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JCSP 40

Exercise Solo Flight

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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE / COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES
JCSP 40 / PCEMI 40

DS554 — ADVANCED TOPICS IN
INSTITUTIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT

WHAT WE HAVE IS NOT QUITE ENOUGH:
PME AND SUCCESSION PLANNING IN THE RCAF

By Maj A.T.W. Carlson

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Word Count: 5361

Compte de mots : 5361

Since the dawn of military history, it has been critically important to have capable soldiers. The very survival of the society was at stake. A key component of developing and maintaining a capable military force is training. Along with the development of standing armies, complex tactics, manoeuvre warfare, increased technology and changing societal views on the conduct of their armies comes the requirement for skilled leaders. One leg of Clausewitz's trinity is the commander and his army, where the commander has the qualities of genius required to eliminate or reduce friction and lead the army to victory.¹ The modern military needs competent leaders but cannot take the chance that Clausewitz's concept of the military genius will appear; rather they have taken the opinion that the raw potential can be identified and then trained, educated and shaped into the effective leaders that are required.² The task of identifying and developing future leaders is a tall one and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) leadership doctrine highlights the changing focus of the leaders as their rank increases.³ This problem is further complicated due to the different service cultures, their different leadership and training requirements and how to bring them all together at the senior levels in order to properly lead the institution. The CAF utilizes a combination of succession planning and professional military education (PME) to develop the leaders the CAF, the government and society needs as an institution. There are some common PME opportunities; however, much is defined by the individual services to meet their own individual needs. The Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) has a good process for succession planning and PME but gaps remain in the preparation of Air force officers for the tasks they will face in the future.

¹ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, eds. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 732.

² English Allan Dr and John Westrop Colonel (Retired), *Canadian Air Force Leadership and Command: The Human Dimension of Expeditionary Air Force Operations*. (Trenton, Ontario: Canadian Forces Aerospace Warfare Centre, 2007), 267.

³ The Chief of Defence Staff, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations* (Kingston, Ontario: Canadian Defence Academy, 2005), 144.

To explore the gaps in RCAF succession planning and PME a comparison with civilian business and other militaries will be used. Examining RCAF succession planning and PME in comparison with other industry and militaries will highlight the importance of leadership development in any organization, as well as the similarities with the RCAF system. A study on the time taken by senior officers to be comfortable in their jobs and what skills they felt they lacked will also be used to show areas where the RCAF needs to improve in order to adequately prepare officers for the future. The comparison will include other similar militaries and the best practices of private sector businesses. The first section will examine succession planning; it will include an outline of ideals as well as a discussion and comparison of both RCAF succession planning and business world succession planning. A similar comparison of PME will be conducted in the second section along with a comparison to other militaries. The third section will highlight the synergy between succession planning and PME that together will produce the most effective senior leadership cadre. Finally, it will also highlight short falls in where current RCAF succession planning and PME systems could be improved in the future development of RCAF and CAF leaders.

Every institution, public and private, needs good leaders to guide and ensure its continued effectiveness. One means of taking someone with potential within the organization to a senior leadership position is succession planning. The intent of this section is to clearly examine the fundamentals of succession planning by showing what it is, what it is meant to achieve and the benefits of it. The focus is on RCAF succession planning and will compare current RCAF policy on succession planning with those used by business and industry. This section will show the fundamentals of succession planning and how it is important to the institution. It will then examine the published RCAF succession planning direction, highlighting some of the challenges

faced by the RCAF in implementing succession planning. Finally, the business and industry communities will be examined in order to see how they develop and conduct succession planning with differences highlighted between the systems.

