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Military Human Resource Management: A Comparative Analysis Between the Australian Defence Force and the Canadian Forces

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Solo Flight Paper

**Military Human Resource Management: A Comparative Analysis between the Australian
Defence Force and the Canadian Forces**

By SqnLdr Matt Cooper

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HR is the driving force behind what makes a winning team. We make the argument that the team that fields the best players wins. HR is involved in making sure we field the best players. That's their job. And their job is to sit in every meeting, be involved in every part of the business equation. They are not the health and happiness, picnics, benefits team. They're the development team, developing today's and tomorrow's leaders. If you have an organization where HR is relegated to forms and benefits, you got the wrong game going.

- Jack Welch, Chief Executive Officer of General Electric¹

Introduction

The first generation of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices were influenced by Frederick Taylor, a young machinist in a steel company during the late nineteenth century, who developed the theory of Scientific Management which focussed on the efficiencies of production and of the workers.² It wasn't until almost a century later that the now well-known concept of HRM began to emerge as commonplace in organisational practice.³ It is difficult to define HRM within an organisation given the environment in which it can be applied, such as in the public or private sector, any imposed legal framework on the organisation or indeed the purpose of the organisation. At its core, however, HRM focuses on personnel and maximising their potential for the benefit of the organisation,⁴ for it is the personnel that are common to all organisations, large or small. "They create the objectives, the innovations, and the accomplishments for

¹ Jack Welch, *Winning* (New York: Harper Business, 2005)

² Harold R. Pollard, *Developments in Management Thought* (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, Inc., 1974), 3-4.

³ John Storey, "Human resource management today: an assessment," in *Human Resource Management: A Critical Text*, 2nd ed., ed. John Storey (London: Thomson Learning, 2001), 5.

⁴ Alex Alexandrou and Roger Darby, "Human resource management in the defence environment," in *Managing Defence in a Democracy*, ed. Laura R. Cleary and Teri McConville (New York: Routledge, 2006), 168.

which organisations are praised...They are not inanimate resources, such as land and capital; instead, they are human resources.”⁵

In the military, it is the unique nature of the defence ‘product’ and the requirements of its personnel that differentiates the application of HRM from the private sector or from that of other government departments within the public sector. While much has been written on HRM within the private sector, there is only a fraction of academic research on its application to the military. HRM is ultimately a leadership function⁶ and as such, it behoves all military personnel to have a basic understanding of HRM roles and responsibilities given their interaction and impact within the human resource system.

This paper will examine the application of Human Resource Management in a military context, specifically in the Australian Defence Force and the Canadian Forces. This paper will then compare the effectiveness of this application to argue that while the two Defence Forces are relatively equivalent, the Canadian Forces have implemented a slightly superior human resource system despite aged strategic policy. Although there are similarities between the two Defence Forces, it should be noted that comparing the two human resource systems can only be done at a macro level given the many different variables associated with each. To that end, only generic concepts and issues facing the permanent/regular force members of both Defence Forces will be presented in order to provide a relatively common baseline for comparison.

⁵ Herman Schwind, Hari Das and Terry Wagar, *Canadian Human Resource Management: A Strategic Approach*, 5th ed. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, Ltd., 1999), 4.

⁶ Victor Catano, I. Jackson, and D. Macnamara, *A Framework for Effective Human Resource Management in the Canadian Forces* (Ottawa: HDP Report for the Department of National Defence, December 2000), 14.

This paper has been divided into two primary sections: firstly, the application of Human Resource Management in the military, including a review of its strategic application, academic models, the impetus for Human Resource Management change, and issues common to both Defence Forces; secondly, a comparison of the strategic human resource policies, recruiting, and retention aspects of both Defence Forces, with a view to determining the effectiveness of their human resource systems.

Application of HRM in the Military

As modern, technically advanced forces, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and the Canadian Forces (CF) require a range of personnel with various skillsets. While some of these personnel and their expertise can be obtained from the private sector, the majority must be recruited, trained and retained in order to undertake tasks that are specific to the military.⁷ The ADF and CF have four unique characteristics that differentiate them from other organisations: of their numerous roles, one is the exercise and application of violence; some of their constituent components can be further subdivided and then utilised in differing roles, for example a signals regiment that provides military communications could be divided into smaller company elements and employed in a civil aid role; their components are contingent in that they could be directed into action at any time and must therefore be prepared at the call of their respective governments; and their personnel have specific obligations in the conduct of their duties,

⁷ Australian National Audit Office, *Retention of Military Personnel* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2000), 23. Last accessed 10 May 2014, http://www.anao.gov.au/uploads/documents/1999-00_Audit_Report_35.pdf

such as the requirement to risk their own lives and the lives of others in combat.⁸ Such is the nature of HRM in the military that it necessitates a highly controlled and centralised human resource system where decisions are made at the higher levels of the organisation, as compared to what some literature refers to as the ‘line manager’ or Commanding Officer in a military context.⁹ The unique characteristics and the nature of military HRM thus require a specialised application that cannot simply be adopted from other organisations.

