of no use for someone posted every four years. Neither site limits the spaces exclusively to military families.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, both sites only offer day care for day shifts, not night shifts.

¹⁰⁸ Directorate of Military Family Services, *An Assessment of the Need for Licensed Group Child Care for Canadian Forces Families*, P. 9.

¹⁰⁹ From the author's personal experience when attempting to enrol her four children in the day cares on these two bases.

Wait times for child care vary across the country. In the 2004 MFRC report, it stated that seven sites across the country had wait times for children of CF families.¹¹⁰ This can be very difficult for a member posted into a new area. If they cannot readily find child care, then there is an additional burden placed on the family until a solution is found.

The alternative to day care on base is to try to find a civilian organization that can provide child care. Yet, sufficient childcare spaces are not readily available across the country. If we take Ontario as a typical example, there are 172,135 estimated spaces of child care available, according to the 2001 report, *Early childhood education and care in Canada 2001*.¹¹¹ However there are 1,944,400 children under the age of twelve, of which, there are 1,325,400 children under the age of twelve who have mothers in the workforce.¹¹² That is a 1,152,000 shortage of available regulated child care spaces in one province. This, of course, greatly affects military members when they are posted to Ontario, and are trying to find day care for their children.

In Quebec, the second largest province, there is an assumption that because Quebec has “universal child care”, that there is no problem in finding adequate child care. However, looking at the same report, Quebec also has a shortage of child care. There are only 133,250 regulated spaces, but there are 1,115,200 children under the age of twelve and 773,100 children under the age of twelve with working mothers. That is over 600,000

¹¹⁰ Ibid.P. 11.

¹¹¹ Martha Friendly, Jane Beach and Michelle Turiano, *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2001* Childcare Resource and Research Unit, [December 2002], <http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2001/ON.pdf>.<http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2001/ON.pdf> accessed on December 2, 2008.

¹¹² Ibid. <http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2001/ON.pdf> accessed on December 2, 2008.

shortages in spaces.¹¹³ For military members posted into the province of Quebec, it makes it difficult to find day care for their children.

The stress in trying to find adequate child care for members on a posting is an added burden that is not needed. It has become such an issue, that some military members choose to release rather than deal with the stress of finding child care for their children.

Approximately 60% of dual military career couples indicated that the CF did not understand the special problems that they faced. Difficulties in finding child care were noted by both single parent and dual military couples. Thus, both of these groups seem to have special work-life challenges. In the case of dual military couples, there is some evidence indicating that work-life conflict may be one reason for one partner leaving the CF.¹¹⁴

Finding adequate daycare is probably the single most stressor for military families. Not only is it a huge stress upon each posting, this stress is compounded by the reality of military families; that is they must deploy on short notice, and often work irregular hours.

For military members who work irregular hours, the traditional child care centres are not adequate, for most open at 7 or 8 in the morning and close at 5pm. For military members who need to be at physical training early or even if they work shift work, these hours simply do not work. Even the day care centres that are on base work traditional hours and charge hefty fees for those who are late.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Ibid.P. <http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2001/ON.pdf> accessed on December 2, 2008.

¹¹⁴ Pickering, *The Relationship between Work-Life conflict/work-Life Balance and Operational Effectiveness in the Canadian Forces*, Pg. 29.

¹¹⁵ In Kingston, for example, a member is charged 5\$ for every minute they are late. That is \$50 for a ten minute overtime. This is an industry standard and in the three provinces I have been posted to (ON, PQ and NB), the overtime charge is about the same.

Interestingly the CF is attempting to change this situation. The Canadian Forces (CF) Family Child Care Advisory Committee met in December of 2008 and came up with the following mandate:

An affordable high quality child care system that: is able to meet 80% of the identified child care needs in each CF community; serves children of all ages including those with special needs; provides services in both official languages as appropriate; provides overnight and weekend spaces as needed for operational support; and is supported by an accountability structure that builds on the existing Military Family Services Program framework, ensures consistency, and has adequate levels of Department of National Defence funding.¹¹⁶

This committee is presenting its recommendations to the CF in the Family summit II in 2009.

