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THE MILITARY AS AN ACTOR IN SOCIAL CHANGE: THE CASE FOR EXPANDING THE SCOPE OF THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS

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Master of Defence Studies

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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE - COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES

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THE CASE FOR EXPANDING THE SCOPE OF THE
CANADIAN ARMED FORCES ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS**

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By Major G.F. Sharpe

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Abstract

The current cadre of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Aboriginal Programs recruit a number of excellent personnel every year. While the overall retention rate from these programs is quite low, arguably the true measure of success of the CAF Aboriginal Programs should rest not only on the benefits of gaining CAF enrollees but also on the social impact of the skills and training brought back by participants to their Aboriginal communities. Therefore, serious consideration should be given to the expansion of the Aboriginal Programs in order to effect significant and lasting positive change in some of the most difficult to reach communities in Canada.

The paper examines the rich history between the CAF and Canada's Aboriginals establishing the commonality of a shared set of positive core values that will make future partnerships promising. This leads into a look at existing CAF Aboriginal Programs and then, looking back before looking forward, the paper will examine past Government of Canada actions and how some programs have sowed the seeds of distrust in Aboriginal communities. Using past experiences and lessons learned, recommendations are proposed as to how the CAF can adapt programs to repair some of these relationships and to assist with Aboriginal nation building. The paper illustrates that the CAF has a role in creating an environment that could assist in gaining a positive foothold within difficult to reach communities through the empowerment of Aboriginal youth. In essence, social change should be the primary goal of the CAF Aboriginal Programs.

Live your life so that the fear of death can never enter your heart...Love your life, perfect your life, beautify all things in your life. Seek to make your life long and in the service of your people.

- Tecumseh

INTRODUCTION

From Tecumseh to Sgt Tommy Prince to Elijah Harper, the influence of Canadian Aboriginal people upon the Canada's history is profound. At the same time the impact of Canada upon the history of Canadian Aboriginal people has been intensely profound. It can be reasonably argued that this impact has been largely negative. Historical examples such as the clearing of the Great Plains and the residential schools program have contributed to the marginalization of Aboriginals and the development of what can be described as a racist ideology in the history between indigenous peoples and the Canadian state.¹ Contemporary issues such as the portrayal of Aboriginals by professional sports teams illustrate that stereotypes are not a thing of the past.² These unfortunate stereotypes influence the attitudes of some non-Aboriginal Canadians and by extension some members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). Similarly, some Aboriginals have impressions of the CAF that may also be based partially on stereotypes. Moving forward, both CAF and Aboriginal cultures will need to coexist successfully if the CAF is to increase the numbers of Aboriginals in its ranks or, perhaps more importantly, increase the numbers of successful graduates of the CAF Aboriginal Programs.

¹ James W. Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: disease, politics of starvation, and the loss of Aboriginal life*. (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013), XI.

² Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*. (Canada: Doubleday, 2012), 59.

Today the CAF aims to be perceived as an employer of choice by Aboriginals and to recruit larger numbers of Aboriginals into its ranks.³ CAF Aboriginal Programs play a significant part in this effort, which has been ongoing since 1990 and appears to be growing into a both a lasting and positive relationship. The three main programs making up the CAF Aboriginal Programs are the Canadian Forces Aboriginal Entry Program (CFAEP), the Aboriginal Summer Programs, namely Bold Eagle, Black Bear and Raven, and finally the Aboriginal Leadership Opportunity Year (ALOY) offered at the Royal Military College of Canada (RMCC).

While the overall retention rates resulting from these programs are quite low, this paper will argue that the true measure of success of the CAF Aboriginal Programs does not rest solely upon gaining CAF enrollees but also on the social impact of the skills brought back to Aboriginal communities by candidates who are successful in their programs and choose not to remain in the CAF. The resulting social change within these communities should be the main goal of the programs. Serious consideration should be given to their expansion, in both size and scope, in order to effect significant and lasting positive change in some of the most difficult to reach communities in Canada.

The CAF has tasked the Commander of Canadian Forces Recruiting Group (CFRG) to increase the numbers of Aboriginal Recruits in order to better reflect the diverse nature of the Canadian population. CFRG has in turn identified this as a critical

³ Canada. Department of National Defence. *Canadian Forces Recruiting Group Operations Plan 2014/2105*. (Ottawa: Canadian Forces Recruiting Group, 2013), 7.

component of recruiting operations.⁴ The Commander of CFRG has charged recruiting Commanding Officers to plan to increase the enrolment of women, visible minorities and Aboriginals; in particular, Commander CFRG has directed that recruiting center Commanding Officer's will meet the assigned Aboriginal Strategic Intake Plan (SIP).⁵ Of note, while there are identified targets for women and visible minorities, from within these three diversity groups there is only a specific SIP for the Aboriginals in the form of the Aboriginal Programs. Furthermore, it must be kept in mind that any Aboriginal applicant is free to apply for any CAF entry plan and is in no way restricted to the aforementioned specific programs.

As will be shown in the body of this paper, when measured solely as a recruiting and retention tool, the CAF Aboriginal Programs deliver a poor ratio of CAF enrollees as compared to the number of candidates who enter the programs; however, as an instrument for positive social change within Canada's Aboriginal communities these programs have achieved some notable successes. This has been mandated as part of the aim of the programs by the Canadian Defence Academy (CDA), which is the CAF organization tasked with managing these programs.⁶ The CAF Aboriginal Programs should be further adapted and expanded such that a larger number of applicants can be reached and a sizable cadre of confident, skilled youth will return to their communities with the skills to effect positive social change in communities that have been largely resistant to outside

⁴ Canada. Department of National Defence. *Canadian Forces Recruiting Group Operations Plan 2014/2105*. (Ottawa: Canadian Forces Recruiting Group, 2013), H-1/6.

⁵ Canada. Department of National Defence. *Canadian Forces Recruiting Group Commander's Planning Guidance/FY 2014-2015*. (Ottawa: Canadian Forces Recruiting Group, 2013), 5.

⁶ Canada. Department of National Defence. "Aboriginal Training Programs." last accessed 25 November 2013, http://cda.mil.ca/ops/ITE_PP/aboriginal/index-eng.asp.

efforts to do so. The CAF has a unique opportunity to effect lasting positive social change. As an instrument of the Government of Canada the CAF must stand ready to act as nation builders amongst our own Aboriginal communities. This paper will describe how the long-term benefits of an expansion to the CAF Aboriginal Programs will justify the use of CAF resources as provided by the Government of Canada.

Research Questions

In support of the position that the success of the CAF Aboriginal Programs should be linked to the positive impact on Aboriginal communities rather than on employment equity and recruiting goals for the CAF, it is important to provide satisfactory answers to the following two questions. Firstly, the question as to whether or not a military can positively influence social change will be addressed. This question needs not only to be addressed early and up front but carried on and re-framed with the continued support of references and scholarly opinion. It is an important foundation to the arguments that will be made in support of expanding the programs.

Secondly, the question of how to ensure that Aboriginals will be supported in their education and training by a cadre of CAF personnel possessing the appropriate intercultural skills capable of embracing cultural diversity will be addressed. In order to ensure the CAF is an appropriate organization to use as an instrument for social change it is important to confirm that the culture will be able to effectively deliver the programs that will assist in reaching the aims of the CAF with respect to Aboriginals. All too often Aboriginals have been ‘assisted’ with programs, such as the residential schools, that have

had negative effects. Some of these will be examined in Chapter 3. To that end, critical mass theories with respect to Aboriginal culture shall be discussed.

Methodology and Outline

To fully support the thesis and research questions posed above, this paper will begin with a literature review that will assess prevailing views with respect to military Aboriginal Programs and assess the role of the military for influencing social change. As the programs are directed at youth, the role of youth in making strides towards cultural change will be very briefly examined. The roles and theoretical foundations of critical mass theory and the requirements of leadership in a diverse environment will be discussed early and provide support to arguments made later in the paper. This literature review will not be exhaustive, but will present scholarly views supporting the use of the military as a tool for social change writ large. References in support of critical mass theory and leadership in a diverse environment will be used to shore-up the case for an expansion to the CAF Aboriginal Programs.

Returning to the Canadian Aboriginal context, the paper will examine the rich history between the CAF and Canada's Aboriginals in order to establish the commonality of a shared set of positive core values that will make future partnerships promising. The paper will then step back to examine past Government of Canada actions and explain how some programs have sowed the seeds of distrust in Aboriginal communities; this is important to establish as it frames the reality faced by the CAF when trying to recruit Aboriginals. This leads into an examination of other current programs such as the Canadian Rangers and the Katimivik programs and then into the existing CAF Aboriginal

Programs. Taken as a group, these programs enjoy successes in similar and sometimes overlapping populations that the CAF Aboriginal programs aim to serve.

The final sections make recommendations as to how the CAF can adapt and expand the programs to repair some of these relationships and to assist with Aboriginal nation building. Select experiences will be used to highlight instances where Aboriginal cultures have been accommodated when seeking to positively influence Aboriginal youth. The role of Aboriginal Elders and community influencers will also be shown to be important to these efforts. It will be further illustrated that the CAF is a positive tool to gain a foothold within difficult to reach communities through the empowerment of Aboriginal youth. Social change should be the primary focus of CAF Aboriginal Programs.

The capability of the CAF to support the expansion of the subject programs must be examined within a realistic scope of what is available in the context of the fiscal and personnel resources that the CAF can expend. It would undermine any arguments made herein to expand the programs should the financial costs and personnel impacts be ignored or impossible to implement. Expansion must indeed be feasible. To further inform the paper, several recruiting experts and a few community leaders who have had interaction with the CAF and the Aboriginal Programs were informally consulted. With 25 years in the CAF, the author's own experience including two years as the Commanding Officer of Canadian Forces Recruiting Center (CFRC) Pacific, encompassing British Columbia and the Yukon, has afforded many first-hand experiences and interactions with Aboriginal applicants, their families and elders.

Limitations

It is critical to note that this paper is not advocating for cultural or social change within the CAF itself. This paper is only concerned with those aspects insofar as they support the ability to expand the CAF Aboriginal programs. While the CAF has made impressive progress in recent years with respect to increased diversity, cultural acceptance and the elimination of racism and discrimination, the scope of this paper only makes reference to those topics as important but underlying themes.

This paper will not discuss Aboriginal Policing. These programs may appear to stand as a solid comparative example to the CAF Aboriginal Programs, but even a brief examination reveals far too much controversy to be useful in making this case. Aboriginal Policing programs have enjoyed varied success in different jurisdictions and are the subject of much ongoing study; it would not only be difficult to assess the programs as successes or failures, but comparing the role of a Military to that of a Police force as agents for social change could be problematic.

Further Study

The data on the positive outcomes of the CAF Aboriginal programs is qualitative and is mostly based on the few available reports, the author's professional experience, some media coverage and informal consultations with recruiting experts and aboriginal community leaders. Larger data sets and studies on outcomes were not found for these programs at this time and could be the subject of further study.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several elements that require review prior to progressing into the main body of this paper. Firstly, it is important to break out some of the CFRG direction and consideration for CAF diversity goals and support for Aboriginal Programs. Secondly it must be noted that some other nations' militaries have similar programs to those of the CAF. It would be an oversight to ignore the experiences of Australia and New Zealand and to consider Canadian Aboriginal programs in isolation. Thirdly, there needs to be an understanding that there is an acceptance by accredited scholars, governments, and senior military leaders that a military can be used to positively influence internal social development. Additionally, the role of youth not only in effecting social change but as agents within Aboriginal communities is highlighted and stands to strengthen the purpose of the CAF Aboriginal Programs as they are targeted to youth. Lastly, a look at the theoretical foundations of critical mass theory and the requirements of leadership in a diverse environment will round out the foundation needed to proceed in support of the thesis.