Through practices and policies, the primary role of HRM is to “ensure that the organisation’s workforce can accomplish assigned tasks and achieve intended objectives”¹⁰ or simply, “to put the right person in the right job at the right time.”¹¹ However, these practices and policies amount to nothing without some form of strategic framework, such as guidance on the longer-term organisational goals. In the military, HRM is not “a bottom-up approach driven by the needs of individual units but rather a top-down approach, which is aligned with corporate objectives.”¹² The term Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) is therefore used to describe the approach that defines these corporate objectives, and then guides the practices and formulates the

⁸ Lieutenant L.T. Jones, Lieutenant D.J. Murray, and Reverend Associate Professor P.A. McGavin, “Improving the Development and Use of Human Resources in the Australian Defence Force: Key Concepts for Strategic Management,” *Australian Defence Force Journal*, no. 142 (May/June 2000): 14, last accessed 10 May 2014, http://www.adfjournal.adc.edu.au/UserFiles/issues/142%202000%20May_Jun.pdf

⁹ Alan Okros, “Becoming an Employer of Choice: Human Resource Challenges within DND and the CF” in *Public Management of Defence in Canada*, ed. Craig Stone (Toronto: Breakout Educational Network, 2009), 150.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Catano et al, *A Framework for Effective Human Resource Management...*, 15.

policies that produce the necessary personnel with the required competencies.¹³ For the ADF and CF, these corporate objectives could be:

To deliver core services and achieve key objectives by ensuring the required number of skilled, competent, and motivated personnel needed to perform assigned organisational tasks; Ensure that the organisation's outcomes and procedures are consistent with Government policies and statutory obligations that reflect core social values; and maintain motivation and commitment by ensuring that the organisation discharges all legal and moral obligations as an employer.¹⁴

In order to be effective, SHRM should encapsulate the organisation's operating environment, its vision and goals, its culture, and any internal strengths or weaknesses.¹⁵

A number of academic models have subsequently been produced over time to guide HRM in the quest for organisational effectiveness.

Academic Models

Of some of the early academic models of HRM, three could be used as the basis for a human resource system specific to the ADF and CF. It is beyond the scope of this paper to design such a model, although the examination of current models will provide some insight into the complexities of military HRM.

The first model below in Figure 1, the Michigan or matching model, was developed by published authors in the field of HRM, Professor Charles Fombrun, Doctor Noel Tichy and Doctor Mary Anne Devanna in 1984. While simplistic in nature, it highlighted the core requirements of personnel management: use of selection tools to identify viable candidates; appraise personnel performance; develop personnel with the

¹³ Gary Dessler, *A Framework for Human Resource Management*, 7th ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2013), 18.

¹⁴ Okros, "Becoming an Employer of Choice...", 146.

¹⁵ Schwind et al, *Canadian Human Resource Management...*, 23.

skillsets needed for their job; and reward or compensate personnel to maintain their motivation.¹⁶ It was developed to emphasise congruence of organisational strategy and organisational structure, that is, matching HRM policies and practices to the organisation's role.¹⁷ However, the model failed to incorporate stakeholders, environmental factors and “the notion of management's strategic choice.”¹⁸

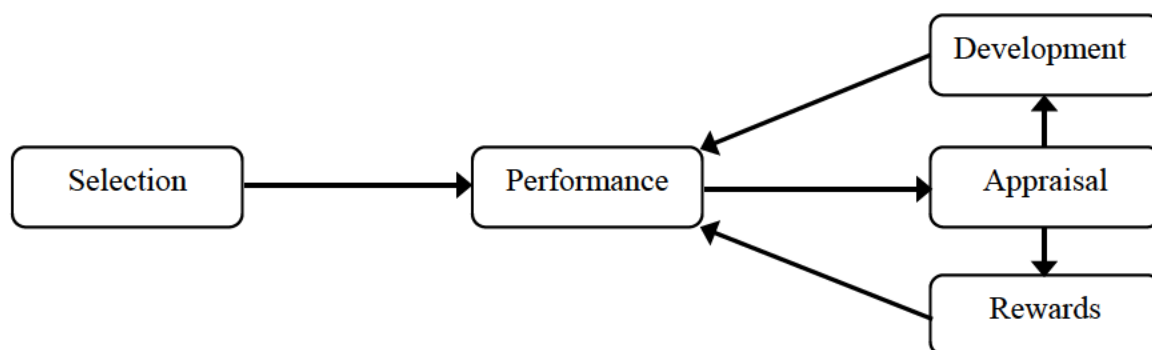


Figure 1 – The Michigan (Matching) Model

Source: Fombrun et al (1984), cited in Bratton and Gold¹⁹

The model also reflects what Professor John Storey, another published author on HRM, has coined as a ‘hard’ model²⁰ which emphasises treating employees as a means to the organisation's ends, that personnel were simply a resource to be used in achieving the organisation's goals. The model perhaps provided a suitable framework for the ADF and CF when HRM was not as predominant as it is today, but it displays a focus on personnel that could no longer be considered acceptable.

The second model below in Figure 2, the Guest model, was developed by Professor David Guest in 1987. With its six components, the model shifted away from

¹⁶ Gary Dessler, *A Framework for Human Resource Management*, 59.