Perhaps the most comprehensive and flexible child care system for a military organization resides in our neighbours to the south. The US Department of Defense (DOD) has recognized the need to

help provide military families with quality, affordable child care. Depending on where a Service member is stationed, finding child care can be somewhat challenging. DoD has created programs to help meet those challenges and to improve the quality of life for military families¹¹⁷.

The US has recognized the unique situation that military families face and has instituted an excellent child care system to ensure that their members remain operational. The US child care program has four key elements: Childcare Development Centres (CDC), Family Child Care (FCC), School-Age Care (SAC), and childcare Resource and

¹¹⁶ Canadian Forces Personnel Support Agency, "Seeking Solutions for Child Care Challenges," http://www.cfpsa.com/en/psp/DMFS/Child_Care_e.asp (January 26, 2009).

¹¹⁷ Department of Defence, "Military Home Front Child Care Home Site," http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/mhf/MHF/MHF_HOME_1?section_id=20.40.500.94.0.0.0.0 (accessed, March 13, 2009).

Referral Programs (R&R). The US DOD child care program is very extensive in the care it provides to its military members and covers all aspects of a military career, including deployments.

The CDC is a comprehensive on site child care system that

oversees 800 Centers located on military installations worldwide. These centers offer a safe child care environment and meet professional standards for early childhood education. Child care is typically available through these centers for children ages six weeks to twelve years. The centers are generally open Monday through Friday between the hours of 6:00AM and 6:30PM. Commanders may decide to extend hours to meet the work and deployment needs and schedules of their installation population.¹¹⁸

These licensed, and flexible child care centres are the corner stone of the US DOD child care initiatives. The CF could easily adopt this model by empowering the current MFRCs with the mandate to provide fully licensed and adaptive child care centres. With 72% of the MFRC currently hosting some sort of child care options, this could be a relatively cost effective method of providing this much required service to CF members. Various research into the area of on-site child care centres has proven that such a benefit has a profound affect on reducing employee turnover, and an increase in commitment to the organization and employee satisfaction.¹¹⁹ It would therefore be very beneficial for the CF to implement an on-site day care option for its members.

Child care subsidies

Currently DND does not offer any child care subsidies. However, a member posted from NB to ON can see day care costs raise as much as \$400 a month per child.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Grover and Crooker, *Who Appreciates Family-Responsive Human Resource Policies: The Impact of Family Friendly Policies on the Organizational Attachment of Parents and Non-Parents*, P. 272.

All provinces offer subsidize child care for low-income families. Approximately 31% of regulated child care spaces are subsidized in Canada¹²⁰.

Figure 13: Monthly cost of child care in 2001.¹²¹

Prov/Territory	Infant \$	Toddler \$	Pre-School \$	Comments
BC	650	547	46	Childcare tends to be significantly more expensive in large centres
Alberta	525	450	425	
Saskatchewan	Not reportable due to sample size	405	380	
Manitoba	573	383	368	
Ontario	783	603	541	Childcare tends to be significantly more expensive in large centres
Quebec	477 - pre-2000* 100**	455 - pre-2000* 100**	440 - pre-2000* 100**	*avg rate before the introduction of the \$7.00-per-child-per-day universal plan **current cost
New Brunswick	380	360	360	
Nova Scotia	470	412	412	
PEI	440	412	412	
Newfoundland & Labrador	not reportable due to sample size	380	360	
Yukon	630	550	514	
Northwest Territories	Not reportable due to sample size	Not reportable due to sample size	not reportable due to sample size	
AVERAGE	531	477	455	

The rates across the country make it difficult for a military member to be posted from one location to another and maintain the same level of income. Although the CF implemented a PLD (Post Living Deferral) to try to equate wages when posted from one province to another, they do little to offset the cost of daycare.