Aboriginal Experiences in Other Militaries

The CAF is not alone among the militaries of our allies in seeking to have its ranks better reflect the diversity of the populations they serve. The militaries of both New Zealand and Australia strive to reflect the diverse nature of their populations and in particular with respect to their indigenous populations. Without doubt both nations provide lessons that can be applicable to CAF efforts. While the Australian programs do

not appear to be as well developed as those in Canada,⁷ the heritage of Indigenous Australians is proudly documented by their Department of Veterans Affairs and physically manifested through impressive monuments that show a deep respect for Aboriginal Veterans.⁸ The Australian Defence Force clearly states that “Indigenous Australians have played a significant part in our military history over the past century and we are proud to continue this involvement with many Indigenous people serving in the Navy, Army and Air Force as full and part-time members. In addition to a diverse range of employment opportunities, the ADF offers support programs and further education opportunities for its Indigenous members.”⁹

The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) recruiting website has no specific links to address Māori issues, but a perusal of both the NZDF Careers and Operations websites present a picture of a diverse and integrated force. A scholarly comparison of Indigenous Peoples in the NZDF and the CAF has been conducted and makes many observations and recommendations that are applicable to arguments made in support of this paper’s thesis and to the research questions posed above. The most notable aspect of this comparison paper for consideration here is the observation that the approach to diversity inclusion in New Zealand and by extension in the NZDF is oriented towards partnership rather than as

⁷ Australia. Australian Defence Force. “Indigenous Overview” last accessed 26 Feb 2014, <http://www.defencejobs.gov.au/indigenous/>.

⁸ Australia. Department of Veterans Affairs. “Indigenous Australians at War” last accessed 26 Feb 2014, http://www.dva.gov.au/BENEFITSANDSERVICES/IND/Pages/at_war.aspx.

⁹ Australia. Australian Defence Force. “Indigenous Overview” last accessed 11 May 2014, <http://www.defencejobs.gov.au/indigenous/>.

a majority/minority issue.¹⁰ As we will see, the partnership approach is also important when engaging youth. Leaning more towards this approach, the NZDF does not have Aboriginal Programs similar to those of the CAF, but rather a well-developed set of frameworks, policies, infrastructures and cultural events that reflect the Māori culture throughout the NZDF.¹¹ An excellent example of this is that fact that in the NZDF all new recruits are introduced to Māori culture, leaders are encouraged to take Māori language training and members learn and perform the Haka (warrior dance).¹² While CAF readers may balk at the thought of the inclusion of additional languages into the CAF, this level of integration of Māori culture into military culture is truly impressive.

The Importance of Aboriginal Youth in Social Change

The role of youth in implementing change is critical. The CAF Aboriginal Programs are clearly advertised and mandated to be targeted towards youth. Recent Canadian demographic trends show that Aboriginal youth are not only a fast growing segment in their communities, but in the Canadian population writ large. In fact Aboriginals represent the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population and within this population eighty percent of people are under the age of thirty.¹³ According to Statistics Canada the Inuit have a median age of 23, the First Nations people 26, and the

¹⁰ Grazia Scoppio, "Indigenous Peoples in the New Zealand Defence Force and the Canadian Forces." *Canadian Military Journal* 10, no 4 (Autumn 2010): 45.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 44.

¹² *Ibid*, 43.

¹³ Christian Leuprecht, "Demographics and Diversity Issues in Canadian Military Participation." In *Challenge and Change in the Military: Gender and Diversity Issues*, edited by Franklin C. Pinch, Allister T. MacIntyre and Alan C. Okros, 122-145. (Kingston: Canadian defence Academy Press, 2004): 130.

Métis 31.¹⁴ All three present a remarkably young population and for military recruiters represents a ‘target-rich’ environment. Military recruiting like any military operation will aim to coordinate and economise efforts where able. The fact that the Canadian Aboriginal population is so youthful makes the population ripe for CAF attraction efforts aimed to simply fill the ranks of the CAF. Little to no convincing would be needed to persuade those working in CFRG to spend time recruiting amongst this demographic. This idea will be visited in Chapter 5.

Within the ranks of these youth will likely be the leaders of tomorrow. The former Prime Minister Paul Martin has called upon Aboriginal youth to become ‘Tecumseh’s successors’ and lead the change.¹⁵ He sees the need for partnership with Aboriginal youth. This appears to be producing results in the NZDF; results which will be shown to be important for the CAF as it makes strides intended to achieve similar levels of success.¹⁶

Social Capital and the Military as a Tool for Social Change

It has been argued that the military is reflective of the society it serves and from which it draws its members.¹⁷ The same can be said for any workplace that hires a work force that reflects the diversity of the population. The CAF strives to accomplish this and

¹⁴ Canada. Statistics Canada. “Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit” last accessed 11 May 2014. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/99-011-x2011001-eng.cfm>.

¹⁵ Paul Martin, “Who will be the next Tecumseh?” *The Globe and Mail*, 7 October 2013.

¹⁶ Scoppio, *Indigenous Peoples in the New Zealand Defence Force and the Canadian Forces*, 44.

¹⁷ Grazia Scoppio, “Leadership in a Diverse Environment: Diversity Strategies in Military and Police Forces in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.” (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy, 2009), 17.

to create a diverse military workplace. The military, as a workplace, presents a promising venue for racial integration.¹⁸ The workplace is essentially a place where people from different cultural backgrounds will spend considerable time together. Without the workplace many people, had they not found themselves working alongside others from different backgrounds, would not previously had been exposed to persons from different cultures. The military as an extreme type of workplace can force members to not only work together, but to live, learn and rely on one another for their very survival in some cases. The creation of relationships in this manner, the building of social capital, can be used to advance ‘racial relations’.¹⁹ The advancement of racial relations can be used as a starting point to move forward outside of the workplace with the ultimate goal of influencing a national cultural shift.

Views regarding the validity and relevance of the use of militaries as a venue to influence social change are mixed. For the purposes of this paper it is important to understand that militaries can indeed be used to assist in implementing social change amongst the societies they serve in a peaceable and positive way. Some experts believe this to be a realistic role for a military in a democratic country. The retired American Lieutenant-General Julius Becton has spoken and written very positively of this role for the military. During his career he saw the US Army go from a segregated force to a fully inclusive one. He assesses diversity to be a force multiplier and convincingly makes the case that ‘Since the military services have a stake in the outcome of bettering the

¹⁸ Ibid, 18.

¹⁹ Ibid.

education process in this country, the military needs to expand its support of this process.²⁰ The same will be said for the CAF and its support to Aboriginal communities.

That is not to say that there is universal acceptance that this should be a role for the CAF; at least one well-known Canadian military Author believes that this should not be the case. Jack Granatstein states that ‘Setting recruiting quotas and lowering training standards to serve political and social goals is no favour to the nation...’²¹ In contrast with this scholarly opposition to using the CAF in this role, this paper will show that CAF efficacy in that regard is feasible. In addition, it should be noted that linking diversity targets to quotas and lowered training standards is an inaccurate statement and is not reflective of CAF and CFRG policy or practices. The author of this paper, having been a Commanding Officer of a CFRC, can fully attest to the fact that this does not occur in any facet of the efforts employed to increase the diversity of the CAF. This paper will show that these sorts of remarks do not describe the recruiting practices for the CAF Aboriginal Programs. CAF diversity goals are achieved via targeted recruiting attractions activities.²² The applications stemming from these events are processed in the same manner as any other application received without deference to gender, ethnicity or cultural background.

²⁰ LGen Julius Becton, “The Military and Public Behaviour.” last accessed 25 Feb 2014, <http://www.upenn.edu/pnc/ptbecton.html>.

²¹ Jack Granatstein, *Who killed the Canadian Military*, (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2004), 147.

²² Canada. Department of National Defence. *Canadian Forces Recruiting Group Operations Plan 2014/2105*. (Ottawa: Canadian Forces Recruiting Group, 2013), H-1/6.

Critical Mass Theory and Leadership in a Diverse Environment

Despite disagreement regarding the use of the military to build social capital, there needs to be a certain number of people within an organization from certain minority groups in order to influence cultural change in an organization. This number, or ratio, is hard to specifically define but is known in this context as a critical mass.²³ Until the critical mass is reached and the organizational culture itself ensures that the reduction of racial barriers have become the social norm, the promotion of diversity needs formal direction and oversight.²⁴ It appears that the critical mass needed for self-sustaining cultural diversity is present for African Americans in the US Armed Forces and for the Māoris in the NZDF.²⁵ This does not mean that the perfect balance of racial harmony has been reached, but that the foundation for significant, lasting and self-sustaining cultural change has been laid.

Leadership in organizations striving to achieve greater cultural diversity through increasing the critical mass of some minority groups must be cognizant of the necessity to monitor and maintain the conditions needed to foster diversity. If led well, the organizational culture can create a virtuous circle that promotes diversity. This in turn grows cultural acceptance and the organization becomes more welcoming to the diverse population being served making it ever easier to increase minority representation. With respect to increasing the scope of the CAF Aboriginal programs, the CAF has undertaken

²³ Scoppio, *Leadership in a Diverse Environment: Diversity Strategies in Military and Police Forces in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States*, 18.

²⁴ Ibid, 19.

²⁵ Ibid.

several educational initiatives to enhance the cultural acceptance of Aboriginals.²⁶

Specifically to enhance the ability to recruit Aboriginals, the CFRG Recruiter's Course includes instruction on diversity.²⁷ CFRG also sends personnel on the Aboriginal Awareness Course run by CDA each year.

The CAF has made progress in its efforts towards Aboriginal cultural diversity by changing dress regulations to allow for Aboriginal hairstyles, by promoting an Aboriginal Awareness Week that encourages base and unit level activities and by appointing the Chief of the Land Staff (CLS), the Commander of the Canadian Army (CA), as the CAF Champion for Aboriginals.²⁸ While there is certainly room for additional initiatives, these are productive steps in the right direction.

²⁶ Grazia Scoppio, "The Power of Diversity in Defence: The Learning and Education Perspective," in *The Defence Learning and Education Training Handbook: Educating the Leader and Leading the Educated*, ed Colonel Bernd Horn and Lieutenant-Colonel Jeff Stouffer, 265-280 (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2012), 275.

²⁷ The CFRG Recruiter course provides lessons on diversity, cultural awareness and how to better interact with cultures that may be new to a recruiter. The Qualification Standards and Training Plans are monitored and, if needed, adapted and improved by the CAF Training Development Center located at CFB Borden.

²⁸ The Aboriginal Awareness week is promoted by the CLS via a message to all CAF Units. Participation in specific events is at the discretion of regional, Base and unit level Commanding Officers.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL LINKS BETWEEN THE CAF AND CANADA'S ABORIGINAL POPULATIONS

The CAF and Aboriginals as Historical Partners

The CAF shares a rich and varied history with Canadian Aboriginals and First Nations people. While this history is not completely free of controversy, it is for the most part a proud and honourable one with many examples of mutual respect and positive outcomes. This places the CAF in a unique position with respect to the Aboriginal population based on episodes going all the way back to first contact.

Prior to a more detailed examination of this historical partnership it is important to understand what is meant by the term Aboriginal. The Constitution Act of 1982 defines Aboriginal as being inclusive of the following groups: Indian, Inuit and Métis. There are of course multiple interpretations of those three terms, of which the term Indian is typically now considered to be outdated and offensive. The Public Service Commission of Canada further clarifies by stating that “An Aboriginal person is a North American Indian or a member of a First Nation, a Métis, or Inuit. North American Indians or members of a First Nation include status, treaty or registered Indians, as well as non-status and non-registered Indians.”²⁹ For CAF purposes the above definition is accepted and taught on the Aboriginal Awareness Course. Within the Recruiting Centers conducting the processing of applicants for the Aboriginal Programs a voluntary self-declaration is all that is needed. These declarations are not usually questioned, particularly given the diverse nature of the Métis population in Canada.

²⁹ Canada. Public Service Commission of Canada. “Affirmation of Aboriginal Affiliation” last accessed 10 May 2014. <http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/plcy-pltq/eead-eeed/dg-gd/aaa-eng.htm>.

Many believe that the arrival of Europeans to the east coast of Canada began a ‘systemic assault’ on the existing First Nation’s civilization.³⁰ While the extent of any alleged assault and the degree to which it could be considered systemic is open to debate, it is important for this paper to focus on the positive relations between the military forces that ultimately became the CAF and Aboriginals from first contact through to the modern day. It is from this foundation that the CAF stands to effect positive change.