¹⁷ John Bratton and Jeffrey Gold, *Human Resource Management: Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed. (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000), 18.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ John Storey, “Human resource management today...”, 11.

traditional views of HRM as simply personnel management and was perhaps the precursor to SHRM. While this more holistic view was indeed a strength, the model requires the three HRM outcomes of commitment, quality, and flexibility to be achieved if behaviour and performance outcomes are to be realised.²¹

HRM Strategy	HRM Practices	HRM Outcomes	Behaviour Outcomes	Performance Outcomes	Financial Outcomes
Differentiation (Innovation)	Selection	Commitment	Effort / Motivation	High: Productivity Quality Innovation	Profits
	Training				
Focus (Quality)	Appraisal	Quality	Cooperation	Low: Absence Labour turnover Conflict Customer complaint	Return on Investment
	Rewards				
Cost (Cost-reduction)	Job Design	Flexibility	Involvement	Organisational Leadership	
	Involvement				
	Status and Security				

Figure 2 – The Guest Model

Source: Guest (1997), cited in Bratton and Gold²²

While Guest's model is based on that of another author, it is considered a 'soft' model using Storey's terminology, which emphasises "communication, training and development, motivation, culture, values and involvement."²³ It comes closer to an approximation of a model that could be applied to the ADF and CF, yet the constraint of flow from HRM outcomes to behaviour and performance outcomes, plus its lack of stakeholder and environmental inputs leaves it far from ideal. It should also be noted that the model has more of an application in the private sector, given the desired financial outcomes.

²¹ Bratton and Gold, *Human Resource Management...*, 22.

²² *Ibid.*, 21.

²³ *Ibid.*, 22.

The third model below in Figure 3, the Warwick model, was developed by Professors Chris Hendry and Andrew Pettigrew in 1990 at the Centre for Corporate Strategy and Change at the University of Warwick. Again based on a model from another author, it has five elements that incorporate HRM strategy and practices, and includes “the external and internal context in which these activities take place, and the processes by which such change take place, including interactions between changes in both context and content.”²⁴

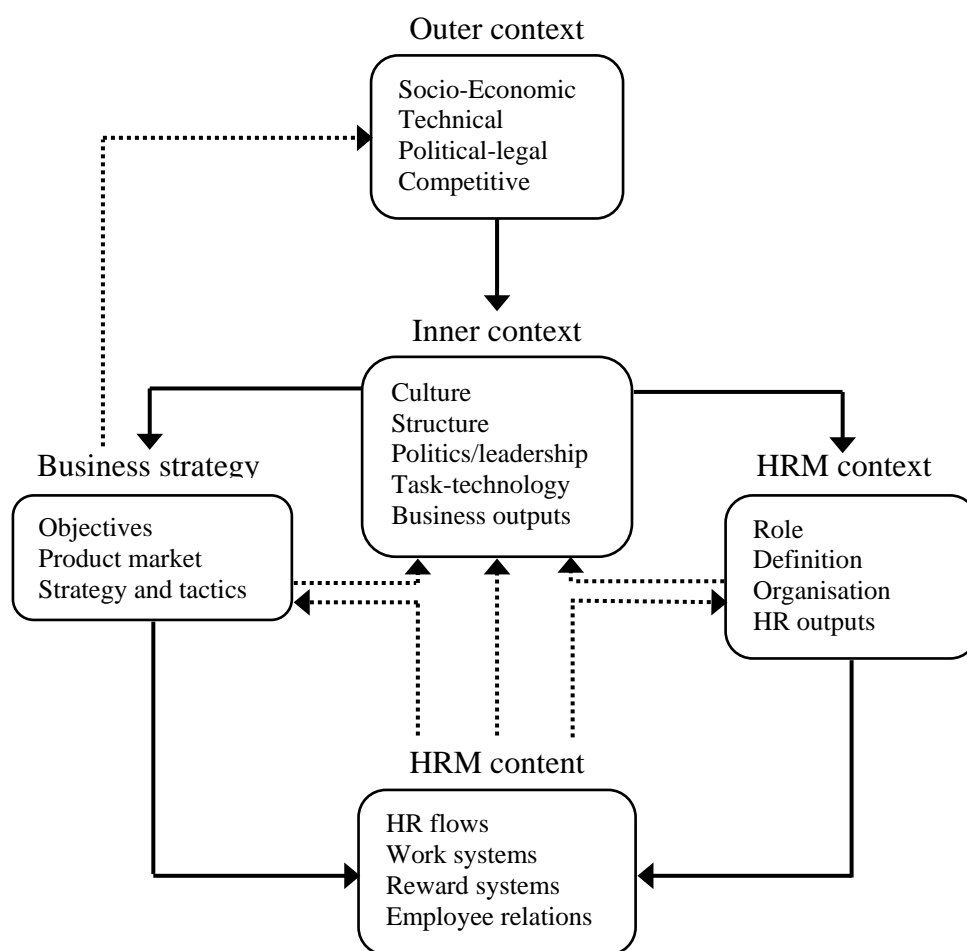


Figure 3 – The Warwick Model

Source: Hendry and Pettigrew (1990), cited in Bratton and Gold²⁵

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

The Warwick model contains those elements lacking in the previous two models, namely external input via the outer context. As an additional strength, it also has a number of feedback loops that arguably would allow an organisation to adapt to changes in context and subsequently foster emergent strategies, where the organisation would have the ability to respond to unplanned events. However, the model does not explicitly explain where the core personnel management aspects, such as selection or appraisal, contribute to the business strategy or outputs.²⁶ Thus, while it perhaps most closely resembles HRM within the ADF and CF, albeit again from a private sector perspective, it still does not provide a complete framework upon which to base a military human resource system.

