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SAPRE AUDE: TOWARD A CANSOF OFFICER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL

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DEVELOPMENT MODEL**

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ABSTRACT

In Special Operations the most important tool is the operator. Although mantras about the centrality of people in the Profession of Arms are abound, nowhere outside of Special Operations is the human taken so seriously. It is the first SOF Truth: *The Human is More Important than the Hardware*. The science and analysis that form the foundation of Special Operations selection and the effort taken to subsequently train and indoctrinate the successful into their chosen vocations are testament to this truth. Yet, this examination is critical of the steps taken after basic operator training to continue honing our operators, and specifically, the Special Operations officer corps. The paper is forthright in its assertion that the current Special Operations Forces officer professional development model is sub-optimal. This is not leveled as an accusation, but instead it points to the self-evident: Special Operations officers advance within the bounds of their service and branch professional development models, which do not account for the needs of the Special Operations Branch. This paper demonstrates that a bespoke solution for operator-officer development would benefit Canadian Special Operations Forces Command by sharpening its value proposition to the Canadian Armed Force and Government of Canada's National Security apparatus.

The second and third chapters are foundational. They provide the reader with an overview of the contemporary and future security environments, the Theories of Special Operations and condensed synopsis the Canadian Armed Forces Professional Development System.

The fourth and fifth chapters offer professional development opportunities and career/talent management alternatives based on emerging bodies of thought on military human resource management.

The conclusion offers a succinct compilation of recommendations and areas for future study within the professional development domain.

This paper is the first open dialogue addressing Canadian Special Operations Forces Officer Professional Development. As such, it does not attempt to provide the Canadian Special Operations Forces with a panacea solution to the professional development conundrums nor the associated career management challenges for operator-officers. Instead, this monograph attempts to open the discourse by leveraging key concepts that have emerged from the United States Special Operations Command – specifically United States Army Special Operations and US Naval Special Warfare. Additionally, this paper provides a survey of options to supplement, augment and ameliorate the current approaches to SOF-officer professional development.

Sapre Aude

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Professional Development is usually defined as how an individual can get better at the job to which they are assigned, primarily through the established military training and education schools and for the larger army this may well be appropriate. In the context of Special Operations, however, Professional Development is not a separate category from your initial training; it is the most effective tool you possess to counteract a rapidly evolving problem set.

-Preston B. Cline
Discussing the Future Professional Development the US Army Special Operations
Command

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM) is quickly closing on its tenth anniversary. In the short time since its creation in February 2006 it has steadfastly worked to accomplish its mandate to provide the “necessary focus and oversight for all Canadian Special Operations Forces (CANSOF).”¹ Excellence on operations has historically been a hallmark of the Canadian Special Operations Forces (SOF) since the Second World War, and permanently since the formation of Joint Task Force Two (JTF 2) in 1993 and the remainder of the Command thirteen years later.² However, the establishment CANSOFCOM demands excellence that transcends operations into the corporate and institutional activities of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). Vice-Admiral (Retired) Greg Maddison inferred this when he described CANSOFCOM as a “one stop shop” for all things Canadian SOF.³ Furthermore, the essence of this mandate is articulated in CANSOFCOM’s five strategic tasks that span the spectrum of force generation, development, employment, sustainment and management activities.⁴ This places

¹ D Michael Day and Bernd Horn, “Canadian Special Operations Forces Command: The Maturation of a National Capability,” *Canadian Military Journal* 10, No 4 (2010): 69.

² For a more fulsome history of Canadian SOF see Sean B. Maloney, “Who Has Seen the Wind? A Historical Overview of Canadian Special Operations.” *Casting Light on the Shadows: Canadian Perspectives on Special Operations Forces*. Eds by Bernd Horn and Tony Balasevicius. (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2007) or Bernd Horn, *We Will Find A Way: Understanding the Legacy of Canadian Special Operations Forces*. (Tampa: JSOU Press, 2012).