The earliest settlers were very much dependent upon the Aboriginal people they encountered until such time as they had gleaned the knowledge required for their own survival in North America. This transfer of knowledge was critical to the colonization and development that followed.³¹ It was not long after their own survival was established that French and English settlers sought to establish military partnerships with tribes such as the Iroquois with whom they had previously faced resistance to their expansionist activities.³² Soon after Europeans were permanently established in Canada it was clear that alliances and partnerships were based largely on commerce and military alliances.³³ Regardless of the ethics behind these somewhat mercenary arrangements, the CAF of today can point to the partnership with Tecumseh and the Indian Confederation during the War of 1812 as being fundamental to the birth of Canada as it exists today.³⁴

³⁰ Craig Brown, *The Illustrated History of Canada*. (Toronto, Lester and Orpen Dennys Limited, 1987), 73.

³¹ Diamond Jenness, *The Indians of Canada*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 251.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ King, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*, 80.

³⁴ Donald Fixico, “A Native Nations Perspective on the War of 1812.” last accessed 18 March 2014, <http://www.pbs.org/wned/war-of-1812/essays/native-nations-perspective/>.

The Impressive Legacy of Aboriginal Veterans in Canada

During Canadian involvement in the First World War, the Second World War and Korea, well over 7000 Aboriginals served overseas; of this group more than five hundred gave their lives.³⁵ These impressive numbers become even more so when considered against the backdrop of how many Aboriginals lived far from major cities, spoke neither official language and lacked cultural ties to the lands in which they signed up to fight.³⁶ This willingness to serve existed despite initial policies during the First World War that forbade Aboriginals to enlist. Furthermore, following the introduction of conscription in 1917 Aboriginal leaders fought for and, by early 1918 obtained an exemption for Aboriginals from combatant duties.³⁷ This victory appeared to have been primarily sought on principle as Aboriginal recruits continued to enlist in large numbers.

Contributions to the Canadian War effort continued in this manner during the Second World War and Korea. It is assessed that the numbers for all three campaigns are likely even higher than officially reported. In particular, figures recorded for Metis and Inuit members are woefully inaccurate.³⁸ Certainly the names of some Aboriginal Veterans are more well-known than others; Sgt Tommy Prince and Lt Greyeyes stand as examples of celebrated individuals, but there are thousands more who served with

³⁵ Canada. Veterans Affairs Canada, *Native Soldiers Foreign Battlefields*. (Ottawa: Minister of Veterans Affairs, 1993), 3.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid, 6.

³⁸ Ibid, 20.

distinction and whose legacy further strengthens the foundation upon which the CAF of today can reach out to Canada's modern Aboriginal communities and population.

The CAF and Government Agencies in Controversy with Aboriginals

Of course there are plenty of present-day controversies between the Government of Canada and Aboriginals. The case that first comes to mind for most Canadians is the Oka crisis. In his contemporary and popular book 'The Inconvenient Indian', author Thomas King briefly lays out the evolution of the crisis due to the simmering issue of taking land from the Mohawks for the expansion of a golf-course which resulted in the bungled intervention of the Sûreté du Québec (SQ). The role of the CAF in this work is presented as that of 're-enforcement' for the SQ.³⁹ Criticism in this work is directed at Provincial and Federal Departments of Indian Affairs, not at the CAF.⁴⁰ That negative experiences such as the Oka crisis can be described with neutrality with respect to CAF involvement is interesting and bodes well for CAF-Aboriginal partnerships.

Oka has not been the only significant crisis, nor is its use here meant to stand as an example of the benevolence of Aboriginal protestors and activists. The killing of an unarmed protestor by the Ontario Provincial Police at the Ipperwash Provincial park standoff in 1995 resulted in a lengthy Public Inquiry and ultimately in direction to return large portions of land. The behavior of both sides in this case was questionable, but the land at the heart of the dispute originally belonged to the Ojibway.⁴¹ As of 2014 the

³⁹ King, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*, 235.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid, 229.

transfer is still being brokered. As the land was used as a Second-World War training site it is possible that the CAF could become a litigant in efforts to clean it.

There are clearly groups within the Aboriginal population that have ulterior motives towards good-governance and the promotion of the values that the CAF Aboriginal Programs aim to build. One need only look to the anarchy at Caledonia, Ontario or the illegal trade in cigarettes across the St Lawrence to see examples of this. These negative examples do not involve the CAF, but they are a significant challenge for several police forces. Of note, the recent rise of the Idle No More protests have illustrated that the potential for a new crisis is significant. For that, among many other reasons, the strengthening of the modern CAF-Aboriginal relationship and the support of positive social change within Aboriginal communities is as important as ever.

The CAF and Aboriginals as Modern Partners

CFRG maintains as one of its strategic objectives to ‘build a [CAF] that reflects Canadian society.’⁴² This remains the case in current CFRG Operations Plans. With respect to Aboriginals, the intended goal is to have at least 3.4% of CAF members who would identify themselves as Aboriginal. As of May 2013 this figure sat at 2.17%, which is a considerable increase from 1.5% in 2006.⁴³ As a comparison, the target for Visible Minorities sits at 11.8% and has improved to 5.08% from 2.7% during the same timeframe.⁴⁴

⁴² Canada. Department of National Defence. *Strategic Level Guidance on Winning the War for Talent*. (Ottawa: Canadian Forces Recruiting Group, 2007), 21.

⁴³ Canada. Department of National Defence. *Canadian Forces Recruiting Group Commander’s Planning Guidance/FY 2014-2015*. (Ottawa: Canadian Forces Recruiting Group, 2013), H-1/6.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

The increase in the percentage of Aboriginal members in the CAF shows that the effort and the numbers are progressing in the right direction. The same CFRG document clearly outlines the importance of diversity, not simply based on ethical grounds, but on the reality that the CAF requires good people.⁴⁵ This is important to note because the partnership between the CAF and Aboriginals is based on raised awareness within the diversity groups and not upon the lowering of any entry standards.

The CAF and Aboriginals as Integrated Forces for Positive Social Change

The Canadian Forces Leadership Institute recognizes that in meeting operational requirements the CAF's leaders must take into consideration the demographic composition of the armed forces.⁴⁶ As we've seen, CFRG has been tasked to ensure that this composition accurately reflects the percentage of Aboriginal persons in Canadian society. Attracting a diverse applicant pool that will be enrolled as recruits will require that leaders at all levels become more aware of social attitudes with respect to a group such as Aboriginals to be aware of ethno-cultural value differences.⁴⁷

The cultural environment of the CAF is shaped by history, tradition and policy; all of which have been shared with Canada's Aboriginals. It is hoped that the workplace culture of the CAF would be one in which Aboriginal members would thrive. This would create a virtuous circle of behaviours that accept and promote diversity. Because, this is not always the case without direction and senior support, it is important that institutional

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Canada. Department of National Defence. A-PA-005-000/AP-004, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*, (Kingston: Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2005), xiv.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

policies and programs for ethics, domestic violence, harassment and racism be utilized to assist and guide leaders and members as needed.⁴⁸ These programs provide a baseline for acceptable behavior which, over time, will stimulate and reinforce the acceptance of the military ethos that Canadian citizens expect of the CAF. With respect to Aboriginal members they aim to promote an atmosphere where traits such as avoiding eye-contact, speaking softly and gentle handshakes will be understood as differing cultural qualities to be embraced rather than as weakness that could invoke negative connotations.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Canada. Department of National Defence. A-PA-005-000/AP-001, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, (Kingston, ON: Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2009), 58.

⁴⁹ Neil McDonald, *Working with Aboriginal Peoples: A Guide to Effective Cross Cultural Communication*, (Cross Cultural Consulting, Inc. n.d), 5.

CHAPTER 3: PAST AND PRESENT GOVERNMENT OF CANADA, PRIVATE AND CAF ABORIGINAL AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

Historical Perspectives on Government of Canada Aboriginal Programs

While Canada is consistently ranked near the top of the UN Human Development Index, the rest of the world is beginning to notice other reports that highlight the gap between the standard of living for Canadian Aboriginals and the mainstream population.⁵⁰ This gap has existed since confederation and beyond.⁵¹ While there have been countless government programs designed and implemented to close this gap, few have resulted in anything coming close to representing success. Most have been initiated from good intent, but all too many have ultimately resulted in misery and late-to-need apologies from the Canadian Government.⁵²

Programs intended to simply provide aid to remote communities have achieved limited success. Countless scholarships, grants and bursaries are available but difficult to take advantage of for youth in remote areas. It has come to the point where Canadian Aid Groups and International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are launching programs in some First Nations Communities.⁵³ These organizations appear to have been embraced by both the Chiefs and Government in some cases. The Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs has donated over one million dollars via the Right to Play organization, which is a charity that promotes development in the lives of children

⁵⁰ Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: disease, politics of starvation, and the loss of Aboriginal life*, IX.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² King, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*, 122.

⁵³ Alyson Rowe, "International NGOs launch programs in First Nations in Canada." *The Toronto Star*, 15 February 2013.

through play and sport.⁵⁴ That fact that NGO support is being embraced is a good sign for the CAF. As a large organization with clear Governmental ties it is helpful that “Chiefs are committed to healing the community and thinking outside of the box. Thinking outside of the box means working with NGOs...”⁵⁵ Acceptance of outside organizations, along with apologies for past wrongs represents significant steps in the right direction for CAF purposes. It will be shown later that these are helpful as a starting point to leverage the expansion of the CAF Aboriginal Programs into nation building programs that will not result in the need for future apologies.

Apologies to Canada’s Aboriginals have been becoming a fairly regular occurrence. An impressive list of organizations and people making them has been growing since the mid-nineteen-eighties. Since 1986 Aboriginal people in Canada have received apologies from:

- a. The United Church of Canada in 1986;
- b. The Minister of Indian Affairs in 1988 (1st from the Canadian Government);
- c. The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1991;
- d. The Anglican Church in 1993;
- e. The Presbyterian Church in 1994; and
- f. The Prime Minister of Canada in 2008.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ King, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*, 121.

In 2009 Pope Benedict XVI, on behalf of the Catholic Church, expressed sorrow for their historical role. It is important to note ‘that this was not an apology, nor was it a statement of responsibility. It was nothing more than a sympathetic lament.’⁵⁷ While there is much to apologize for from many organizations, these all have to do with one Canadian Government-mandated program that was farmed out to the Churches to run. This one program casts a shadow over any modern Government attempt to reach Aboriginal communities: Residential Schools.

The Impact of Negative Experiences with Government of Canada Programs

At this time in history, no program designed for Canadian Aboriginals can ignore the lingering effects that the residential schools have impressed upon Canada’s indigenous peoples. The expansion of the CAF Aboriginal programs will aim to reach a cohort of youth who have at least some close relation who is a residential school survivor. The impact of this is difficult to understand for those Canadians who were not affected.

“Establishment of the residential school system, now widely recognized as a national disgrace, ensconced in TB infection, malnutrition, and abuse in an institutional setting that endured for most of the twentieth century. Now, in the twenty-first century, it is for all Canadians to recognize the collective burden on its indigenous population by the state even as it opened the country to our immigrant ancestors to recast the land to suit the needs of the global economy in the late nineteenth century.”⁵⁸

Attendance at residential schools was mandatory for Aboriginal children from the 1850 until into the 1960s. For this reason any program directed at youth, in particular a program for youth that will be conducted away from their communities will operate with

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: disease, politics of starvation, and the loss of Aboriginal life*, XXII.

a degree of suspicion unless it comes with the support of Aboriginal influencers. In recruiting parlance, influencers are leaders from the community who the recruiters have partnered with in order to better reach the target audience. The importance of influencers in diversity recruiting has been identified by experts⁵⁹ and stands as a pillar of today's recruiting operations in the CAF.⁶⁰

A final word on residential schools to shed further light on the effects this program had on Canadian Aboriginals. As stated, attendance was compulsory, and parents had no choice but to surrender their children from the ages of six to fifteen or to face prison.⁶¹ One can only imagine the hopelessness and rage a parent would feel. Making matters worse is the fact that the overall mortality rate in these institutions, which outlawed Aboriginal culture and language, was in the range of fifty percent.⁶² In 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper stood in the House of Commons and stated that "assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm and has no place in our country. We are sorry."⁶³ While the levels of mortality and abuse did vary from school to school, and some even had positive outcomes, it is now accepted that the overall notion of assimilation is unacceptable.