Impetus for HRM Change

HRM within any organisation, but particularly the military, would appear to be in a constant state of internal conflict, “dominated by the need to recruit and retain the best available talent”²⁷ yet fiscally constrained to a fixed number of personnel. In the past, for both the ADF and the CF, this conflict has been “characterised by a significant decrease in the number of service personnel, overstretch, low morale and difficulties recruiting the next generation.”²⁸ To be effective, however, HRM must maintain a balance between ensuring the needs of personnel and the requirements of the organisation. Arguably, both the ADF and CF have had their watershed moment where the human resource system was unable to maintain this balance and thus organisational change was necessary.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

²⁷ Alexandrou and Darby, “Human resource management in the defence environment”, 157-158.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

The impetus for HRM change is not usually attributed to a single factor, but rather the combination of a number of variables and neither the ADF nor the CF were an exception. For the ADF, this impetus occurred in 2001 as a result of: the highest level of operational activity during peacetime, which included a peacekeeping mission to East Timer and support for the Sydney Olympic and Paralympic Games; significant policy development, including the Government's 2000 Defence White Paper which detailed a new strategic direction for the military, and a Defence Capability Plan which specified investment priorities for the next decade; the conclusion of the Defence Reform Program, a 3 year commitment of resource redistribution to support the military's core functions more efficiently;²⁹ achieving only 79.5% of the recruiting target³⁰, which had been preceded the year before by the lowest recruiting intake for many years;³¹ and a high separation rate of 14%.³² Although organisational change had already commenced in 2001, the compounding issues required a more substantial effort in addressing some of the core personnel management issues, such as adapting recruiting techniques to recognise demographic changes, enhancing the 'image' of the ADF as an employer of choice, and focussing on the retention of highly qualified personnel.

The CF impetus, identified at approximately the same time as that of the ADF, had its genesis several years before in the mid-1990s as of result of downsizing in the Department of National Defence. A report from the Office of the Auditor General to

²⁹ Department of Defence, *Defence Annual Report 2000-01* (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service, 2001), 3. Last accessed 10 May 2014, <http://www.defence.gov.au/budget/00-01/dar/full.pdf>

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 309.

³¹ Department of Defence, *Defence Annual Report 2007-08* (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service, 2008), 107. Last accessed 10 May 2014, http://www.defence.gov.au/budget/07-08/dar/2007-2008/Defence_DAR_13_v1_full.pdf

³² *Ibid.*, 110.

Canada in 2002 stated “a reduced recruiting level, cuts in human resource management, a lack of information to monitor the health of occupations, and limitations in training capacity have contributed to the current problems.”³³ It was identified that human resource managers lacked recruiting and retention information that should be used to guide the development of HRM practices and policies,³⁴ and that attempts had been made to utilise private sector HRM models.³⁵ However, as previously discussed, the application of HRM to an organisation is dependent upon the context, and private sector goals of maximising profit did not translate well into a military organisation seeking to operate on a reduced budget. While the two concepts may sound similar, the military faces an increased emphasis on “accountability, probity and transparency”³⁶ that requires “prudence and equity over risk taking and efficiency.”³⁷ The Auditor General to Canada’s report acknowledged that while initial measures helped to alleviate the issue, such as increasing the recruiting intake, they were insufficient to restore the balance to the human resource system and the report implied a number of recommendations: more resources, in the way of personnel, were required in the recruiting system; efforts within recruiting needed to focus more on diversity such as attracting individuals from minority groups; retention options were the key to keeping experienced and skilled personnel in uniform; and uniformed personnel assigned a HRM role should have experience or training in

³³ Office of the Auditor General. *Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the House of Commons* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2002), Chapter 5, 1. Last accessed 10 May 2014, <http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/docs/O205ce.pdf>

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Okros, “Becoming an Employer of Choice...”, 144.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 143.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 143-144.

human resources.³⁸ In comparison, therefore, the ADF and the CF were prompted to change by completely different factors but, as will be discussed, the future of their respective human resource systems are bound by a number of common issues.

Common Issues

Both Australia and Canada face many rising challenges to their organisations, private and public sector alike. Issues such as globalisation, interaction between generational cohorts, an ageing population and multiculturalism³⁹ are all contributing to a changing labour market, one which the military must compete within in order to recruit a sufficient number of people. An analysis of the Australian labour market indicates that by 2030, there will be a deficiency of approximately 0.5 million workers.⁴⁰ The projected deficiency for Canada by 2031, is between 1.4 million and 3.9 million workers, dependent upon the level of population growth.⁴¹ Obviously, the demand for this depleted workforce will be high and while it is perhaps one of the bigger issues confronting both Defence Forces, it is not the only one. A Canadian Policy Analysis in 2001 identified that in addition to technological changes, organisational practices, operational concepts, and policy frameworks, “governments and businesses are shifting from the old economy to [a] knowledge-based and highly technical future and we cannot meet future defence

³⁸ Office of the Auditor General. *Report of the Auditor General of Canada...*, 1-2.

³⁹ Keith Thomas and Steve Bell, “Competing for the Best and Brightest: Recruitment and Retention in the Australian Defence Force,” *Security Challenges* 3, no. 1 (February 2007): 102, last accessed 10 May 2014, <http://www.securitychallenges.org.au/ArticlePDFs/vol3no1ThomasandBell.pdf>

⁴⁰ Department of Defence, *People in Defence...*, 10.