³ Maddison, Greg. "CANSOF and the CF: A Shared Framework." Vanguard Magazine. Accessed 12 Feb 2015, <http://vanguardcanada.com/cansof-and-the-cf-a-shared-framework/>

⁴ Canada. Department of National Defence. "Special Operations Forces." *Canadian Special Operations Forces Command*. Accessed 24 March 2015, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/operations-special-forces/index.page>.

CANSOFCOM in an exceptional position as it executes the force employment and sustainment roles of an operational-level Command while maintaining the force generation, development and management activities of the Services. Although these obligations may at times challenge the relatively small staff capacity within CANSOFCOM headquarters, they also provide CANSOF with unique opportunities. This research focuses on the opportunities related to the professional development of its members. One potentially obvious advantage is the rapid incorporation of lessons learned from operations into individual and collective training. This is accomplished as a consequence of the short feedback loops resulting from the flat structure of CANSOFCOM. However, professional development is more comprehensive than training. It encompasses individual training and education (IT&E), employment experience and self-development.⁵ Additionally, this seeming advantage can be challenging as the Command must weigh its desired professional development requirements with those mandated by the Services. Lieutenant-General Michael Day and Colonel Bernd Horn described CANSOFCOM as a “*de facto* fourth service” and, at the risk of overstating the problem, this quasi-status as a proto-service can present as a handicap because the *de jure* services maintain control over some CANSOFCOM members’ careers; ultimately driving their professional development requirements.⁶

The five strategic tasks articulated by CANSOFCOM are to 1) provide advice on special operations to the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and other CAF Operational Commanders; 2) to generate deployable, high-readiness SOF capable of deploying as a part of a broader CAF operation, or independently; 3) to conduct and command SOF operations on behalf of the CDS; 4) continuously develop SOF capabilities and tactics; 5) to maintain and promote relationships with Canadian

security partners and allied SOF. Force generation (FG), development (FD), employment (FE), sustainment (FS) and management (FM).

⁵ Canada. Department of National Defence. A-PD-055-022/PP-003 *Canadian Forces Officer General Specification*. Chief of Military Personnel, 2013, 2-1.

⁶ Day & Horn, “Canadian Special Operations Forces Command: The Maturation of a National Capability,” 69.

As a result of these divergent professional development requirements and potential personnel management issues, Commander CANSOFCOM, through the Assistant Chief of Military Personnel (A/CMP), created two new Military Employment Structures (MES) for Non-commissioned members: the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Operator and the Special Forces (SF) Operator.⁷ Additional analysis by Canadian Special Operations Training Centre is nearing completion and will establish a SOF annex to the Canadian Armed Forces Non-commissioned member General Specification (NCMGS) to consolidate the requirements of SOF NCMs that are not adequately addressed within the common or environmental service performance requirements.⁸ The development of SOF-specific Non-commissioned member requirements is demonstrative of a delta between General Purpose and Special Operations Forces professional development requirements. If the requirements of SOF Non-commissioned members are necessarily different than those expected of their General Purpose Force (GPF) counterparts, then it stands to reason that the SOF officer corps also has unique requirements that are not sufficiently addressed within their parent service and trade professional development regimes. No similar venture is being pursued for CANSOF's officers.⁹

For CANSOF officers the situation is somewhat complicated by the fact that there is no military occupation for SOF officers and nor has a specific requirement been identified.

⁷ Kiropoulos, S. and Mike Gauley. "Special Operations Forces Operator Occupation Study Sponsor Advisory Group III Presentation." n.p., presented 28 May 2012. For example, the Problem Definition Paper prepared by staff at Director Personnel Generation Requirements (DPGR) identified eight issues within the Canadian Special Operations Regiment (CSOR) that could be resolved through a unique SF Operator MES. These included personnel tempo management, recruiting, retention, return on investment (based on the cost of training SOF personnel), career management, career progression and succession planning.