⁵⁹ Chantal Fraser, "Diversity Recruiting: It's Time to Tip the Balance." *Canadian Military Journal* 13, no 4 (Autumn 2013): 30.

⁶⁰ Canada. Department of National Defence. *Canadian Forces Recruiting Group Operations Plan 2014/2105*. (Ottawa: Canadian Forces Recruiting Group, 2013), H-1/6.

⁶¹ King, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*, 121.

⁶² *Ibid*, 120.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 122.

Positive Experiences with Government of Canada Programs

Having earlier established the rich shared history that the CAF shares with Canadian Aboriginals and the realities of history that would continue to linger over well-intentioned efforts to reach Aboriginal youth, it is important to now look at positive examples. Outside of the current cadre of CAF Aboriginal programs, there are examples to illustrate that it is possible to obtain widespread acceptance in Aboriginal cultures and also that there is an appetite among influential Canadians and media to support citizenship and nation-building programs. The two examples selected here are the Canadian Rangers and Katimivik programs.

The Canadian Rangers

The Canadian Ranger program is a sub-component of the Canadian Reserves that provides patrols and detachments for national-security and public-safety missions in sparsely settled northern, coastal and isolated areas of Canada.⁶⁴ There are approximately 5000 Canadian Rangers from over 200 communities. Furthermore, there are some 26 dialects and languages spoken by Canadian Rangers, many of whom are Aboriginal.⁶⁵ In fact, Aboriginals make up well over fifty percent of the Canadian Rangers.⁶⁶ While this program cannot be classified as an Aboriginal program, participation by Aboriginals at that level clearly indicates that there is widespread acceptance by Aboriginal communities and leadership.

⁶⁴ Canada. Department of National Defence. "Canadian Rangers." Last accessed 13 April 2014, <http://www.army-armee.forces.gc.ca/en/canadian-rangers/index.page>.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Whitney P. Lackenbauer, "The Canadian Ranger Project." Last accessed 13 April 2014. <http://www.lackenbauer.ca/Rangers/contact.htm>.

The Canadian Rangers also support a Junior Canadian Rangers (JCR) Program which “is open to all youth ages 12 to 18 years old. It promotes traditional cultures and lifestyles in remote and isolated communities of the North. JCRs make a valuable contribution to their communities and become active, responsible citizens. Many JCRs are fluently bilingual or even trilingual, and are able to assist their elders in communicating with visitors from the south.”⁶⁷ This program is similar to the Cadet program and, as described, promotes both citizenship and linkages between youth and elders.

Looking for external confirmation of the successes claimed by the CAF on behalf of the Canadian Rangers is easy. The CBC touted their accomplishments following the widely publicized Vladimir Putinesque visit by Prime Minister Harper who practiced some target shooting with a group of Aboriginal Rangers.⁶⁸ This particular article speaks highly of the program while making no mention of the high numbers of Aboriginal members. Perhaps this is oversight, but nevertheless stands as recognition of a successful program. These successes have been documented by Whitney Lackenbauer who makes the following statements in relation to the program:

“Aboriginal peoples make up more than half of the force’s strength, and their service embodies a vital contribution to Canadian sovereignty and security as well as cross-cultural awareness and identity formation. My research provides the first scholarly overview and assessment of this unorthodox military formation. This study reveals how the partnership that underlies the Rangers allows this force to fulfill operational requirements

⁶⁷ Canada. Department of National Defence. “Organizational Structure: Patrol Groups” Last accessed 13 April 2014, <http://www.army-armee.forces.gc.ca/en/canadian-rangers/organization-patrols.page>.

⁶⁸ Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. “Canadian Rangers: the thin red line patrolling our harshest terrain.” last accessed 13 April 2014. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/canadian-rangers-the-thin-red-line-patrolling-our-harshest-terrain-1.1414341>.

vital to the Canadian Forces, and contributes to capacity building in remote Canadian communities.”⁶⁹

Taken with the percentage of Aboriginal members in mind, this quotation stands as a ringing endorsement of what can be accomplished between the CAF and Canada’s Aboriginal population. The vast areas of the country served by the Canadian Rangers would prove a daunting task were it not for their service. This view is echoed by the Program Director for the Aboriginal Focus Programs at the University of Manitoba who states that “The Rangers offer living proof that military activities designed to assert sovereignty need not cause insecurity for residents of remote regions. Local knowledge, stewardship, and national security prove compatible and mutually reinforcing.”⁷⁰ These are precisely the views and successes that an expansion to the CAF Aboriginal programs can build and expand upon.

The Katimivik Program

While not an Aboriginal program,⁷¹ the Katimivik program is a citizenship building non-profit organization established in 1977 that has enjoyed success and broad public support through volunteer-based service programs that have reached over 35,000 Canadian youth. The Katimavik program is based on “learning through volunteer service programs for young Canadians looking for a unique experience that enables them to make

⁶⁹ Whitney P. Lackenbauer. “The Canadian Ranger Project.” Last accessed 13 April 2014. <http://www.lackenbauer.ca/Rangers/contact.htm>.

⁷⁰ Oulette, review of *The Canadian Rangers: A Living History*, “At the Edge of Canada: Indigenous Research” Robert-Falcon Oulette (blog), March 18, 2014, <http://www.attheedgeofcanada.com/2014/03/the-canadian-rangers-living-history.html>.

⁷¹ Katimivik. “About Us,” last Accessed 13 April 2014, <http://www.katimavik.org/about>.

positive change in their lives and in communities.”⁷² The program is run as a not-for-profit organization. The Katimivik program description is remarkably similar to the CDA intent for the CAF Aboriginal Programs but aimed at all Canadian youth.

The similarities in overall aim of community development and the Katimivik program focus “on the development of lifelong personal, professional and social competencies in the areas of civic engagement, autonomous living, healthy lifestyle and environmental stewardship” is well worth examination as a comparative model for the CAF Aboriginal Programs.⁷³ Interestingly, Katimivik has very recently initiated a funding drive in support of a new sub-program designed specifically for Aboriginal youth.⁷⁴ This funding is intended to allow Katimivik ‘to develop a specific program, which will allow them not only to strengthen their respective cultures, but their representation in post-secondary institutions and in the workplace.’⁷⁵

For the established programs at Katimivik, the mission and vision is “...to prepare youth to become responsible citizens who make positive change in their lives and communities. Our vision is a society where youth are inspired and prepared to achieve their personal and professional development through contributing to the betterment of

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Katimivik. “Programs.” last Accessed 10 May 2014. <http://www.katimavik.org/programs>.

⁷⁴ Katimivik. “News.” last Accessed 17 July 2014. <http://www.katimavik.org/news/launch-new-fundraising-campaign-partnership-druide>.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

communities.”⁷⁶ This is very much in keeping with the proposals that will follow in the next chapters in support of the expansion of the CAF Aboriginal Programs.

Federal funding for Katimivik was cut in 2012 and the organization continues to function, albeit at a drastically reduced fraction of its former size.⁷⁷ The cessation of funding to Katimivik did not go unnoticed and was perhaps most poignantly noted by Canadian Olympian Adam Van Koeverden. His impassioned plea to reverse the funding decision was based on the premise that cancellation would come “at the expense of Canadian youth and the communities they were preparing to serve.” He went on to declare that “Katimavik’s value is found in purposefully engaged youth serving our communities.”⁷⁸ While the funding decision has not been reversed as of 2014, the program continues under private donation with a reduced scope.

A quick internet search shows that there was considerable opposition to cutting funding to Katimivik and that there is notable public support to a reinstate funding for a program that aims to engage in activities aligned with:

- a. Social services;
- b. Poverty reduction;
- c. Formal and non-formal education with a focus on literacy;
- d. Arts, culture and heritage Sports, leisure and outdoor activities;

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Katimivik. “News,” last Accessed 13 April 2014. <http://www.katimavik.org/news>.

⁷⁸ Adam van Koeverden, “Katimavik is worth saving,” *Globe and Mail*, 18 April 2012.

- e. Environment and sustainable development;
- f. Media and communications; and
- g. Social justice.⁷⁹

The positive aspects of the Katimivik program can be linked to many elements of the CAF Aboriginal programs such as providing opportunities for ‘successful participation in Canada’s educational, training and employment opportunities.’⁸⁰ Furthermore, the public sentiment against the federal cuts and the continued level of public donations that allow the program to continue provides evidence of public support for citizenship and, as will be shown, for nation building programs.

Lessons Learned and Context Derived from Government of Canada Programs

In light of the lessons learned through history regarding attempted assimilation or aid programs, it is easy to understand why new programs aimed at attracting aboriginal youth from various communities, may encounter some resistance. This is particularly evident when youth would be required to leave their communities to participate in training. The clearest lessons learned with respect to nation and citizenship building efforts in the Aboriginal communities of Canada have to do with attempts at assimilation, aid and education. The horrific experiences of the residential school program are still so fresh that no Government program will exist in the minds of many members of the Aboriginal population without some shadow of the tumultuous history of this travesty.

⁷⁹ Katimivik. “Our Areas of Impact,” last Accessed 13 April 2014 <http://www.katimavik.org/our-areas-impact>.

⁸⁰ Katimivik. “News.” last Accessed 17 July 2014. <http://www.katimavik.org/news/launch-new-fundraising-campaign-partnership-druide>.

This is easy to understand, particularly when youth would be required to leave their communities to receive training. One message the message the CAF should amplify is in the transferrable skills that will be returned to the community after a youth's brief experience with the CAF is completed.⁸¹ This message will be more effective coming from Aboriginal community elders and influencers.⁸² These two elements may provide additional support for a possible expansion.

Taken together the Canadian Rangers and the Katimivik program make a strong case that, operationally, Aboriginals are an excellent population with which the CAF should partner and that there is a base of support for citizenship and nation building programs within Canada. These two elements will become important for the expansion of the CAF Aboriginal Programs. The Canadian Rangers who mentor the Junior Canadian Ranger program "improve the quality of life of youth in the most remote and isolated regions of Canada" while the program itself employs members who are leaders in their communities.⁸³ Additionally, the program addresses concerns to do with the loss of traditional skills by "facilitating the transmission of indigenous knowledge among patrol members, provides for the preservation of traditional knowledge."⁸⁴ This is precisely the type of benefit that can help to not only assuage fears of assimilation but to act concomitantly with elders and influencers in achieving an appropriate mentorship for Aboriginal youth.

⁸¹ Fraser, *Diversity Recruiting: It's Time to Tip the Balance*, 30.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Monk School of Global Affairs, "The Canadian Rangers." last accessed 13 April 2014. <http://gordonfoundation.ca/sites/default/files/images/The%20Canadian%20Rangers.pdf>.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Lastly, as a method of positively influencing difficult to reach communities, it is generally accepted that direct aid alone does not work. Aid delivered from government invariably flows to another government (or at least a form of government) and can end up as a source of corruption or as a disincentive for long-term change.⁸⁵ The African economist Dambisa Moyo is attributed with having said “aid doesn’t work, hasn’t worked, and won’t work...no longer part of the potential solution, it’s part of the problem – in fact aid is the problem.”⁸⁶ While the remote tribal communities of Africa may not present the best parallel for remote Aboriginal communities in Canada, the underlying theme is that lasting change, both economic and social must come from within. In struggling economies the nurturing of the entrepreneurial spirit and the enhancement of property rights can kick-start economic growth. In Canada’s Aboriginal communities it will be the confidence and leadership of youth that needs to be mentored and enhanced in order to bring about lasting positive change. This is where the CAF comes in.

⁸⁵ Matt Ridley, *The Rational Optimist: How Prosperity Evolves* (New York: Harper Collins, 2010), 317.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 318.