Succession planning requires clear, long-term vision and an understanding of what experience is required or desirable for future leaders. It can be “defined as a process for identifying and developing key leaders within” the organization.⁴ To be effective and credible, it is important that the process is transparent and clear, not shrouded in mystery or suspicion of patronage. The process is about preparing future leaders of the organization, not for identifying people who are coincidentally prepared and able to fill vacancies.⁵ An effective succession planning process will identify the roles that the personnel are being developed to fill. This is often a general type of role such as manager. The competencies or skills required for those jobs are identified and declared as required or recommended. In a large organization such as the CAF, the job skills and roles will be generic and applicable across a broad spectrum of senior jobs. To give a start point for succession planning, the personnel within the organization will need to be assessed, for example, of skills, strengths, potential and longevity. It is important to identify their current status and define their developmental needs. From the staff analysis, a pool of potential talent is identified. In civilian industry the best pool of talent is often found within the organization. Once the pool of talent has been identified and their developmental needs are defined, it is possible to map their progression plan to ensure that they receive the positions and challenges that will develop them for their jobs of the future.⁶ Succession planning is an effective

⁴ Doug Gray, "Succession Planning 101," *Professional Safety* 59, no. 3 (03, 2014), 35-35. Succession Planning 101

⁵ Michelle Harrison, Tom McKinnon and Paul Terry, "Effective Succession Planning," *T + D* 60, no. 10 (Oct 2006, 2006), 22-23.

⁶ Gray, *Succession Planning 101*, 35-35

means of ensuring a consistent number of qualified people who have the breadth of experience that will allow them to succeed in leading the institution.

The identification and development of the future leaders of the RCAF and CAF is essential to ensure the continued success of the institution. The RCAF succession planning structure is clear and provides the required oversight by senior RCAF officers that is important in the identification and development of the future institutional leadership. The RCAF has an order that defines the succession planning process. The objective of the policy is “to ensure that individuals with the capability to achieve senior appointments are identified, tracked and provided with developmental opportunities very early in their careers. This will ensure the selection and guidance of the most appropriate individuals towards senior command.”⁷ Individuals are nominated by their chain of command to their Advisory Groups (AGs). The AG is a group that represents all of the RCAF personnel associated within a specific community. They provide community specific advice to Personnel Boards and senior AF Commanders on LColts and below; there is a specific AG for Colts.⁸ As figure 1 shows, the AGs will nominate the candidates for either appointment to a specific job (high profile, command, etc) through the Air Personnel Appointment Board (APAB) or to be included in RCAF succession planning through the Air Personnel Management Board (APMB). Both boards will recommend the selected people to the Chief of the Air Staff (CAS). The process is repeated annually and individuals can be added or removed if required. The APAB and APMB are chaired by the Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (ACAS) and are comprised of several senior RCAF officers of different backgrounds. This gives a good level of oversight in the selection and development of succession planned officers. A key aspect of the RCAF succession planning process is the requirement to select

⁷ Director General Air Personnel, *Air Force Personnel Management - Officers*, Vol. AFO 1000-7, 2010).

⁸ Ibid.

personnel early enough in their career so there is time to provide them with proper breadth of developmental challenges to prepare them for senior appointment and leadership within the institution.

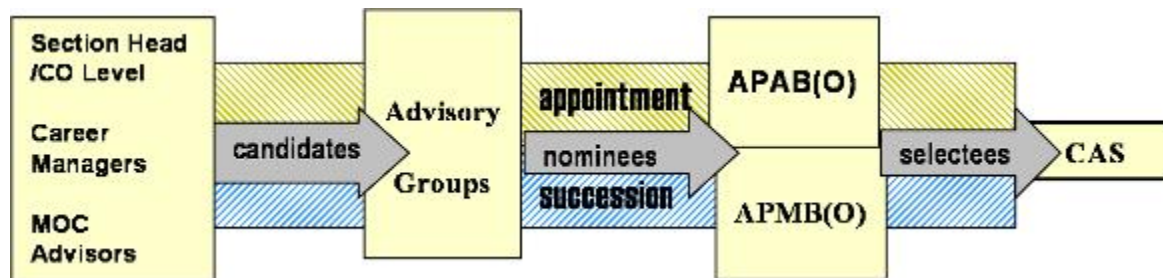


Figure 1.