The American military also offers subsidized day care for their families. The 2005-06 US Armed Forces scale is as follows¹²²:

¹²⁰ Childcare Resource and Research Unit, *Early Childhood Care and Education in Canada: Provinces and Territories* (Toronto: University of Toronto,[1998]), p. 128

¹²¹ Ibid. p. 107

Category	Family Income	Weekly Fee Per Child	High Cost Range (Optional)
I	\$0 - 28,000	\$43 - 59	\$48 - 62
II	\$28,001 - 34,000	\$53- 70	\$58 -76
III	\$34,001 - 44,000	\$64- 84	\$70- 89
IV	\$44,001 - 55,000	\$77 - 95	\$83-102
V	\$55,001 . 70,000	\$92 - 111	\$95-. 116
VI	\$70,001 +	\$107- 126	\$108 - 129

Considering the low income of some CF families and the inconsistencies of the cost of child care across the country, it would be beneficial for the CF to adopt such a model. The stress of finding affordable child care, especially for the lower income brackets would be reduced.

Emergency Care

Emergency Child care is essential to an organization such as the CF that deploys its members on short notice, and for an unknown duration of time. The directorate of QOL initiated an “emergency” child care program in response to the SCONDVA report. These are “on-site” day care locations that provide 24 hour service. However this program is only good for 3 days at which point the member must find their own child care. Although the three day emergency care program is good, it is often difficult for someone to wake their children in the night, take them to day care, then deploy. While deployed, they have to wonder if their child was able to even make it to school, try to arrange for someone to come and get the child before the three days is finished, while trying to concentrate on their job itself. Sometimes these operations may find the member overseas with little

¹²² Department of Defence, "Department of Defense Child Development Center and School Age Care Programs Fee Policy and Fee Schedule for 2005-2006," http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/dav/lsn/LSN/BINARY_RESOURCE/BINARY_CONTENT/1866231.pdf, (accessed March 2009).

ability to communicate with people in Canada.¹²³ The emergency child care program is certainly helpful on a short notice deployment; however it is not adequate for a deployment that could last over the three days.

Ideally the CF should adopt a full-time day care system, and then emergency daycare could also be provided at the same site when required. Any full time day care adopted by the CF should have to have provisions for emergency day-care for deployments and operations. This would reduce the stress of parents when told they must deploy. Furthermore, it would allow parents to be more operationally effective, not only would they be able to deploy rapidly, they would be able to concentrate on the deployment rather than worry about their children.

In the US, the second part of the DOD program, the FCC, provides in-home care by installation-certified providers. FCC helps bridge gaps in child care when the CDC does not entirely meet the child care needs of the family.¹²⁴ The FCC is ideal for the military parent who work shifts, weekends, has children with special needs, or is deployed and allows parents to have flexible child care arrangements outside of on site programs. The child does not have to be transported to an on site-day care and can remain in the comforts of home.

¹²³ From the author's personal experience: In 2006, I was deployed to Lebanon to assist in Operation Lion (the evacuation of Lebanon). I was called at 22h00 hours to deploy the next morning. Once in Lebanon, there was no method of communicating with Canada to arrange for any type of child care support. As my husband was the Commanding Officer of a High Readiness Unit (CJIRU), he was on two hours notice to deploy as well. Our nearest family that could assist was a 24 hour drive away. It would have been impossible to provide our children with a well arranged child care option from Lebanon.

¹²⁴ according to the DOD military benefits website: Department of Defence, "Military.Com Benefits: Military Child Care," <http://www.military.com/benefits/resources/family-support/child-care> (accessed on Sept 11, 2008).

The CF could adopt such an “emergency day-care” that could provide “in-home” services. Such “in-home” care would alleviate the stress of deployments, and allow CF families to be more operationally focused. Furthermore, the children of military parents would not have to move to a facility in order to have adequate care. This increases flexibility to the family for operations and helps provide an option when faced with a sick child. A program such as the FCC would also be beneficial to bases that currently do not have the infrastructure to provide on site child-care options. This program is equally beneficial to members who live a fair distance from the base and where it is not feasible to transport their children to an onsite facility.