CHAPTER 4: EXISTING CAF ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS

History of Current CAF Aboriginal Programs

The CAF Aboriginal Programs were created to ‘demonstrate to Aboriginal communities in urban, rural and remote locations that the CAF, as a National institution, offers a fair and equitable environment in which to serve. The intent and essence of these programs not only serves the interests of the CAF but also contributes as a service to Canada.’⁸⁷ CDA, charged with the overall management of the programs, is also charged to ‘increase Aboriginal awareness and cultural knowledge for CAF and DND personnel and to develop leadership opportunities for Aboriginal peoples through Individual Training and Education.’⁸⁸ This relationship as managed by CDA presents the opportunity to develop a virtuous circle building upon positive effects within the CAF and within Aboriginal communities.

The CAF has been proactive with regards to the challenges facing Aboriginal applicants and members for many years. Some of these efforts have been clumsy while some have been good natured but largely ineffective. For example, in 1998 the CAF produced a booklet aimed at providing Aboriginal youth some direction not only with making an application to the CAF, but with developing a resume and other job hunting skills.⁸⁹ The CAF typically does not require a resume from an applicant, but the

⁸⁷ Canada. Department of National Defence. “Aboriginal Training Programs.” last accessed 25 November 2013, http://cda.mil.ca/ops/ITE_PP/aboriginal/index-eng.asp.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Canada. Department of National Defence. *Paths to Employment: Military and Civilian Career Choices*, (Ottawa: Director General Public Affairs, 1998), 13.

aforementioned booklet provides generic job seeking advice followed in its final pages by a description of life in the CAF and the very straightforward methods in which to apply.⁹⁰

At the time of publication of that booklet the Bold Eagle program had been running for ten years and there existed the Aboriginal Student Employment Program and the Native Northern Entry Plan (NNEP). These latter two programs have since been replaced. The NNEP was cancelled due largely to a lack of participation which is not surprising given the narrow demographic focus.⁹¹ It was not a failure however, and lessons from the NNEP were taken and used to develop the CFAEP.⁹² At the same time Bold Eagle continued to be an effective program and was becoming successful enough that in 2003 and 2009 it was expanded to include Raven and Black Bear respectively.⁹³ In 2008 the ALOY program came into being at RMCC and today's cadre of programs entered the current steady state.⁹⁴

Aboriginal social media outlets, such as the Warrior Publications Blog, do not hesitate to reprint stories regarding the success of these programs and highlighting their successes.⁹⁵ A quick look at other posts on this particular blog demonstrates that praise for any Federal programs is not easy to come by. If the Aboriginal Programs are

⁹⁰ Ibid, 42.

⁹¹ Major Bruce Maclean, "The Aboriginal Leadership Opportunity Year: Addressing the Canadian Forces Next Recruiting Crisis." (Canadian Forces College Joint Command and Staff Programme Master's Thesis, 2012), 50.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Canada. Department of National Defence. "Aboriginal Training Programs." last accessed 25 Nov 2013, http://cda.mil.ca/ops/ITE_PP/aboriginal/index-eng.asp.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Hill, "Canadian Military and RCMP Recruitment Program", Warrior Publications (blog), July 21, 2012, <http://warriorpublications.wordpress.com/2012/07/31/canadian-military-and-aboriginal-recruitment-program/>.

promoted in this forum, then it is relatively safe to assume that the widespread perception is positive.

While the current cadre of CAF Aboriginal Programs do recruit a number of excellent personnel into the Officer and NCM ranks every year, the retention rate from selection into these programs through to the numbers who remain in the Primary Reserve (PRes) and the Regular Force is quite low. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that Aboriginals make up at least 3.4 percent of the CAF.⁹⁶ The latest numbers indicate that the CAF is currently at approximately 2.17 percent which is an improvement from 1.5 percent in 2006.⁹⁷ Despite this clearly positive trend, the actual retention from the programs averaged over each year since inception is approximately 26 percent.⁹⁸

The Current Cadre of CAF Aboriginal Programs

With three main programs to choose from, an Aboriginal applicant is able to make a choice to apply for the Regular Force, the PRes or simply just a ‘try before you buy’ experience that can be used to enhance skills, obtain experience or just to see what the CAF would be like. The scope of each of these programs will be outlined below. It is important to understand what each program offers and not only what an applicant can expect from a CAF program, but also what the CAF could expect from the successful applicant and program graduate. The CFRG Recruiting website, Forces.ca promotes the programs in the following manner:

⁹⁶ Canada. Department of National Defence. *Canadian Forces Recruiting Group Operations Plan 2014/2105*. (Ottawa: Canadian Forces Recruiting Group, 2013), H-1/6.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ MWO Grant Greyeyes, CFRG Aboriginal Recruiting Advisor, e-mail correspondence with the Author, 57 January 2014.

“Our “CF Experience” programs introduce you to the type of work we do, the way we train and how we live, without joining the Forces for your whole career. At the end of the program, you may choose to apply to the Forces. You will gain the leadership, work skills, and dedication to be successful in whatever path you choose.”⁹⁹

CFAEP

The CFAEP program was developed to replace and augment the NNEP with a broader audience. This program provides a three-week period of pre-recruit skills and preparatory training which is not targeted towards applicants intending to pursue university level education.¹⁰⁰ Successful candidates earn a \$1200 stipend and a certificate of military achievement and are not bound to the CAF by any contract.¹⁰¹ These three weeks are in essence a sampling of the CAF life, or potentially a training period that could enhance a resume. The skills taught are outlined by the Forces.ca website:

“You will learn about the long and proud history of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada’s military and take part in exercises similar to Basic Training, such as morning inspections, daily physical fitness and sports, navigation with compass and maps, basic weapons training and military drill. You will also try living in field conditions. Civilian Aboriginal counselors are on staff and available to assist with the transition to military life. At the end of the course, if you choose to join the Forces, you return home until the next available Basic Training course starts.”¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Canada. Department of National Defence. “Aboriginal Programs.” last accessed 11 May 2014, <http://www.forces.ca/en/page/aboriginalprograms-93>.

¹⁰⁰ Maclean, *The Aboriginal Leadership Opportunity Year: Addressing the Canadian Forces Next Recruiting Crisis*, 50.

¹⁰¹ Canada. Department of National Defence. “Aboriginal Training Programs.” last accessed 25 Nov 2013, http://cda.mil.ca/ops/ITE_PP/aboriginal/index-eng.asp.

¹⁰² Canada. Department of National Defence. “Aboriginal Programs.” last accessed 11 May 2014, <http://www.forces.ca/en/page/aboriginalprograms-93>.

With no obligation to the CAF following completion, applicants are free to undergo the experience for their own purposes.

Since 2006 the CFAEP has accepted 372 recruits of which 332 have completed the three-week session. Of those 332 an impressive 217 have been retained for some period of service in either the Primary Reserve (PRes) or the Regular Force. While these numbers vary from a low of 28% to a high of 94% year to year, the overall results are quite good and are the best by far of the three existing programs.¹⁰³

Aboriginal Summer Programs (Bold Eagle, Raven, Black Bear)

The Aboriginal Summer Programs, made up of three separate ‘camps’ better known as Bold Eagle, Raven and Black Bear, are six weeks long and accept up to 212 candidates who, upon successful completion, will have obtained the CAF Basic Military Qualification (BMQ); the very same ‘basic training’ qualification as any other CAF recruits but with some additions to take into account the needs of Aboriginal applicants.

“The training is based on the Army Reserve Basic Military Qualification and is taught by military instructors. Subjects include General Military Knowledge, Weapons Handling, Navigation, First Aid, Drill, and Survival Skills. All three Summer Training Programs begin with a Culture Camp. The camp is designed to ease the transition from civilian to military lifestyle, and focuses on common spiritual beliefs. All Culture Camps are conducted by Elders of different First Nations and Aboriginal groups.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ MWO Grant Greyeyes, CFRG Aboriginal Recruiting Advisor, e-mail correspondence with the Author, 57 January 2014.

¹⁰⁴ Canada. Department of National Defence. “Aboriginal Programs.” last accessed 11 May 2014, <http://www.forces.ca/en/page/aboriginalprograms-93>.

Bold Eagle and Black Bear are sponsored by the CA and are held in Wainwright, Alberta and Gagetown, New Brunswick respectively. Raven is held in Esquimalt, BC and is run by the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) via the Pacific Fleet School. During the six week long period applicants are enrolled in the PRes and earn approximately \$3500.¹⁰⁵ Following graduation there are three available options. Graduates can transfer to a PRes unit and remain in the CAF. Candidates can also transfer to the Regular Force and having obtained the BMQ proceed to the next step in training for their trade. Lastly, the option exists to take an honourable release and return to their community.¹⁰⁶

Bold Eagle began in 1998 with two expansions in 2006 and 2009 to include Raven and Black Bear respectively. Beginning in 1990 and continuing through to 2013 there have been 2007 candidates undertake these summer programs. 1879 have successfully completed the programs, which is an astounding success rate of 94%.¹⁰⁷ The CAF, working with Aboriginal Elders, has worked diligently to provide an environment that will assist with the success of the candidates. Initiatives such as the week-long culture camp at the beginning of the six weeks seem to be effective in preparing the candidates for success. Since inception 354 graduates have opted to continue in the PRes or the Regular Force. This represents a retention rate of 19%; not a particularly large number,

¹⁰⁵ Maclean, *The Aboriginal Leadership Opportunity Year: Addressing the Canadian Forces Next Recruiting Crisis*, 52.

¹⁰⁶ Canada. Department of National Defence. "Aboriginal Training Programs." last accessed 25 Nov 2013, http://cda.mil.ca/ops/ITE_PP/aboriginal/index-eng.asp.

¹⁰⁷ MWO Grant Greyeyes, CFRG Aboriginal Recruiting Advisor, e-mail correspondence with the Author, 57 January 2014.

but the remaining 1524 graduates have returned to their communities having completed a significant challenge and with a valuable new skill set.¹⁰⁸

A vexing problem facing a successful candidate of the summer program has to do with proximity of a PRes unit within which to serve. For example, on the mainland of British Columbia there are PRes units only in the lower-mainland, Kelowna, Kamloops, Trail and Prince George. It is not possible to serve in the PRes in these locations from the majority of reserves or communities located in the bulk of the area of British Columbia. While this issue is less prevalent in the East of Canada, the fact remains that the more remote a community is, the more difficult it is to serve in the PRes for program graduates. This paper will not address the politically charged debate as to the best locations for PRes units, but simply notes that for an immeasurable, but certainly large, percentage of Aboriginal Program applicants that continued military service is difficult.

Aboriginal Leadership Opportunity Year (ALOY)

ALOY is the newest and smallest of the CAF Aboriginal Programs. It is also the only one specifically targeted at university bound applicants and offering a potential direct route to the Officer cadre of the CAF. The ALOY provides Aboriginal youth who have successfully graduated from high-school the ‘opportunity to combine a university level educational experience, military leadership training, with physical fitness and cultural development.’¹⁰⁹ Again, candidates are provided pay and university level education with no resulting obligation to join. After completion of the year, candidates

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Canada. Department of National Defence. “Aboriginal Training Programs.” last accessed 25 Nov 2013, http://cda.mil.ca/ops/ITE_PP/aboriginal/index-eng.asp.

may apply for admission to be considered for a degree program at RMCC degree under the Regular or Reserve Officer Training Programs. They are also free to leave the CAF and pursue their own educational or employment goals.¹¹⁰ The scope of the program, according to the Forces.ca site is presented below:

“The ALOY program includes sports, field trips, leadership development, military training, cultural support activities, and individual learning plans. Through these learning plans, you take part in individual and small group tutorials for pre-university (non-credit) and first-year university courses.”¹¹¹

Between 2008 and 2013 there have been 107 candidates commence the ALOY and 61 have completed it.¹¹² There are many factors that contribute to the overall completion rate of 51%, not the least of which is the rigour and challenges of the RMCC environment which includes training towards bilingualism, military achievement and fitness in addition to academic requirements. Following the inaugural year lessons learned were observed and reported that aimed to create a more suitable learning and cultural environment for the ALOY youth. For example, a lack of cultural support was identified and subsequently addressed.¹¹³ These changes helped to raise the completion rate to 91% for the second year of the program which was a vast improvement from the

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Canada. Department of National Defence. “Aboriginal Programs.” last accessed 11 May 2014, <http://www.forces.ca/en/page/aboriginalprograms-93>.