⁴¹ Rick Miner, *People Without Jobs, Jobs Without People: Canada’s Labour Market Future*, last accessed 10 May 2014, http://www.collegesontario.org/research/other/people_without_jobs_canada.pdf

challenges using the tools of the past.”⁴² Of the social and demographic trends, Gary Dessler, a prolific writer and consultant in areas such as strategic planning, human resource management systems, and executive and management recruiting has stated “what people want from their careers is changing. Baby boomers – those retiring in the next few years – tended to be job- and employer-focussed. People entering the market now often value more opportunities for balanced work-family lives.”⁴³ This generational transition, from Baby Boomers through Generation X to Generation Y poses some interesting challenges for personnel management. For example, Baby Boomers “believe in sacrifice in order to achieve success”⁴⁴, Generation X are “independent and resourceful with [a] free agent approach to careers”⁴⁵, and Generation Y place “[a] high value on education and skill development.”⁴⁶ Ensuring that a human resource system is capable of meeting the varying requirements and attitudes of its personnel will necessitate a number of specific strategic policies with a view towards the future.

Comparison of the Effectiveness of HRM in the ADF and CF

The ADF has been subject to three strategic human resource policies within the past five years, targeting both the civilian and military aspects of Defence: *People in Defence: Generating the Capability for the Future Force*, the *Annual People Plan 2011-12*, and the *2012-17 Defence Corporate Plan*. In comparison, the CF has also been

⁴² Department of National Defence, *Policy Analysis and the Canadian Forces Military Occupational Structure (MOS)* (Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 2001), 18.

⁴³ Gary Dessler, *Fundamentals of Human Resource Management*, 3rd ed. (New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2014), 243.

⁴⁴ Thomas and Bell, “Competing for the Best and Brightest...”, 103.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

subject to three strategic human resource policies, although these date back to 1999, 2001 and 2002 respectively: *Shaping the Future of the Canadian Forces: A Strategy for 2020*, *People in Defence: Beyond 2000* and *Military HR Strategy 2020*. A fourth policy, *Horizon One: Civilian HR Strategy 2003-2005*, appears to target only the civilian aspect of Defence. In the context of this paper, only those strategic policies as issued at the Government or Departmental level are being considered, recognising that a number of additional policies have been generated from the respective Chief of Defence Force/Chief of the Defence Staff level and below. As a starting point for comparison, however, it is necessary to review the basis on which policy is formulated and implemented.

Strategy formulation and implementation from a human resources perspective consists of a number of steps: (1) an analysis of the environmental threats and opportunities, such as the changing demographics of society or governmental policy changes; (2) development of a mission statement, which defines the essence of an organisation, what the organisation does, and the future direction of the organisation; (3) an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and its culture; (4) an analysis of organisational strategies. While the academic literature offers example strategies of a business nature, concepts such as leadership or operational focus could be applied to the military; (5) selection of a strategy and the directing of resources, both within and external to the organisation; and (6) periodic review of the strategy, with identifiable performance indicators to ensure it remains valid.⁴⁷

The ADF has received a comprehensive suite of strategic policies with distinct recognition of the ‘people aspect’ of Defence. In 2009, the Australian Government

⁴⁷ Schwind et al, *Canadian Human Resource Management...*, 23-31.

released the Defence White Paper which satisfied three steps of the aforementioned strategy formulation and implementation process, namely it provided an analysis of threats and opportunities, a mission statement, and an analysis of the organisation's strengths and weaknesses including its culture. While a Defence White Paper and subsequent update were released in 2000 and 2003 respectively, there appears to be a lack of human resource policy prior to 2009 which could indicate that it took several years for the ADF to implement organisational change or that simply, such policy is not readily available. The 2009 Defence White Paper, however, was the capstone document upon which the remaining strategic policies were crafted. *People in Defence: Generating the Capability for the Future Force* identifies that "People are at the heart of Defence capability and attracting and retaining the future workforce is one of [the] most significant challenges."⁴⁸ Its purpose is to "[identify] what success will look like for our people and [work] out ways to achieve that success," subsequently providing an analysis of organisational strategies and identifying performance indicators to gauge that success. While the policy does not explicitly direct the use of resources, it contains a brief area on implementation which details deliverable dates, including a period of review.⁴⁹ The *Annual People Plan 2011-12* is an extension of the *People in Defence* policy, and is "the key planning document for Human Resource development across Defence" and "the implementation plan to support Defence's delivery of our People Vision."⁵⁰ It provides the detail regarding resources lacking from its parent policy and was subsequently

⁴⁸ Department of Defence, *People in Defence: Generating the Capability for the Future Force* (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service, 2009), 1.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 20-22.

⁵⁰ Department of Defence, *Annual People Plan 2011-12: Implementing the Vision of People in Defence* (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service, 2011), 3.

followed by a review twelve months later. The final strategic policy, *2012-17 Defence Corporate Plan*, is more holistic in nature and hence does not provide as much of a specific focus on human resources. It does not analyse organisational strategies nor direct resources, but it does specify goals, strategic targets and key strategies for four of ten Defence outputs.⁵¹ Therefore, the suite of ADF strategic human resource policies not only follow the formulation and implementation process, they expand on the concept by identifying the link from HRM to the organisation's mission.