Once deployed, the US DOD has *Operation: Military Child Care* which:

- Helps eligible Military Families locate affordable child care options in local communities.
- Reduces child care fees of eligible Military Families who are already using licensed community child care programs and providers.
- Supplements and expands the deployment child care services already provided on military installations.¹²⁵

By having a child care program in place, enhanced just for deployments, increases the flexibility and deployability of its members and allows its members to go on operations relatively stress free. Although the MFRC provide some assistance to families when a member is deployed, this service is limited to some “drop-in” day care or courses for the children on how to cope with deployments. There is no supplemental child care arrangements made available for a working parent that has to cope with a parent deployed for several months.

¹²⁵ Department of Defence, "Military Child Care Benefits," <http://www.military.com/benefits/resources/family-support/child-care> (accessed on September 11, 2008).

After-school or summer camp programming:

After-school and summer camps vary from base to base depending on the MFRC and the local support. In Valcartier, for example, there is an excellent summer camp offered every day from 06h00 to 18h00 (counting additional hours for extra care if required). The summer day camp includes daily swimming outdoor play and a weekly trip to a local museum, Water Park or overnight camping trip. However, not all bases even offer such a service, expecting their members to find their own summer camps for their children. In some locations, summer day camps are at a premium, very difficult to get into, and the parent must often switch from location to location each week to find suitable summer day camp programs. For a family posted in the summer, after most camps are already full, it can be a nightmare trying to find some suitable care for your children, while trying to move in and start a new job. The MFRCs should be mandated to provide after school and summer camp programs. There should be no limit on spaces, ensuring that all military families can access the service as required. This would certainly be beneficial to military families across the nation and ease the burden of postings.

The School-Age Care (SAC) program of the DOD coordinates before and after school programs and summer day camp options.¹²⁶ It would be beneficial for the CF to adopt a similar program within Canada. It could be easily done in conjunction with the local school boards and MFRCs to provide this service to members. It would also ease the stress of the first few months of a posting and provide some level of flexibility.

Currently members are posted in the summer and must return to work prior to the start of

¹²⁶ according to the DOD military benefits website: Department of Defence, *Military Home Front Child Care Home Site*.

school. It is often difficult to find a summer day camp program to take your child as many are booked in the early spring, long before posting season. However, if offered by the MFRCs, they could reserve spaces for military members posted into an area, reducing the stress for the parents. It would be equally beneficial for the children as a way to meet new friends when posted to a new location.

Sick child care

Most child care centers and schools refuse to take a child with a fever, even if the fever is only slight. “One of the most common but stressful difficulties of working parents is finding care for a sick child... yet most child care programs are not capable of caring for sick children.”¹²⁷ For a working parent, this can be difficult to manage, especially if there is only one parent available.¹²⁸ The CF does not offer any form of leave for a sick child, except “compassionate leave” or “sick leave for the member.” To have these types of leave, normally a child needs to be terminal, or in a hospital. The member must go see the Medical Officer or the Commanding Officer for approval of one of these types of leave. For a child with a minor illness that simply needs rest at home, there is no alternative. Although most supervisors tend to be accommodating, it is left up to the individual supervisor to tell the member if they can leave for the day or take an

¹²⁷ Kossek and Nichol, *The Effects of on-Site Child Care on Employee Attitudes and Performance*, 485-509

¹²⁸ From the author’s personal experience: Upon my first day back at work, after a year of maternity leave, I had a call from the school to go pick up my third son, as he had a fever. With my husband deployed, I could not share the responsibility with him. I called the emergency day care, and I was informed that this was not a case for “emergency day care”. I brought my son home and let him rest, sending him the next day to school, as he seemed better. After a couple of hours, I got the call to come and pick him up. I was desperately trying to show my supervisor that I was not a needy mom, but a professional employee, yet I had to once again go pick up my son. On the third day, the school had the nurse waiting to tell me I was a bad parent, and that I should really stay at home with him until he was better. This was very difficult to explain to my supervisor, who had just lost me for a year. I kept sending him all week, hoping he would make it through the day, so I could prove myself to my supervisor, who was not very supportive. Yet, each day the school called me and on the last day, threatened to call child service about my parenting.” Personal situation that occurred after having my fourth child, on my first week back to work. My child gets a fever easily, so I knew he was not sick, but just had a bad cold. None the less, I was stuck with a parenting dilemma which was causing a huge strain on my work.

annual leave day. Public Service employees are entitled to 5 days of leave per year for “family related reasons.” The CF could easily adopt the public service policy and it would allow members an added security of knowing they can take leave for a sick child when needed.