¹¹² MWO Grant Greyeyes, CFRG Aboriginal Recruiting Advisor, e-mail correspondence with the Author, 7 January 2014.

¹¹³ Canadian Defence Academy Lessons learned Division. *Lessons Learned Report on Aboriginal Leadership Opportunity Year*, (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy, 2009), 32.

initial 43% success rate in the initial year.¹¹⁴ With respect to retention 26 of 61 successful candidates have opted to remain with the CAF representing a retention rate of 43%.¹¹⁵

Overall Results of the CAF Aboriginal Programs

Taken together these programs have graduated 2272 of 2486 candidates; this represents a graduation rate of just over 91%.¹¹⁶ By any measure this is an impressive percentage. In addition to the efforts of the candidates themselves, a wide range of players are invested in their successes. These include CFRG, CDA, and Aboriginal Elders just to highlight a few. The retention rate of successful graduates for all programs is just over 26%. If the success of these programs was based solely on retention it is unlikely that this figure would be seen as a particularly good rate. However if it is framed such that 597 graduates went onto some sort of CAF service while 1675 Aboriginal youth returned to their communities better prepared for leadership and challenges then the measures of success can begin to be broadened to take into account the potential for positive social change.

CAF Aboriginal Programs Successes for Individuals and Communities

There are many examples of individual success in Aboriginals communities resulting from participation in the CAF Aboriginal programs. Furthermore, there are many communities across the country that have experienced positive social change due to the positive influence the programs have had on returning individuals. Specific examples

¹¹⁴ MWO Grant Greyeyes, CFRG Aboriginal Recruiting Advisor, e-mail correspondence with the Author, 7 January 2014.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

have been provided to the author by Elders, RCMP Officers and also military instructors and recruiters. At the 2013 Kamloopa pow-wow, the Author encountered participants, parents and prospects who all proclaimed an outpouring of support of the programs and expressed a desire for their family and friends to participate further. Not one negative comment was espoused. In the interest of individual privacy, examples for this paper will be taken from published newspaper articles.

The experience of Capt Taypotat (Ret'd) was outlined in a *Regina Leader Post* article in 2012. Evan Taypotat who participated in the Bold eagle program in 1998 states that "I think the government of Canada has given me, as a First Nations dude, a good chance to be successful in life..." He goes on to proclaim that "The program is definitely working...I'm walking proof that it's working. I'm here because of the program." This blunt assessment from an individual graduate is from a man who assesses that at age 18 he had been "one of those guys who couldn't sit still for too long."¹¹⁷ He went on to join the forces and had a successful career which culminated in going back to teach on the Black Bear program. In the same article Major Nolan Kemp, the CAF Bold Eagle Coordinator at the time, made it clear that with respect to the participants "they are going to take the skills they learned here, they are going to take what they found out about themselves and what they are capable of back home and that's one of great things about it."

Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Vice-Chief Dutch Lerat announced and endorsed the Bold Eagle Program on the Federation website in 2012, encouraging

¹¹⁷ Kerry Benjoe, "Canadian military and RCMP Aboriginal recruitment program." *Regina Leader Post*, 28 July 2012.

youth to apply and called the program a “successful youth development program.”¹¹⁸ The website indicates that as part of the program, the recruits will participate in a Grand Entry at a First Nations Pow-wow. That this honour is offered to participants by Aboriginal leadership is a clear testament to Aboriginal leadership and community support to the program.

One very insightful opinion with respect to the effect of the programs in remote communities comes from an RCMP constable working in the Northern part of British Columbia. Constable Jordan Irvine is also a current member of the PRes and was employed for several years at CFRC Pacific. He is intimately familiar with both the CAF Aboriginal programs and the conditions and issues facing Aboriginals in remote communities. In response to questions regarding the effect of the programs for Aboriginal youth and their communities he had this to say: ‘There is no shortage of ways to get dragged down by your peers on a reserve. This is not to speak ill of Aboriginals at all, I love and care about them...giving them a chance to not just get out of town for a couple weeks, but to go away long enough to get training in a skill and just enough time to get a chance to be praised for having a skill, might make the difference.’¹¹⁹ Given the conditions and situations that the member has encountered, this comment carries significant weight and, in the author’s opinion, is high praise for the programs and the potential they hold for positive social change.

¹¹⁸ Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. “Bold Eagle Canadian Forces Training Program Celebrates 21 Years Of Military Excellence.” Last accessed 2 June 2014, <http://www.fsin.com/index.php/media-releases/442-bold-eagle-canadian-forces-training-program-celebrates-21-years-of-military-excellence.html>.

¹¹⁹ Constable Jordan Irvine, RCMP Fort St John BC, e-mail correspondence with the Author, 29 May 2014.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CAF ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS

Due to the fact that the CAF has an active and high-ranking advocate for Aboriginals, it is anticipated that support for positive change would receive backing from CAF leadership and personnel. In support of further change, the CDA has commissioned independent studies in order to obtain third-party insights and lessons learned with respect to improving the Aboriginal programs. Utilizing these lessons learned, and making the assumption that the level of advocacy for Aboriginals is adequate, this chapter makes recommendations to improve the CAF Aboriginal programs and examines recently implemented processing measures within CFRG.

CAF Advocacy for Aboriginals

As mentioned earlier, the CAF Champion for Aboriginals is the CLS. The weight that the CLS can bring to bear to address issues facing Aboriginals in, or hoping to join, the CAF is significant. In discussion with the Executive Assistant (EA) to the CLS it is evident that the matters facing Aboriginal people in the CAF, and the desire to position the CAF as a diverse and welcoming organization for Aboriginals is being taken very seriously within the CA and the CAF.

At the moment staffing changes are taking place that will allow the CLS to have better access to Aboriginal advisors which will enhance his ability to positively influence CAF culture and take quick action where and when needed in support of CAF initiatives.¹²⁰ With a punishing schedule and a vast scope of duties, the CLS consistently

¹²⁰ LCol S.G. Graham, EA to CLS, during telecon with the Author, 27 May 2014.

makes time and effort to champion and display his support to Aboriginals by attending and supporting events, meeting leaders and paying close attention to Aboriginal issues.

In a similar vein, the Commander of CFRG is also ensuring that changes to staffing within CFRG will enhance his ability to effect positive change and support to Aboriginal issues is enhanced. In the summer of 2014 the CFRG Aboriginal Recruiting Advisor position will be brought from Edmonton to Borden to be co-located with the Commander and CFRG Diversity staff.¹²¹ While a seemingly small move in this age of virtual connectivity, the fact that the Commander of CFRG is willing to have the CAF expend the fiscal resources needed to implement a cost move at this time is significant. The Commander of CFRG is showing CFRG personnel that this is an important issue that is worthy of not just fiscal resources but of his time and the need to have immediate contact with his staff to progress important Aboriginal concerns.¹²²

It is worth mentioning that at a recent address to the personnel of CFRC Pacific, the Commander of CFRG relayed a story that confirmed his support, and that of an Aboriginal Elder, for the CAF Programs. While discussing his priorities for the upcoming year, the Commander mentioned that at an Aboriginal recruiting event one of the elders spoke to him and espoused that it was his wish to have all of the youth attend one of the CAF programs.¹²³ The Commander made it clear that there is support for the CAF programs from the elders and influencers that he has encountered. The fact that

¹²¹ CFRG HQ includes a Diversity Section led by a Major and responsible to the Commander of CFRG through the CFRG Chief of Staff for Operations. This section has 4 personnel assigned to it.

¹²² Major Guy Janssens, CFRG R3 Diversity and National Events, during conversation with the Author, 4 June 2014.

¹²³ BGen J.P.L. Meloche, Commander CFRG, during address to CFRC Pacific, 19 June 2014.

there is a desire by elders to expand the scope is a good sign that Canadian Aboriginals may be ready to fill the ranks of these programs should they be expanded. The Commander's advocacy was apparent to the personnel of CFRC Pacific as he confirmed his commitment to filling the Aboriginal SIP.

Both the CLS and the Commander of CFRG have been effective advocates for Aboriginals in the CAF. By championing this cause the message to the CAF rank-and-file is that the recruitment of Aboriginals and the creation of a welcoming culture within the CAF is important and worthy of time, effort and resources. It is recommended that this level of advocacy be maintained.

CAF Aboriginal Program Lessons Learned Studies

The CAF has commissioned some qualitative studies of the Aboriginal Programs to assess the objectives and outcomes of the full cadre of programs. Most notably a lessons learned analysis was carried out in 2008/2009 on the ALOY program¹²⁴ and in 2014 a report was completed by Phoenix Strategic Perspectives that looked at all of the programs.¹²⁵ The ALOY Lessons Learned report will be referenced later, but the Phoenix report outlines some very interesting successes in support of the arguments made in this paper along with some excellent recommendations that should be discussed first.

The Phoenix report confirms that the CAF Aboriginal programs have not been a particularly good recruiting tool, but that the programs have been otherwise 'doing a good

¹²⁴ Canadian Defence Academy Lessons Learned Division. *Lessons Learned Report on Aboriginal Leadership Opportunity Year*. Report Prepared for the Director of Learning and Innovation. Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy, 2009.

¹²⁵ Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. Final Report: Assessing Objectives of Canadian Armed Forces Aboriginal Programs. March, 2014.

job.’¹²⁶ This somewhat muted endorsement is due to the fact that this report was assessing the ability to recruit Aboriginal people into the CAF; when the report is considered as an assessment of the skills garnered by the applicants it seems to be a resounding success.

The Phoenix Strategic Perspectives assessment of the Aboriginal programs listed the following positive outcomes as reported by program attendees:

- a. Improving self-discipline;
- b. Increasing confidence and self-esteem;
- c. Contributing to overall growth and self-development; and
- d. Ability to work in teams with other people.¹²⁷

The same report goes on to describe other positive outcomes as follows:

“Regarding other outcomes, participants still attending school at the time of the interview indicated the program helped them in their studies. It did so through the skills and personality traits they developed or strengthened during the program. Time management, leadership, punctuality, and self-discipline were each cited as having a positive impact on their studies. Examples volunteered included being able to concentrate in the classroom and pay attention to the lessons, being able to lead projects, being less likely to procrastinate, and generally being a more reliable student. Several participants mentioned that the CAF program has encouraged them to think more about their future.

Among those not attending school at the time of the interview, some credited the summer training programs with helping them to obtain and maintain their current job. Listing the program on their CV was perceived to give them an advantage over other job applicants, while things like general work ethic, communication skills, teamwork skills, and leadership were seen as helping them to maintain their current employment. At least one participant indicated a job was offered to him/her because of the summer training program listed on his/her CV.”¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Ibid, i.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 33.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 34.

The quotation above provides a ringing endorsement of the programs. By bettering the ability of students to stay in school, to seek and obtain employment and the myriad positive attributes discussed above, the programs are still achieving highly-desirable results for those who choose not to pursue a career in CAF. Of particular note was the finding that “participation in the CAF Aboriginal programs tended to confirm [a] participants’ decision to continue with (or start pursuing) post-secondary schooling.”¹²⁹ A decision to continue with education outside of the CAF, while not adding to the ranks of the military, is a clear and highly desirable outcome of the CAF Aboriginal Programs and fully consistent with the thesis of this paper.

Lessons Learned Regarding the Scope and Conduct of Training

The ALOY Lessons Learned report from 2009 that assessed the 08/09 year of the program contained several observed lessons, of which many have been accepted and implemented.¹³⁰ In his 2011 MDS thesis paper, Major Bruce Maclean provided analysis of the 2009 ALOY Lessons Learned report which recommended that:

- a. CFRG provide better academic review of applicant files;
- b. that ALOY be provided a dedicated Squadron Commander;
- c. that an ALOY training plan be developed; and
- d. that ALOY Cadets be better integrated in the activities of the College.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Ibid, 41.

¹³⁰ Canadian Defence Academy Lessons Learned Division. *Lessons Learned Report on Aboriginal Leadership Opportunity Year*. Report Prepared for the Director of Learning and Innovation. Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy, 2009.