The CF has progressed down a different path, predominantly due to the publication dates of its strategic policies, but that is not to say that the end result is any different. The Canadian Government last released a Defence White Paper in 1994 which, similar to Australia, satisfied the same three steps of the strategy formulation and implementation process. While the *Canada First Defence Strategy* was released in 2009, it lacks sufficient details with no follow-on strategic policies to be used in the human resource management context. *Shaping the Future of the Canadian Forces: A Strategy for 2020* was designed with the Defence White Paper as its foundation⁵², yet it progresses further than the Australian *People in Defence* by meeting five of the six formulation and implementation steps. Its deficiency is in the explicit direction of resources, although again like its Australia counterpart, it too contains a brief area on implementation.⁵³ *People in Defence: Beyond 2000* is an extension of the *Strategy 2020* policy, and its purpose is "to provide a [human resources] response to the strategy that will guide us in

⁵¹ Department of Defence, *2012-17 Defence Corporate Plan* (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service, 2012), 18, 34-37. Last accessed 10 May 2014, http://www.defence.gov.au/publications/DCP2012_17.pdf

⁵² Department of National Defence, *Shaping the Future of the Canadian Forces: A Strategy for 2020* (Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 1999), 1. Last accessed 10 May 2014, <http://www.cds-cemd.forces.gc.ca/doc/str2020-eng.doc>

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 19.

providing the important people dimension needed to make it work.”⁵⁴ Unfortunately, it does not provide any specific details on resourcing, although it does articulate a number of additional objectives to those proposed in *Strategy 2020*. The final strategic policy, *Military HR Strategy 2020*, is an extension and update of *People in Defence: Beyond 2000*. It was developed to “address a range of plausible human resource scenarios that elaborate further upon the future [human resource] context...”⁵⁵ As such, while it arguably provides an analysis of the environmental threats, opportunities and organisational strategies, it does so on a hypothetical basis through the scenarios it presents. Therefore, similar to the policies of ADF, the CF strategic human resource policies not only follow the formulation and implementation process, they expand on the concept. In this instance, the inclusion of the hypothetical scenarios allows the CF to prepare for multiple contingencies in a human resource context, and hence perhaps could be considered emergent strategy.

Recruiting

If HRM involves the practices and policies concerned with the management of personnel, then it is the selection and recruitment process that represent one of two key aspects. The other aspect, retention, will be discussed later. The role of the recruitment process is to attract capable applicants into a “pool of high-quality candidates.”⁵⁶ The selection process then is a series of steps used to identify which of those candidates meets

⁵⁴ Department of National Defence, *People in Defence: Beyond 2000* (Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 2000), 2.

⁵⁵ Department of National Defence, *Military HR Strategy 2020: Facing the People Challenges of the Future* (Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 2002), 1, last accessed 10 May 2014, http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/dn-nd/D2-139-2002-eng.pdf

⁵⁶ Schwind et al, *Canadian Human Resource Management...*, 29.

the required baseline standard and possesses those characteristics and qualities aligned with Defence values. A review of the ADF and CF recruiting websites,^{57,58} perhaps the spearhead of the recruiting process, indicates they are comparable in the strength and quality of the information provided. Applications can be made online, high priority positions are highlighted, equity and diversity links are provided, and a wealth of information on the recruitment process and subsequent military career is available. The CF website has taken one step further, however, and provided information for the family of potential candidates. This would indicate a better grasp on the changing demographics and the incorporation of Generation Y into the workforce, given parental involvement in Generation Y decision making.⁵⁹ The CF's initial exposure via their recruiting website is therefore assessed as slightly more advanced than its ADF counterpart.

Historically, recruitment has been viewed solely as a human resource problem or a failure of human resources when in fact, it is a failing in senior leadership.⁶⁰ A lack of strategic planning or a lack of integration between a human resource system and senior leadership simply compound the issues affecting military HRM. However, both the ADF and CF have a strong leadership commitment to HRM, as evidenced by the content of their respective strategic policies. The ADF recognises that a common vision and a blueprint outlining key strategies are necessary to improve outcomes for Defence personnel.⁶¹ Similarly, the CF recognises that “the vision, flexibility and adaptability of leadership are integral to the development and sustainment of an operationally effective

⁵⁷ ADF - <http://www.defencejobs.gov.au/>

⁵⁸ CF - <http://www.forces.ca/en/home/>

⁵⁹ Permanent Search Group, “Generation Y: The Millennials – Ready or not, here they come,” last accessed 10 May 2014, <http://www.permanentsearch.com/designedit/upload/GenerationY.pdf>

⁶⁰ Catano et al, *A Framework for Effective Human Resource Management...*, 26.

⁶¹ Department of Defence, *People in Defence...*, 1.

CF culture.”⁶² Hence in comparison, both Defence Forces have transitioned away from historical organisational structures where human resources was separate, to that of an integrated human resource system with senior leadership and therefore can be considered on par.