Information and referral

Currently the MFRCs offer limited information on available child care to members posted into the area. Yet, only 76% of the MFRC offer referrals, and these are simple registries “available in binders in the reception counter.¹²⁹” It is up to each member to investigate if the child care centre is licensed, adequate or if they even have space for the children. This can be very time consuming for the member when they are posted into a new region. “The general assumption is that each change to a child care arrangement—changing centres, choosing a camp, hiring a nanny—takes up ten daytime or working hours to investigate and select.¹³⁰” The CF typically allows 5 days for a House Hunting Trip and this can be extended by two days to allow members to search for schools and daycares. However, this is typically not enough time to find adequate daycare for someone posted in to a new area.

The United States, in contrast, provide a R&R (referral and recommendation) as part of their universally child care program for the DOD.¹³¹ This is very similar to the referrals that are currently offered by the MFRCs , however, the DOD program is more regulated than the MFRC “binder” system. Child care options are verified for licensing

¹²⁹ Directorate of Military Family Services, *An Assessment of the Need for Licensed Group Child Care for Canadian Forces Families*, P. 14.

¹³⁰ Moore, *Families, Employers and the Community Benefit from High Quality Child Care: Ten Emerging Workplace Support Options*, P. 2

¹³¹ according to the DOD military benefits website: Department of Defence, *Military Child Care Benefits*

and available spaces. Parents do not have to do the mundane tasks of verifying all possible options on the list one by one. This complete referral program provides parents with alternative child care arrangements that are dependable and safe when so desired.

The military is in a unique situation in that they post individuals from one province to another on a regular basis. The stress of trying to find adequate daycare is perhaps the most stressful part of the move for a parent. If the MRFCs regularly provided a list of available licensed day care spaces in the area, then this could ease the stress of posting on a family.

Flexibility

Many daycares have very fixed hours. In the NCR, for example, the majority of daycares open at 0730 hours or 0800 hours. As most CF members need to be at work for 0800 hours, these hours of operation make it near impossible to be to work on time, unless your employer has allowed you to have flexible hours. As discussed in section 2, the CF only allows flexible hours of work, in some locations, the NCR being one such place. However, the majority of bases require that members come at specific times and leave at specific time, due to PT training, morning parades, and the like. It is essentially left up to the supervisor to determine if they will allow a flexible schedule or not for their member. Although most employers are now more and more understanding of family requirements, more education and direction on the matter would ensure that members benefit from more flexibility allowing them to get to the day care before closure. If the CF were to adopt a child care program similar to the US model, then on site centres

would be able to remain flexible in regards to their operating hours in order to provide the best service possible to the military parent.

Parental networks

Parental networks are increasing informally throughout the CF to accommodate the need to find adequate day care. Many service couples contact one another to find the best daycare options available at the base the members are moving too. Some members have referred nanny agencies to other members as a means to allow flexibility in the child care options. Although the MFRCs do offer some information on available daycares, as discussed above under information and referral, there is no formal way for a member to verify information about a possible daycare or nanny service other than through other military members.

With the advantage of internet, an online parental network could be established to help find child care when posted. The US military spouses have a website that offers not only information on child care, but other spousal type networks such as employment opportunities, scholarships, benefits and the like that ease the burden that a posting has on the family as a whole¹³². Although most basis send member a “welcome package” these packages are limited in the information they provide and offer little in regards to child care. The CF should set up a comprehensive parental network website for military families that could be similar to the US site. This would be an invaluable tool for families when faced with the stress of a move.