Major Maclean makes specific note that RMCC did indeed implement these enhancements and that there was a subsequent improvement to the program completion rate from 36% to 72%.¹³² With the exception of item D, which is unique to ALOY, the rest of the cadre of CAF Aboriginal programs now operate with these recommendations in place.

Moving again to the 2014 Phoenix report, this study also makes several recommendations that may provide further changes that can be implemented to enhance the programs. While not all of the lessons learned in the Phoenix report would result in recommendations that could be implemented to improve the scope and conduct of training, there are some ideas that hold a high degree of merit and practicality in this regard. These are quite valuable as they are drawn from participants in all of the programs and make recommendations for ALOY, CFAEP and the summer programs.

Before examining the recommendations it is important to note that the Phoenix study found that the cultural support that was coordinated by the CAF and Aboriginal Elders was almost unanimously viewed as highly positive.¹³³ This is in keeping with the principles recommended and largely adopted by the CAF with respect to fostering an environment designed to grow the critical mass needed to sustain a positive environment towards diversity. In this case, the efforts, such as the culture camps, make the applicants feel welcome, comfortable and secure in a challenging military environment. This

¹³¹ Maclean, *The Aboriginal Leadership Opportunity Year: Addressing the Canadian Forces Next Recruiting Crisis*, 61.

¹³² Ibid, 62.

¹³³ Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. *Final Report: Assessing Objectives of Canadian Armed Forces Aboriginal Programs*. March, 2014, 10.

resulted in a further assessment that applicants would recommend the programs to family and friends.¹³⁴ These sorts of findings are indicative of the beginning of the desired virtuous circle discussed elsewhere in this paper.

The recommendations listed in the Phoenix report are applicable not only to the delivery of training, but also to recruitment and to issues surrounding the transition of successful applicants back to their communities following program completion. The specific recommendations are as follows:

- a. It is important to better publicize all of the CAF Aboriginal programs within the target population. Many Aboriginal youth are missing the opportunity simply because they are not aware of the programs;
- b. Increase the length of CFAEP. The three-week program was viewed as being too short to get a hands-on experience and learn about the range of career options in the CAF;
- c. Expand the ALOY curriculum. Participants interviewed felt that the courses available to them through the Royal Military College were too limited in selection;
- d. Provide more opportunities for ALOY students to interact with other RMC students;
- e. Help ease transition from the ALOY back to civilian life. Participants interviewed mentioned experiencing some difficulties transitioning from military to civilian life upon completion of the year long experience; and
- f. Provide training for instructors of the summer training programs.¹³⁵

It is interesting that item c above is a repeat from the 2009 ALOY Lessons Learned report. Despite efforts to progress this issue, there appears to be continued room to improve. This would be true across all of the recommendations of which most call for

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 39.

expansion of one aspect or another of the programs. Increasing the scope of program curriculum, length, integration and ultimately efforts towards re-integration all lead to a call for expansion to many aspects of the Aboriginal programs and to the training of those who provide them.

Notwithstanding these recommendations, the overall conclusion of the report is that the programs are doing a ‘good job.’¹³⁶ That said, very few members of the CAF are happy with a ‘good job’, when it is known that there are ways the CAF could do better.

Recommendations for the Distribution of Aboriginal Program Positions

The 2006 Statistics Canada census indicated that Canada’s Aboriginal population of 1,172,790 had grown by 20% since 2001 as compared to 5.2% for the Canadian non-Aboriginal population of 30,068,240 during the same period. This figure alone indicates the need to expand the number of program positions simply to keep pace with what appears to be a population boom. Simply put, more positions are required simply to maintain the same effect, let alone to further the reach into Aboriginal communities.

Another issue that should be addressed lies not only with respect to expansion, but also rests with the distribution and assignment of available positions in the programs. CFRG and CDA need to make sure that the programs are balanced with respect to where applicants are drawn in order to provide fair and equitable representation across the country. The distribution of positions should be in line with the distribution of the Aboriginal population in order to ensure that deserving candidates from all regions face

¹³⁶ Ibid, 41.

as similar a level of competition as possible. This has been highlighted by various CFRC AORs and is under consideration by CDA.

An examination of the distribution of the 51 positions allotted for the 2014 CFAEP program stands as an example. With the overall Canadian Aboriginal population of 2014 sitting at approximately 1.2 Million, there is one CFAEP position for every 23 thousand Aboriginals of all ages and abilities.¹³⁷ The table below presents the current distribution of these positions across the existing CFRG AORs and what they ought to be based on being linked to the actual Canadian Aboriginal population distribution.

CFRG AOR	Actual CFAEP-Allotted Positions	Proposed CFAEP Positions
Atlantic	12	3
Quebec	5	5
Ontario	18	11
Prairies and the North	11	24
Pacific	5	9

Table 1: Current and Population Based Distribution of CFAEP Positions¹³⁸

Clearly the current distribution of positions is skewed to the Eastern portions of Canada. The West, where the majority of the Canadian Aboriginal population resides, is woefully under-represented. Because applicants are processed and compete against others in their local CFRC AOR, two otherwise equal applicants do not always stand the same chance of being enrolled. All things being equal, other than where an applicant

¹³⁷ Lt(N) Turner, CFRC Pacific Attractions and Diversity Officer, e-mail correspondence with the Author, 15 May 2014.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

resides, an applicant in Ontario has a relatively greater chance of being selected than an applicant from Alberta. Ontario has roughly 21% of the countries' Aboriginal population and 35% of the positions. The Prairies and the North CFRC AOR serves over 47% of the Aboriginal population with only 20% of the positions.¹³⁹ This imbalance is even more pronounced if the Atlantic region is used for comparison.

This unequal dispersion of positions is a fundamental flaw that could, and should, be quickly addressed either via redistribution or by a national selection process similar to that of the ROTP program. That said, a national selection is complex and can be difficult to manage. For that reason the current selection process, but with a redistributed number of positions, based on population, for each CFRC AOR is recommended.

The distribution ratios should then be maintained for future expansions of the programs. We are now seeing that there are three main justifications that can be made for growing the CAF Aboriginal programs. Expansions can be made to keep pace with the growing Aboriginal youth population. Any future expansion can be intended to obtain more Aboriginal CAF members, or an expansion can be coordinated to benefit Aboriginal communities. Regardless of the tactic chosen, there are fundamentally sound reasons to expand the intake of these programs.

In addition to the basic tenet of fairness with respect to the regional dispersion of the positions, the CAF can ill afford to select any other than the most deserving applicants. Regional imbalance should be corrected so that the CFRG selection process can ensure that these new recruits will have competed fairly amongst themselves and in the same manner as any applicant to the CAF. Selection in this manner will further

¹³⁹ Ibid.

distance the programs from being mistaken for any sort of quota system. Recent national newspaper articles point how undesirable and counter-productive quota based selection can be.¹⁴⁰

If it is accepted that the most deserving applicants are evenly dispersed amongst the population and that given the choice between applicants who ‘test’ equally, then it should be that the more skilled applicant is selected. The CAF of today is a highly technical and advanced military deserving of the best applicants in all programs and processes; this includes the Aboriginal programs. As pointed out by the historian Norman Dixon, in cases where “possibly less able people are being called upon to carry out a more difficult task” there could be “a heavier price to pay for error.”¹⁴¹ It must be remembered that even though this paper is focused on expanding a program for social benefits we are still discussing programs through which military personnel can be enrolled in a professional fighting force.

Recommendations for Expanding the CAF Aboriginal Programs

Despite very recent indications that the CAF Aboriginal Programs will be facing cutbacks due to reduced funding to the CDA, there still remain prudent reasons to expand the programs and look elsewhere for funding cuts.¹⁴² Although not a reason for action in its own right, CAF diversity goals are the subject of renewed press interest. Recent stories have not been complementary to the CAF. While not wholly accurate, on 21 May

¹⁴⁰ Matt Gurney, “Quotas have no place in our military.” *The National Post*, 21 May 2014.

¹⁴¹ Norman Dixon, *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence*, (London, Pimlico, 1976), 21.

¹⁴² Major Guy Janssens, CFRG R3 Diversity and National Events, e-mail correspondence with the Author, 20 May 2014.

2014 it was reported that the CAF was missing its assigned diversity targets for women, visible minorities and Aboriginals. As of 20 June the Commander of CFRG confirmed that recruiting efforts targeted towards women have resulted in an increase from 13% to 16% in little over a year. This is an impressive increase and indicative of the effectiveness of targeted CFRG recruiting efforts. These efforts should also be adopted for Aboriginals.

The National Post journalist further reported that the CAF may be seeking “an exemption from its current targets, and fears that, if it does not get said exemption, the HRC [Human Rights Commission] could ‘potentially impose conditions upon the [Canadian Forces] to comply with recruitment of [women, visible minorities and aboriginals] over a timeline and in a manner which would unduly stress our organization.’”¹⁴³ Expanding the CAF Aboriginal Programs would help to alleviate this issue and demonstrates a clear commitment to employment equity goals. Further impressing the need for expansion is the fact that Aboriginals are the fastest growing demographic in Canada.¹⁴⁴

This youthful and growing population will likely be the key to the future resolution of many issues facing Aboriginals and provides further argument for expanding the CAF Aboriginal programs. In order to simply maintain the ratio of positions within ALOY, CFAEP and the Aboriginal Summer Programs to the Canadian Aboriginal population, the number of positions should be indexed to the rate of growth of the population of Aboriginal youth.

¹⁴³ Matt Gurney, “Quotas have no place in our military.” The National Post, 21 May 2014..

¹⁴⁴ Leuprecht, *Demographics and Diversity Issues in Canadian Military Participation*, 130.

Recommended Changes to CAF Recruiting and Attractions Activities

CAF leadership has issued clear direction to recruiters that there is a desire to have the ranks better reflect the diverse nature of the population. As demonstrated, this is borne out in guidance from the Commander of CFRG and acted upon by front-line recruiters as they carry out their assigned mission.¹⁴⁵ Canadian Aboriginal applicants will experience this direction in action upon interfacing with CFRG recruiters or they will see it displayed prominently on the CAF Recruiting Website.¹⁴⁶ That said, there are elements within CFRG recruiting and attractions activities that can be improved to foster the expansion recommended throughout this paper. Of immediate concern is the ability of CFRG to advertise the programs and reach the intended Aboriginal audience throughout the country.

In the same manner that the allotment of SIP for the Aboriginal programs needs to be balanced, the allotment of diversity spending within CFRG needs to be augmented and then distributed based on population and geography. All Government of Canada departments are charged with being efficient and doing their utmost to expend resources responsibly. The same is true for CFRG; recruiting resources must always be spent in the most efficient manner possible and monies earmarked for diversity must be treated in the same manner. At the same time, citizens throughout Canada have a right to equal access to programs offered by all Government of Canada departments. To that end, a First Nations' youth residing outside of Fort Nelson in northern British Columbia deserves the

¹⁴⁵ Canada. Department of National Defence. *Canadian Forces Recruiting Group Operations Plan 2014/2105*. (Ottawa: Canadian Forces Recruiting Group, 2013), H-2/6.

¹⁴⁶ Canada. Department of National Defence. "Aboriginal Programs." last accessed 26 Feb 2014, <http://www.forces.ca/en/page/aboriginalprograms-93>.

same opportunity to make application to the CAF Aboriginal programs as does a Metis youth residing within the city limits of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

With the spirit of equal access in mind, it is important to note that in practice this effect is difficult to achieve given the geography and the vastness of Canada. Once an application is made the recruiting processes are applied fairly and equitably, but ensuring that as many youth as possible have been made aware of the program is a vexing challenge. As with many government services, there will often be disparity of access between rural and urban Canadians; the remoteness of many Aboriginal communities requires not only particular attention and planning but personnel and fiscal resources in order to get the message out. Highlighting the need for the maintenance and expansion of the resources needed to ensure a physical recruiting presence is the lack of internet access in many Aboriginal Communities.