The CAF is not the only institution that conducts succession planning. It is used around the world in militaries and business alike. It is interesting to note that the steps of the processes are very similar, even if the execution is different. The New Zealand armed services formalized their system of training geared to recognize leadership potential. People that emerge from the group as leaders are given further opportunity to develop. The New Zealand Navy has three parts to their succession planning system. First, career managers help the officers determine the next steps for their career and the training and development they will need to make it happen. Then their immediate supervisor will help them reach the standard and provide individual feedback. The third part is the individual themselves. They need to take responsibility in the process and in their own development. If they are not investing in themselves, they will not make it. There is a final test for leadership they must pass. They are taken to a remote island and are each given an opportunity to lead the group for tasks that will increase in complexity and difficulty during the training period. The tasks will be further complicated as the candidates tire through lack of sleep and increased physical demands.⁹ “Those who don’t show leadership potential by the end of the

⁹ Carroll du Chateau, "Planning for Promotion," *New Zealand Management* (07/02, 2011), 26-30.

series of challenges are discharged from the Navy.”¹⁰ It is a tough challenge, but the goal is to ensure that in a potential conflict situation, the New Zealand armed services wants to ensure that they have the best proven leaders in place.

Succession planning is also very important for businesses. Some define succession planning as “the consistent, constant and organized process to identify, develop, and support a pipeline of candidates for different positions throughout the company to maintain it uninterrupted operation in case of planned or unexpected vacancies, to ensure business continuity.”¹¹ The definition could be used for military succession planning as well, with some minor changes. For businesses, their goal is survival of the company and financial success. For that reason, their succession planning process “is all about making sure that the company stays in business with the right people in the right place at the right time.”¹² The principles are the same for the RCAF; however, the goals are not financial. It is important, regardless of the organization, to have people ready to take over when positions become vacant, but the CAF needs senior leadership that can lead the institution and interface with other government departments to succeed in the whole of government approach. Succession planning is used by numerous organizations, civilian and military, around the world because it can be an effective tool to provide the breadth of experience to prepare future leaders of the organization.

Succession planning is an important means of ensuring continuity of good leadership within an organization. It is a process of identifying, developing, and guiding people within the organization in preparation for senior positions and responsibility. The process is important to all organizations in order to secure their future, with the right person in the right job at the right

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ NORMA DÁVILA and WANDA PIÑA-RAMÁREZ, "Populate the Pipeline," *T+D* 68, no. 2 (02, 2014), 32-37.

¹² Ibid.

time. The RCAF has a very good succession planning process that is clearly defined, transparent and has very good oversight from senior leaders with different backgrounds in the RCAF. It is the means by which we provide the breadth of experience deemed necessary to ensure that we have leaders able to lead the institution into the future. Succession planning is also used within other military and civilian organizations, all of which share the fundamental elements of succession planning, though they do it for different reasons and achieve it by different means. One part of the succession planning not yet discussed is the knowledge development that goes along with the building of experience.

Succession planning is important, but it is only one portion of growing great leadership within the organization. It is important to develop people through experience and training. It is the positions that they occupy throughout their career and the accompanied training that ensures they have the knowledge required to meet future challenges. In the RCAF, personnel are developed using four pillars: education, training, self-development and experience.¹³ This section will focus on the education and training, the professional military education (PME), of the RCAF professional development system. The system currently in place is comprehensive and covers most of the members' career. To take a look at the PME system within the RCAF, the first step is to identify the components and goals of the education. The focus will then be on the RCAF PME system and how it changes to address the changing needs of the member as they advance through their career, achieve higher rank and increased responsibility. The final piece will be to examine how other institutions conduct their professional development, make comparisons with the RCAF, and highlight the differences between the two systems.

¹³ The Chief of Defence Staff, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada* (Kingston, Ontario: Canadian Defence Academy, 2009), 84.