¹³²The DOD military family website is called National Military Family Association and can be accessed at: <http://www.nmfa.org/site/PageServer>

Family Care Leaves

As an employer, effective January 1st, 1996 the Government of Canada offers a Care and Nurturing Leave to the public service employees, “the total maximum LWOP permitted is five years plus up to three years of child care leave (one year per child) for a total of up to eight years for all types of LWOP.”¹³³ For those needing care for a parent, the total maximum they can take varies (depending on their classification) between two and five years of LWOP. Although this benefit is extended to the RCMP, it is not extended to the military.

The military is only entitled to the 4 months of maternity for the birth mother and 8 months of parental which can be split between the mother and the father that the rest of the public service enjoys. While this is more generous than it has been in the past, when at one point a woman had to release from the military if she was pregnant, it is not even close to what the rest of the government of Canada offers their employees. Furthermore, there have been a significant number of women that have left the military when their children were young, so that they could stay home for the very crucial informative years.¹³⁴ Although the US does not offer family leave in comparison to the CF current benefits, this does not mean that the CF cannot adopt the RCMP option. If the CF could adopt the same policy afforded to the rest of the public service, then many military members who release while their children are young may opt to stay in.

¹³³ Treasury Board of Canada, "Care and Nurturing of Pre-School Aged Children," Government of Canada, <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/hr-rh/sbl-ltas/letters/l-cnn-eng.asp>, accessed on December 2, 2008.

¹³⁴ From the author's personal experience: Out of the 13 female logisticians that graduated CMR in 1992, all but three left the CF when they became mothers, to stay at home for the first few years of their children's lives. All but one rejoined the workforce, once their children were in school, but only one lady rejoined the CF when her four children were all in school, even though she had to redo her training. My sister-in-law, who graduated a year later, left the CF when she became pregnant, and rejoined the work force when her children were all in school.

The current MFRC construct provides a good basis by which the CF could use to develop a fully flexible and accommodating military child care service that expands all aspects of the need. This paper has demonstrated that the need for child care is important for military families. A fully flexible child care system would allow members to deploy rapidly, increasing the operational effectiveness of the CF. With a full 62% of members with children, it becomes essential for the CF to implement policies in order to reduce the stress of finding child care on postings, reduce the work-life conflict and most importantly to increase the deployability of its members.

CONCLUSION

The CF has undergone serious downsizing in the 1990s that resulted in a manpower crisis today. The new recruits of today, generation X and Y are looking for employers that will assist them in maintaining a good work-life balance. In addition, the CF attrition rate has dramatically increased, mainly due to the pressures of the modern-day, high-paced life and the current operational tempo that has increased the work-life conflict of many military members. The CF HR framework has failed to address the demands of the new recruits, or the desires of those that are releasing from the CF in order to reduce this attrition rate or attract new recruits to the CF.

People releasing from the CF have demonstrated through various surveys that they often leave the military due to the increasing demands the Forces puts on their work-life balance. However, the CF HR system has not been able to reduce the attrition rate despite the results of these attrition surveys.

This paper has proven that work-life balance initiatives must be implemented in order to increase retention. It has demonstrated that there are two areas that the CF can easily invest in to improve the work-life balance of CF members while increasing the overall operational effectiveness of the CF. Some of the initiatives proposed in this paper, such as the various child-care options, would increase the deployability of military members by allowing parents flexibility in their child care needs, while reducing their stress of finding adequate child care on postings and deployments. The various Flexible Work Arrangements proposed could decrease the daily stress that members face with the current PERSTEMPO of the CF, making them more ready to deploy when needed.

Most of the proposed work-life balance initiatives proposed in this paper are easy to implement, and are relatively inexpensive. The child-care options can be piggy-backed onto the current daycare options available within many MFRCs without causing a financial strain on the CF. The flexible work arrangements discussed are mirrored on the public service, and therefore something that is already in place in the federal government, and needs only to be extended to the military members. Both initiatives would result in an increase job satisfaction rate, and therefore an increase in retention and recruitment. It is therefore recommended the CMP review these work-life balance proposals as a measure to increase retention, recruitment and operational effectiveness.

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