The lack of Internet access in many remote communities requires that CFRG maintain a capability of processing paper applications for the CAF Aboriginal Programs. CFRG has been moving towards online applications for several years via the Forces.ca website. While this serves the majority of Canadians well, there are many for whom this is problematic. Within the CFRC Pacific AOR, which covers BC and the Yukon, there are many communities lacking internet access. There are plans in place throughout the country to remedy this gap; however, for the time being there is a significant lack of coverage.¹⁴⁷ It is recommended that CFRG continue to accept paper applications from applicants to the CAF Aboriginal programs.

¹⁴⁷ Stephen Hui, "B.C. First Nations' lack of broadband Internet access called "ridiculous"." *The Georgia Strait*, 22 February 2012.

The use of influencers in CFRG recruiting operations is a large part of the current CFRG Diversity and Attractions Operations Plan.¹⁴⁸ The use of influencers has been productive for several years within CFRG. The current Aboriginal influencer program should be expanded as much as possible. This allows CFRG, via the regional expertise of the CFRC AORs to reach the elders and leaders who occupy positions of trust within the communities. The use of Aboriginal influencers allows CFRG to reach applicants using the principles of concentration of force and economy of effort. This also promotes long-lasting relationships with respected persons who provide valuable guidance not just to prospective applicants, but also to CFRG recruiters in the form of feed-back and constructive criticism. As with the Canadian Ranger program any link between elders and youth should be supported as much as possible with respect to CFRG recruiting activities.

The various methods of recruiting operations including the online website, the physical presence of CFRG recruiters, and the use of influencers are generally considered successful in that there are many thousands of applications made above and beyond the number of positions available within all elements of the CAF. An abundance of applications as compared to positions allows the CAF to process and select the very best applicants from the pool. A critical, but politically charged, action needed to effectively reach all of Canada's aboriginal youth is to re-balance recruiting resources in accordance with population and geography.

¹⁴⁸ Canada. Department of National Defence. Canadian Forces Recruiting Group Operations Plan 2014/2105. (Ottawa: Canadian Forces Recruiting Group, 2013), 3/14.

This logical step requires no additional funding, and is within the scope of CFRG to implement quickly. Given the firestorm of criticism surrounding the recent closures of some small CFRG recruiting detachments, this reallocation of personnel would likely need to be coordinated by simply thinning the number of personnel in some of the eastern detachments and bolstering the staffing in the western ones. This would allow CFRG and the CAF to achieve the desired effect without disadvantaging any other Canadians or causing undue concern with the public.

A second order of improvement would involve augmenting diversity spending and adding personnel resources. While this is easy to state in an academic paper, it is difficult to do in the current climate of fiscal restraint. Until such time as the results of having conducted recruiting operations with an equitable coverage of Canada's Aboriginal population can be assessed it would not be feasible, or perhaps even responsible to recommend redirecting money and additional personnel to CFRG in support of this endeavor at this time.

Recommended Changes to Aboriginal Applicant Processing Requirements

The Commander of CFRG is reforming many of the processes within Recruiting Group in order to better the whole of the recruiting experience from start to finish for all applicants to the CAF. He has declared that the modernization of CFRG is one of his top priorities. The intent is to modernize in order to ensure the 'streamlining and standardization of processing'.¹⁴⁹ The initiatives under this modernization will reduce the frustrations of many applicants and allow an applicant to navigate towards selection, or

¹⁴⁹ Canada. Department of National Defence. *Canadian Forces Recruiting Group Commander's Planning Guidance/FY 2014-2015*. (Ottawa: Canadian Forces Recruiting Group, 2013), 4/14.

rejection, much quicker. This will allow the CFRC COs to act quickly with the applications to the Aboriginal programs and respond while applicants are still motivated and excited about their application. As has been the experience with many applicants, delays within CFRG have been de-motivating and act as a dis-incentive to following through to enrollment. This is true for applicants to all elements of the CAF and is not unique to the Aboriginal programs.

Although not specifically aimed towards the processing of the applicants of the Aboriginal programs, CFRG is beginning to employ selection techniques that have evolved to reduce error and bias with respect to all three diversity groups. These techniques will augment the percentage of applicants selected from diversity groups without the use of quotas or affirmative action type initiatives. The main technique is called selection banding which ‘is a selection approach used to increase diversity and meet the legal requirements outlined in the Employment Equity Act, which allows for the implementation of social programs to correct [the] under representation of members of designated groups.’¹⁵⁰ This description outlines a process seemingly designed to impart the effects desired for applicants to the Aboriginal Programs.

At the moment the use of selection banding will primarily be used for PRes and Regular Force applicants, but because the Aboriginal programs have more applicants than there are positions, even within the Aboriginal diversity group there will be groups, perhaps urban versus rural for example, whereby a balancing of the playing field will be useful in reaching the most deserving applicants by limiting bias. This would be carried

¹⁵⁰ Major Tanguay, Recruiting Personnel Selection Officer, e-mail correspondence with the Author, 28 May 2014.

out in the same manner within the diversity group as is used outside of it. Recent draft submissions to update CFRG manuals indicate that:

“This method involves grouping applicants based on ranges of scores or ‘bands’. The grouping process takes into account the concept of standard error of measurement (SEM) from classical test theory. The SEM reflects the fact that almost any measurement contains error as well as a true score component. In other words, because of this type of error, it is possible that two different test scores do not, in reality, represent two different ‘levels of potential’. When creating bands, it is assumed that scores within a determined band are statistically equivalent.”¹⁵¹

If used in the processing of Aboriginal applicants to both the CAF Aboriginal Programs, and the CAF writ large, we can only enhance fairness and add another level of robustness to CAF efforts to achieve the legal requirements outlined in the Employment Equity Act.

Recommended Changes to the Delivery of Training

The RCAF should take responsibility for the delivery of a fourth summer program. At the moment the CA sponsors Bold Eagle and Black Bear, the Navy is responsible for Raven, but the RCAF is notably absent from the CDA outline for the programs.¹⁵² The CA not only sponsors the two programs, but the Black Bear program is bilingual. This raises the question as to why there is perhaps not a French only program, but this is perhaps beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, the RCAF does not currently sponsor a program whether it be English, French or bilingual. Tasking the RCAF with delivering a summer program would provide another venue for program

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Canada. Department of National Defence. “Aboriginal Training Programs.” last accessed 25 November 2013, http://cda.mil.ca/ops/ITE_PP/aboriginal/index-eng.asp.

expansion that would perhaps further meet the need of the expanding Aboriginal youth demographic without over-taxing the staff and facilities of Bold Eagle, Black Bear and Raven. This would further offer an opportunity to re-balance the distribution of positions to reflect the dispersion of the population.

Summary of Recommendations

The following list summarizes the recommendations made in this chapter:

- a. CAF Advocacy for Aboriginals should be maintained at the CLS level;
- b. CDA should ensure all recommendations are implemented based on the 2009 ALOY Lessons Learned report;
- c. CDA should implement and monitor the lessons learned from the 2014 Phoenix report;
- d. CFRG should increase targeted Aboriginal recruiting efforts;
- e. CFRG should maintain or expand the use of Aboriginal influences to assist recruiting efforts;
- f. CFRG should maintain the availability of paper applications for Canadians without access to the internet;
- g. CFRG should maintain the availability of paper applications for Canadians without access to the internet;
- h. CFRG should proceed with selection banding for processing;
- i. CDA and CFRG should ensure a representative balance of positions are available for the appropriate populations in accordance with Table 1;
- j. CDA and CFRG funding and staffing should be enhanced so that the overall number of program positions can be indexed to the growing Aboriginal youth population; and
- k. The RCAF should sponsor and run a 4th summer program.

CONCLUSION

If the recommendations from the preceding chapter were accepted and undertaken the CAF Aboriginal programs would solicit more applications, select the most deserving applicants and ensure that no applicant would be disadvantaged based on geography or regional-disparity. Furthermore, the training and conduct of the programs would be improved and the desired training, traits and benefits imparted by the programs to the applicants would be reinforced and solidified. This would result in a larger cadre of empowered Aboriginal youth returning to their communities with the type of confidence that would bolster their desire to pursue and continue with post-secondary education. Over time these actions will drive positive social change in difficult to reach communities and the Aboriginal demographic overall.

This paper has argued that the true benefit of the CAF Aboriginal Programs has more to do with the social impact of the skills brought back to Aboriginal communities by successful candidates than with recruiting and retention. Those youth who successfully complete one of the programs and do join the CAF are more than welcome and help the CAF to better reflect the makeup of Canadian society while helping to achieve the goals set out under employment equity guidelines. It is important to note that these members form a valuable part of the military team for their skills and determination and not for membership in one of the targeted employment equity groups. That said, given the long and proud history between the CAF and Aboriginal peoples, it stands to reason that more Aboriginals in the CAF can only strengthen the organization. We have seen, however, that the retention rates are relatively low and that there still remains a benefit to the country of Canada for the CAF to continue to provide a cadre of Aboriginal programs.

The main benefit of these programs clearly lies in the skills and confidence that candidates bring back to their homes and use to better their lives and communities. Independent studies have confirmed that while not particularly good as a recruiting tool, the programs help to develop and reinforce sound decision making resulting in improved self-discipline, increased confidence and self-esteem, contribute to overall growth and self-development and enhance the ability of candidates to work in teams with other people.

When coupled with the findings that participation in the programs also appears to positively influence the decision to undertake, and to stick, with post-secondary education, it is clear that the programs are valuable and make a difference to those who attend. By strengthening this type of behaviour in the graduates, the Aboriginal programs have demonstrated that a military can positively influence social change.

The CAF as an organization is taking an active stance to improve an already welcoming atmosphere to cultural diversity; if it has not achieved it already, the CAF is on its way to attaining the critical mass needed to not only embrace Aboriginal recruits but to develop leaders and instructors who can effectively train, lead, counsel and educate the Aboriginal youth who attend the CAF Aboriginal programs. The CAF is well on the way to possessing the social capital needed for this critical mass.

The next step then, as discussed, is to ensure that enough applicants can attend the programs in order to make a difference in their communities and in the Aboriginal population writ large. The CDA itself states this as a main tenet of the programs. It is recommended that consideration should be given to the expansion of the CAF Aboriginal

Programs, in both size and scope, to better effect positive change in some of the Canada's most difficult to reach communities. Happily though, we have seen that recruiting and retention goals are not mutually exclusive from this other aim. In fact, recent efforts to augment diversity within the CAF stands to further bolster the argument for program expansion.

We saw that there are three arguments to be made for expanding the scope of the CAF Aboriginal programs: to keep pace with the growing Aboriginal youth population, to obtain more Aboriginal CAF members and to benefit Aboriginal communities. These very practical recommendations are backed by solid demographic data regarding Canada's fastest growing population. Coupled with a fair distribution of positions for the Aboriginal programs, the CAF can undertake immediate steps to better serve the Aboriginal population. It should be kept in mind, that a portion of these youth will be joining the CAF which will continue to reinforce the ranks in a virtuous circle that will enhance the attainment of cultural critical mass within the overall organization. Simply put, this is a 'win-win-win' scenario. Furthermore, the RCAF should be challenged to match the efforts of the CA and the RCN and sponsor a summer program of its own. As discussed, the benefits will not be limited to the Aboriginal candidates, recruitment targets, or even their communities but within the ranks of the RCAF itself. By increasing exposure to different cultures in all three services, the aforementioned virtuous circle can be additionally reinforced.

The CAF should embrace the reported lessons learned with the current cadre of Aboriginal programs. These programs have already been an effective tool for social change with the youth accepted thus far and expansion may create the same type of

change due to a similar phenomenon of critical mass in their communities in concert with the critical mass that is being fostered within the CAF. The programs should be scaled to grow in accordance with the target population and expanded beyond that within the fiscal and personnel resources of the CAF, the CDA and CFRG. Once this is done the Aboriginals enrolled in the CAF Aboriginal Programs will be supported in their education and training by a cadre of CAF personnel possessing an appropriate military culture who are even more capable of embracing cultural diversity than they are today. Together, in the spirit of Tecumseh, the CAF and Aboriginal youth can gain a positive foothold within difficult to reach communities and effect a positive and lasting social change that will benefit all Canadians.

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