PME is critical to the development of the officer corps, the success of the RCAF and CAF and is a key part of succession planning. It is part of the transformation of personnel from the very junior and tactical level through to the leadership of the profession. It is comprised of both military delivered courses and academic education including sending personnel to study at civilian universities. The education that is required “should be broad enough to provide new academic horizons for those who have been narrowly focused, but deep enough to ensure scholarship and challenge and whet the intellectual curiosity of all officers capable of developing strategic vision.”¹⁴ Sending people to civilian institutions for academic advancement allows increased development of critical thinking outside of the military collective thought. As remarked by General David Patraeus, arguably one of the most successful commanders in Iraq, “the most important training he received for dealing with what they encountered in the Mosul area of northern Iraq was not his experience in Bosnia. Rather, it was having done a PhD at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton.”¹⁵ This mixed approach provides the environment to develop the critical thinking and innovation required to operate in the complex operational and socio-cultural environment in which military professionals find themselves operating.¹⁶ A good professional development system is one that continues throughout the career and prepares officers for the shift in focus from leading people to leading the institution as they increase in rank. Senior leadership within the profession is “leadership of longer timeframes, greater span of influence and greater complexity.”¹⁷ Succession Planning will not be effective unless it is combined with a good Professional Military Education system.

¹⁴ Bob Feidler, "PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION," *The Officer* 88, no. 4 (Jul/Aug 2012, 2012a), 44-49.

¹⁵ Eliot Cohen, "The US Military After Iraq: A Speculation," *RUSI Journal* 151, no. 1 (Feb 2006, 2006), 20-22.

¹⁶ The Chief of Defence Staff, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, 84

¹⁷ Walker, Robert, W., CD, PhD., *The Professional Development Framework: Generating Effectiveness in Canadian Forces Leadership* (Kingston, Ontario: Canadian Defence Academy, [2006]).

The CAF are members of the profession of arms. The primary function of the military profession is the management of military force. “The ordered application of military force requires not only specific knowledge and skills spanning all the combat functions of a professional military organization, but also and, perhaps more especially, a highly developed capacity for judging its use.”¹⁸ The function of the PME program in the RCAF is to “prepare CAF members for the demands of a progressive career.”¹⁹ To do this, the RCAF has divided an officers’ career into developmental periods (DPs) and associated professional development with each of the DPs; shown in figure 2. In the development of RCAF officers there is a mix of CAF common courses such as the basic officer training course (BOTC), the joint command and staff program (JCSP) and the national securities program (NSP). The JCSP and the NSP courses bring people from all trades within the CAF as well as from other countries and, for NSP, other government departments such as DFATD and the RCMP. The courses are academic in focus to develop critical thinking and encourage further study in areas that are applicable to the senior military officer including international and domestic affairs. The students are also exposed to the military and governmental relationship and provided with some understanding of policy development and the role of the military in providing advice to government. The diverse participation opens everyone to different perspectives and allows the connections to be made that will serve the individuals and the institution well into the future. There are also RCAF specific courses to build and maintain the Air Force culture and knowledge. Many RCAF trades require significant technical training to perform their jobs and this has to be balanced with their leadership development. This broad and career-long development is preparing the RCAF and CAF leaders of tomorrow.

¹⁸ The Chief of Defence Staff, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, 84

¹⁹ Director Air Personnel Strategy, *Royal Canadian Air Force Learning and Professional Development*, Vol. AFO 5007-0, (2012).