The ADF and CF are considered as a closed labour market, that is, they rely upon personnel entering at the lower levels and through promotion, progress towards the higher levels of the organisation.⁶³ Subsequently, vacancies in higher positions or personnel shortages thus pose a unique problem for a military human resource system.⁶⁴ In order to attract potential recruits, particularly in light of some of the common issues discussed previously, the ADF and CF will need to provide “interesting and meaningful work and a supportive environment as well as good pay and promotion and development prospects.”⁶⁵ This has certainly been identified in the ADF’s *2012-17 Defence Corporate Plan* which states “Defence will need to find innovative ways to sustain the competitiveness of its employment offer and be more agile and focussed in developing available talent...”⁶⁶ Although the CF’s *Military HR Strategy 2020* does propose a recruitment strategy, there is no reference to an interesting work environment, or good promotion and development prospects. Instead, it states:

[CF] recruitment is sustained by images of an organisation that: is relevant to individuals and communities in Canadian society; solicits membership based upon valid, reliable, transparent and defensible military requirements (both current and projected); and maintains continuous contact with

⁶² Department of National Defence, *Military HR Strategy 2020...*, 4.

⁶³ Okros, “Becoming an Employer of Choice...”, 166.

⁶⁴ Office of the Auditor General. *Report of the Auditor General of Canada...*, 3.

⁶⁵ Bratton and Gold, *Human Resource Management...*, 195.

⁶⁶ Department of Defence, *2012-17 Defence Corporate Plan*, 34.

Canadians through competent, professional recruiting staff and the use of the most relevant media options available.⁶⁷

Arguably, the CF's recruitment strategy is dated and has yet to address the changing labour market. Subsequently, the ADF could be considered more advanced and aligned with the labour market.

One final area of comparison between recruitment within the ADF and the CF can be made from recruitment statistics, as shown in Table 1 below. It should be noted that the Fiscal Year for the ADF is not yet complete for 2013/2014, so the figures have been adjusted accordingly.

Table 1 – ADF and CF Recruitment Statistics

Fiscal Year	ADF			CF		
	Target	Actual	Percentage	Target	Actual	Percentage
07/08	7412	6013	81.1	6865	6716	97.8
08/09	7139	5635	78.9	7995	7701	96.3
09/10	6063	5675	93.6	7454	7552	100.9
10/11	4731	4430	93.6	4724	4806	101.7
11/12	4093	3741	91.4	4202	3718	88.4
12/13	4930	4363	88.5	4686	4573	97.5
13/14	4341	4087	94.1	5042	4392	87.1

Source: ADF – Defence People Group, Defence Force Recruiting Achievement⁶⁸
 CF – Production Attrition Recruiting Retention Analysis⁶⁹

Three hypotheses can be drawn from the statistics: firstly and the most obvious, is that the CF recruitment process has been more effective in meeting recruitment targets; secondly, the introduction of ADF strategic human resource policy in 2009 appears to have had a positive effect in meeting recruitment targets; and thirdly, in

⁶⁷ Department of National Defence, *Military HR Strategy 2020...*, 16.

⁶⁸ ADF - <http://intranet.defence.gov.au/People/sites/DFR/ComWeb.asp?page=50969>

⁶⁹ CF - <http://cmp-cpm.forces.mil.ca/index-eng.asp>

contrast, despite aged strategic human resource policies, there does not appear to have been any noticeable impact on meeting CF recruitment targets. In fact, the over achievement of targets during the 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 fiscal years would indicate a highly successful recruiting process.

On the whole, examination of the ADF and CF recruitment strategies and processes at a macro level indicate that the CF human resource system is more effective in providing information to potential candidates and meeting yearly recruitment targets.

Retention

Retention strategies are the second key aspect of HRM practices and policies. With the changing labour market, candidates seeking employment no longer expect to have “cradle to grave careers or jobs”⁷⁰ and thus the focus of retention needs to adjust accordingly. As the cost of losing experienced personnel is high, managing voluntary separation from the Defence Forces is an important HRM task. Using the effective strength of the ADF and CF as an example, a one percent improvement in recruitment will produce approximately six to seven hundred candidates while conversely, a one percent increase in retention has two outcomes: firstly, it retains six to seven hundred experienced personnel and secondly, six to seven hundred less inexperienced candidates need to be recruited to maintain the effective strength. Thus simplistically, a one percent

⁷⁰ Catano et al, *A Framework for Effective Human Resource Management...*, 21.

increase in retention effectiveness translates to a net benefit of over one thousand personnel.⁷¹ The question is therefore, how do you retain personnel?

Experts from the consulting company Development Dimensions International and from the employment firm Robert Half International have suggested retention strategies need to be based on: selection, professional growth, career management, meaningful work, recognition and rewards, culture and environment and a work/life balance.⁷² As part of its human resource strategy, the ADF offers:

When you join the ADF you have access to a comprehensive range of benefits and support services across all aspects of your life. This allows you to build your career, provides competitive pay and conditions, plus opportunities to train and retrain and the potential to generate long term economic stability. You will be looked after, challenged and encouraged to grow professionally and personally.⁷³

A key deliverable as part of this strategy is to “develop a Defence culture that values the contribution of its people and allows them to pursue rewarding careers.”⁷⁴ Therefore, if selection is achieved as part of the recruitment process and a work/life balance is accepted as implicit, ADF strategic policy meets the aforementioned retention strategies. The CF divides its human resource strategy into twelve components, but those of direct applicability are: culture, communication, consultation, retention, professional development, transition, health, and well-being.⁷⁵ These components include guidance such as: “leadership in the CF accepts accountability for developing and fostering an open and positive culture...”; “this networked strategy will integrate methods for soliciting and managing feedback, evaluating effectiveness, and facilitating open and timely

⁷¹ Thomas and Bell, “Competing for the Best and Brightest...”, 101-102.

⁷² Gary Dessler, *A Framework for Human Resource Management*, 237.