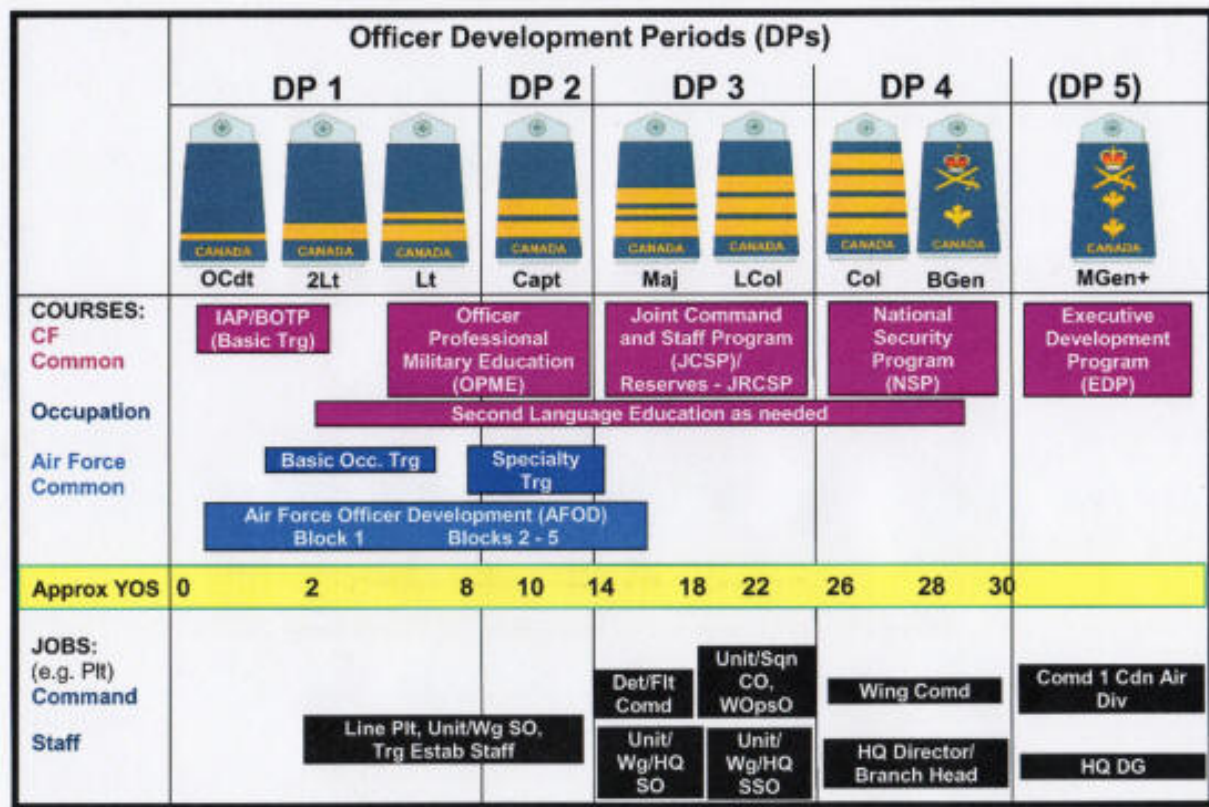


Figure 2.

Militaries throughout history have used PME to educate their officers to try and achieve success in the battlefield. Clausewitz himself was an instructor at the Prussian war college 200 years ago. PME is provided by military colleges or universities around the world. They are delivered in house and via distance programs and most include students from foreign militaries to build networks and share ideas and experiences. The U.S. military has extensive training and education for officers throughout their careers to match their advancement and prepare them for higher levels of responsibility.²⁰ In a similar fashion to the CAF, the program moderator of the U.S. Naval War College noted that “the goal of military education should be to produce officers who think strategically – who can relate means to ends and understand the strategic milieu where

²⁰ Bob Feidler, "Professional Military Education," *Officer* 88, no. 4 (Jul, 2012b), 44-49.

politics and the military are integrated.”²¹ To achieve these goals requires that officers are knowledgeable in the workings and structure of the military as well as government and how the two interact. They must be familiar with international affairs and having a good understanding of different cultures and religions is important. They also need to have knowledge of history, finance and human resources all in addition to tactical expertise in their occupational specialties.²² These issues are consistent with what is experienced within the RCAF.

The UK has a similar PME process as the CAF and U.S. military where the goal is “to prepare armed forces to fight by preparing officers for the unexpected and to cope with uncertainty.”²³ The focus is on postgraduate level education to develop their officers’ critical thinking thereby enabling effective and reasoned responses to unknown or unexpected situations. The UK advanced staff course, similar to the Canadian JCSP, is focused at the operational level to enable the link between strategic direction and tactical operations. They also need to work with other militaries and non-defence actors within the theatre of operations.²⁴ The officers of western militaries have similar challenges and tasks, often under very demanding situations within a theater of operations or within the military to government space. The challenge is matching the right education to prepare them for the task.

Educating officers for the challenges they will face throughout their careers is the *raison d’être* of PME. Failure to develop an officer corps that is able to think critically and develop strategic vision will fail the institution and put its future in jeopardy. PME needs to prepare officers to be able to respond to the demands of their profession in peace time, crisis, and in war.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Kate Utting, "Beyond Joint - Professional Military Education for the 21st Century: The United Kingdom's Post-Defence Training Review Advanced Command and Staff Course," *Defence Studies* 9, no. 3 (09, 2009), 310-328.

²⁴ Ibid.

The RCAF has a very good PME system in place that develops officers in their Air Force technical skills and knowledge as well as sending them to CAF joint courses such as JCSP and NSP to prepare them for their future roles within the RCAF. Both the U.S. and UK militaries have PME programs with similar aims for their officers. They start with tactical expertise, add the ability to translate strategic direction into tactical operations and then focus on leading the institution. Solid PME is critical for the success of officers and the institution as they move through their career.

To prepare officers for the challenges of the highest levels of their professions requires a combination of succession planning and PME. The education needs to be timed appropriately to meet the needs of the officers as they move through their careers giving the right training or education at the right time. The RCAF uses succession planning and PME effectively with only minor gaps in the education of its officers. This section will look at how succession planning and PME need to be considered as two distinct parts of an officers development but yet are linked and match the phases of an officer's career. There are significant challenges that need to be addressed in the execution of succession planning and PME; defining the goals and skills required and how to get them there. The issue of time available for the development and the quality and credibility of the PME is also an issue. The goal is to develop the best possible officers to lead the RCAF into the future. Succession planning without PME will develop leaders with breadth of experience but may leave them without the ability to think critically; this may affect their ability to meet the challenges of the senior positions within the profession.

In the RCAF, the amount of time that a member has to achieve and serve at the highest levels of the profession is limited. When taken with the breadth of experience that is desirable for a senior officer to have, it is not possible for them to spend more than 1-2 years in each position.

Succession planning is the map or plan to get the members into the positions that will broaden their experience in preparation for employment in senior positions, but it is not effective alone. It must be matched with proper PME in order to properly prepare them for their future challenges. A key trait needed to fulfil the tasks of senior leadership is judgement. This can only be achieved through the acquisition of knowledge (PME) and practical experience in its application.²⁵ The system is designed to ensure that the education is delivered in a timely manner prior to the member taking a position where they will require the knowledge. The education must also be timely so that it remains current and relevant and the member will be able to apply it soon after they have received it. Officers are expected “to demonstrate intellectual agility, think critically, communicate well, conduct themselves with integrity, and lead others to perform strenuous tasks in difficult and often dangerous situations.”²⁶ To achieve such effects, the matched combination of succession planning and PME is required.

Succession planning and PME are not perfect in their execution; there are challenges involved in developing people for their futures within the profession. The short time spent in positions as a result of the compressed amount of time available in their careers is a significant issue from an institutional perspective. A balance needs to be found between maintaining consistent productivity from the position and the need to expand the breadth of a members experience as part of the succession plan. The institution needs to determine if the cost in lost productivity is worth the value of the increased breadth of experience gained from the variety of positions they will fill in their career. According to a study on Colonel and Captain(N) readiness,

²⁵ The Chief of Defence Staff, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, 84

²⁶ Feidler, *Professional Military Education*, 44-49

it took anywhere from 4-6 months before they felt comfortable in their new jobs.²⁷ If one considers a normal tour length of 2 years and include 6 months to learn the job, 25 days of annual leave per year and 1 month of time lost due to turn-over and planning for a move to the next job; there is only about 15 months of productive time in a given tour. The interruption to the progression of the work within the position is made even worse if the tour length is shortened. To minimize the disruption of position turnover, the member should remain for as long as possible. A balance needs to be found between the requirements of succession planning and the potential impact of so much lost time in positions subject to successive rapid turnover.