⁷³ Department of Defence, *People in Defence...*, 7.

⁷⁴ Department of Defence, *Annual People Plan 2011-12...*, 6.

⁷⁵ Department of National Defence, *Military HR Strategy 2020...*, 15-17.

communication...”; “the CF...will be an environment conducive to retention under a fully integrated [human resources] framework that balances individual and organisational interests”; “[professional development] must be accessible to all CF members, of high quality, and tailored to suit the needs of individuals...”; and “...the CF strives to provide flexible career options and a competitive combination of benefits and non-financial honours, awards, and recognition.”⁷⁶ Again, if selection is a component of recruitment and meaningful work is accepted as implicit, the CF strategic policy also meets the retention strategies previously described. The next question is, how effective have these retention strategies been?

Table 2 below provides the number of personnel who separated from the ADF and CF, either voluntarily, involuntarily, through retirement or as trainees who failed to meet initial employment standards.

Table 2 – ADF and CF Separation Rates

Fiscal Year	ADF		CF	
	Personnel	Separation Rate	Personnel	Separation Rate
07/08	5112	9.8%	6088	9.1%
08/09	5043	9.4%	6217	8.9%
09/10	4000	7.1%	5293	7.6%
10/11	4578	7.9%	4691	6.7%
11/12	5150	9.1%	4248	6.1%
12/13	5611	9.9%	4606	7.2%

Source: ADF – Defence Annual Reports⁷⁷
 CF - Production Attrition Recruiting Retention Analysis⁷⁸

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ ADF - <http://www.defence.gov.au/annualreports/>

⁷⁸ CF - <http://cmp-cpm.forces.mil.ca/index-eng.asp>

Separation rates by themselves are not indicative of a problem per se, unless of course the number of personnel voluntarily leaving the Defence Force exceeds the recruitment intake for the fiscal year as an unplanned event. Two hypotheses can be drawn from the statistics: firstly, the Global Financial Crisis of 2007/2008 may have resulted in the decrease in separation rates over subsequent years with personnel electing to remain in the Defence Forces due to a lack of alternate employment opportunities; and secondly, the ADF has had a net loss of personnel from 2010 onwards, but this is in line with “recruiting and retention initiatives undertaken by Defence since 2006...”⁷⁹

Reasons for voluntary separation range from inadequate career progression and poor job satisfaction to the adverse effects of constant relocation on family life. Given the comparable retention strategies and the separation statistics above, the ADF and the CF retention component of their human resource systems can be considered on par.

Conclusion

In summary, while the Australian Defence Force and the Canadian Forces are comparatively similar in their application of Human Resource Management, the Canadian Forces have implemented a slightly superior human resource system.

Both the ADF and the CF have adopted SHRM by incorporating their operating environments, mission statements, culture, and strengths and weaknesses into their human resource practices and policies. Their uniqueness as military forces has necessitated a specialised human resource system that cannot simply be transplanted from private or other public sector organisations.

⁷⁹ Department of Defence, *Annual People Plan 2011-12...*, 10.

Three academic models of HRM were examined to determine their applicability to military HRM: the Michigan model, the Guest model and the Warwick model. As the field of HRM developed, these models became progressively more advanced and incorporated elements that would have an effect on the human resource system, such as external stakeholders or environmental factors. While they may have provided the basis for earlier military human resource systems, each was deficient in encapsulating the complexities of the military process.

HRM within the ADF and CF has arguably come a long way since its humble origins, yet perhaps imbued with a resistance to change, each Defence Force required an impetus to change. While this impetus was different between the two, it ultimately helped to foster the human resource system in place today. With rising challenges to private and public sector organisations, these human resource systems are now bound by a number of common issues. Social and demographic changes will require strategic policies with a view towards the future if the ADF and CF are to compete effectively for a dwindling personnel resource in their respective labour markets.

To be effective in a human resource context, these strategies should be developed following a strategy formulation and implementation process. A comparison of the existing ADF and CF human resource strategies revealed that they exceed this 'requirement', and while CF strategic policy is dated, the use of hypothetical scenarios compensates for what could be considered a deficiency. In this respect, the ADF and CF are on equal footing.

With regards to recruitment, both Defence Forces have embraced the role of human resources in the larger organisation with their human resource systems closely intertwined with senior leadership. By way of comparison, the ADF has more recent

strategic policy than that of the CF, yet the CF appears more in-tune with the social demographic through their recruiting website. Along the same lines, the ADF acknowledges this social demographic and has a better grasp on the labour market, yet there has been no significant impact on CF recruiting as observed in the recruiting statistics. In this respect, the CF human resource system is considered more effective in recruitment than its ADF counterpart.

Finally, with regards to retention, potential candidates seeking a military career are no longer expecting to remain in the Defence Forces. Retention strategies from both the ADF and the CF acknowledge this shift in focus and have maintained control of voluntary separation rates for several years as indicated by the separation statistics. While the Global Financial Crisis may have assisted the effect of these retention strategies, the ADF and CF are also on equal footing in this regard.

When viewing the ADF and CF human resource systems holistically, therefore, both seem prepared for the personnel challenges in the immediate future. Each has taken a slightly different approach to HRM, be it through current policies or more effective communication of information, but ultimately the improved recruitment statistics and provision of information suggest the CF has implemented a slightly superior human resource system.

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