The CAF is a unified service; however, many leaders spend their formative years in a single service culture; building technical expertise and focusing on being tactical experts. Pilots require years to reach the technical expertise required by their trade and community which leaves little time for developing leadership, finance or human resource skills.²⁸ These critical skills are not currently part of the RCAF PME program, which causes difficulties as the officers are then left to learn on the job. In a study on Colonel/Captain(N) readiness, the most common areas where they felt they lacked preparation were HR management and business planning or finance.²⁹ This gap in training and preparation is interesting as people and money are both very important to the institution. Poor management of people leads to dissatisfaction, and often release, whereas poor financial management can lead to loss of confidence in the CAF by government. RCAF officers do study leadership theory as part of PME, however, due to the length of time it takes to become technically proficient within the profession and the lack of leadership opportunities available for junior officers (other than leading or mentoring other

²⁷ Raphaëlle Grenier and Maj Blanchette, *Results of the Colonel/Captain(N) Readiness Questionnaire* (Ottawa, Ontario: Director General Military Personnel, [2011]).

²⁸ Based on authors experience as a Sea King Pilot.

²⁹ (Raphaëlle Grenier and Maj Blanchette, 2011).

officers or aircrew); they are less prepared for senior leadership challenges. The very nature of RCAF operations, sending the officers off to war, added to the lack of opportunities for junior officers to lead troops causes some clashes of culture when senior positions are reached.³⁰

Although it is possible to reduce the time junior officers spend in achieving technical expertise, it comes at a risk to operational success and future credibility. Experience can only be gained with time and senior tactical leadership demands credibility which is only gained by experience.

Options need to be explored in order to meet operational requirements and future leadership demands while minimizing unnecessary risk to the personnel and the institution.

There is not much that can be done by the RCAF to increase the time available for developing our people for senior level institutional positions. The goal, therefore, is to find ways to better prepare them for those roles. The PME institutions and courses need to be seen as credible; the staff and students must value attendance in order to obtain the most benefit out of the people attending.³¹ PME is part of the growing number of checks required to gain points on promotion boards. Most are automatic attendance and 100% pass, with little attempt to ensure student development, and most focus on rote memorization that will not leave a lasting impact.³² This is not to say that every course should have a selection process for attendance or that not all attending should pass. The issue is that it appears that the goal of some parts of PME is focused on simply getting through it for the check in the box instead of developing critical thinking and further educating the officer corps. Officers attending PME need to find the tangible link to their current and/or future jobs, other than a check in the box for promotion, in order to buy into the

³⁰ English Allan Dr and Westrop, *Canadian Air Force Leadership and Command: The Human Dimension of Expeditionary Air Force Operations.*, 267

³¹ Nicholas Murray, "The Role of Professional Military Education in Mission Command," *JFQ: Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 72 (2014, 2014), 10-13.

³² CLAY M. FULLER, "Squadron Officer School and Professional Military Education Checking Boxes Or Building Leaders?" *Reporter* 40, no. 3 (09, 2013), 11-14.

program. The institution needs to change the culture around PME and incentivize professional development, including formal PME, online courses and self-study.³³ To achieve this, there must be an education campaign to ensure that potential students know the aims of the course and how it will relate to their occupation and roles within the RCAF. The course must be relevant and staffed with credible instructors that are able to get the most out of the students as they pass through the course. It is an RCAF responsibility to prepare its officers for higher level responsibility within the profession of arms. It is something that cannot be taken lightly and the journey needs to be about education and development rather than just meeting the minimum requirements.

Succession planning and PME are linked and must be considered together in order to develop people within the institution and to better prepare them for the responsibilities of senior appointment within their profession. In the RCAF, with a mandatory retirement age, there is a limited amount of time to achieve the breadth of experience desired for senior leaders. A balance must be found between achieving this breadth of experience desired against the cost to the institution of lost productivity each time a position is changed over. This can happen every 1-2 years within high profile positions in the RCAF and is a cost that is difficult to quantify. There are also gaps in training that were identified, such as in HR and finance, as well as a lack of opportunities for RCAF officers, specifically aircrew, to gain practical leadership experience as a junior officer. These gaps and the absence of leadership opportunities can, in the case of HR and finance, have significant impact on credibility and retention of RCAF personnel. The lack of leadership experience can also cause friction with respect to the leadership challenges faced by senior CAF positions. Finally, the culture in the RCAF has to adapt and raise the bar on PME.

³³ Ibid.

Officers need to take ownership of their own development, as well as that of their subordinates. The education offered by PME must be relevant, credible and timely in the provision of knowledge and skill development that will enable success throughout the members' career.

Succession planning and PME are important aspects of developing the future leaders of any institution. It is the means of ensuring that leaders have the desired breadth of experience, background education and knowledge in order to be effective leaders of the profession.

Succession planning is an effective means of ensuring the availability of a consistent number of qualified people who have the breadth of experience that will allow them to succeed in leading the institution. It is a process applicable to any organization, civilian or military. The RCAF has a very good succession planning process, the objective of which is "to ensure that individuals with the capability to achieve senior appointments are identified, tracked and provided with developmental opportunities very early in their careers. This will ensure the selection and guidance of the most appropriate individuals towards senior command."³⁴ This identification and breadth of experience is, however, not enough to completely develop the leadership needed within the RCAF and CAF. The succession planning process must be matched up with PME in order to provide the background knowledge needed to accompany the practical skills that are gained through experience. PME, like succession planning, is not an RCAF or CAF only endeavour. It is used by militaries the world over, including the US and the UK and has been part of officer development for a very long time as evident by Clausewitz graduating from the Prussian War College in 1803.³⁵ The RCAF has developed a PME program that mixes specific Air Force education with CAF courses that will, together, develop officers throughout their careers.

³⁴ Director General Air Personnel, *Air Force Personnel Management - Officers*

³⁵ Von Clausewitz, *On War*, 8

There are, however, issues associated with succession planning and PME within the RCAF. The mandatory retirement age for CAF personnel translates into reduced developmental and employment time in their career. Training on HR and finance are not included within the RCAF PME program and there is also, due to the required technical expertise within the RCAF, a lack of leadership opportunities for junior officers. The available time a person has within their career means that they must spend minimum time in each position in order to gain the breadth of experience desired by the institution for senior leadership. This can be as little as 1-2 years in any position and the cost of this reduced time is a delay in productivity due to the initial 4-6 months needed to learn the job. To reduce the turmoil in each change of position, the member should remain in the position as long as possible; however, it will be a balance of the breadth of experience desired for the member against the cost that turnover has on the position. The RCAF succession planning and PME is good but there are gaps in the preparation of Air Force officers for the tasks they will face in the future. The gap in HR and finance training can have implications on retention if people are poorly looked after and on credibility if money is mismanaged. Both can be remedied with some timely training on policy and procedures prior to the assumption of duties that will require those skills. Also, leadership opportunities for junior RCAF officers need to be found as there is only so much that can be mastered by studying theory without practical experience. By including these missing items in the development of RCAF officers, they will be better prepared for senior leadership challenges within the profession. Succession planning and PME are constantly developing within the RCAF and CAF. They deserve continued study to ensure that the RCAF is doing everything possible to develop well rounded and competent leadership well into the future.

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