⁸ Canada. Canadian Special Operations Forces Command. *Draft Non-Commissioned Member General Specification - Special Operations Requirements*. (Ottawa, 2014).

⁹ For the purposes of this examination SOF officers are those members of JTF 2, CJIRU and CSOR that have completed the Special Operations Assaulter Course, Special Forces Course, or the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Operator Initial Entry Training.

The intention of this paper is not suggest that a SOF officer MES framework be developed; particularly given the relatively small number of officers that have been awarded SOF qualifications. However, several senior officers within CANSOFCOM have articulated a desire for a professional development system that better prepares operator-officers for service within SOF and brings further predictability to their chosen career path.¹⁰ It is with this aspiration in mind that this paper explores several questions. First, this research will investigate and establish whether distinct professional development requirements for SOF officers exist beyond the measures that are currently taken within CANSOFCOM. Second, it will examine allied models that are currently being used for the development of SOF officers. Lastly, this research endeavours to identify enabling activities that can strengthen and ameliorate SOF officer career management. Ultimately, this research intends to establish that a unique CANSOFCOM officer professional development model should be adopted to address the distinctive operational environment and tasks that SOF officers confront. Furthermore, it offers supporting recommendations *vis-à-vis* SOF officer career management practices – particularly as it pertains to succession planning and talent management.

In completing this research numerous sources were consulted. On the subject of SOF in the contemporary operating environment the study relied heavily on United States (US) doctrine in addition to multi-disciplinary academic research into the nature of Special Operations. In weighing the requirement for a distinct SOF officer professional development regime and career management instruments in the Canadian Armed Forces several sources were consulted including include Canadian Armed Forces doctrine and personnel management policies; allied professional development publications; consultations

¹⁰ Discussion between author with senior CANSOF officers.

with senior CANSOFCOM and allied SOF leadership; private sector Human Resource (HR) Management practices; academic research; and previously published Professional Military Education (PME) papers.

In short, it is the people who make SOF special, not their missions, equipment or training. Although the absence of special missions would eliminate the need for special men, the hallmark of SOF are the operators, not their tasks. It is these operator qualities that – the specialness of the people – that allow SOF to do the things that other military components could not do, were not allowed to do, or would not do. The quality and caliber of its personnel thus are the core value of SOF. This value is captured in the SOF truth: “People are more important than hardware.”

-Jessica Glicken Turnley,
*Retaining Precarious Value as Special Operations Go Mainstream*¹¹

CHAPTER 2 – FUTURE SECURITY CHALLENGES AND THE NATURE OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS

SOF History: A Very Short Course

Before investigating a distinct professional development regime for CANSOFCOM officers it is instructive to understand the nature of special operations and how they differ from those of the General Purpose Force.¹² A very brief survey of the internet, or a book store, rapidly results in a plethora of material that discusses special operations.¹³ Unfortunately, the mainstream characterisation of SOF is fraught with exaggeration, sensationalism, and inaccuracy or speculation. Many articles are replete with boilerplate information summarising doctrinal axioms that are sufficiently vague as to render them useless. As one strategist noted, “one may have noticed that although there is an abundance of literature on the unconventional derring-do of SOF, discussion of their strategic value is all but non-existent.”¹⁴ The shortage of accessible and accurate information concerning SOF fosters neither a positive image nor explains the utility of SOF to other military or civil organisations. The result is that the realised potential of SOF is oft discounted and

¹¹ Turnley, Jessica G. *Retaining a Precarious Value as Special Operations Go Mainstream*. (Tampa: JSOU Press, 2008), 8.

¹² The terms General Purpose Forces and Conventional Forces are used interchangeably throughout this monograph.

¹³ Some 58 million returns were made by Google in .54 secs on March 14, 2015.

¹⁴ Colin S Gray, *Another Bloody Century*. (London: Winston & Nicolson, 2005), 252.

disparaged. This phenomenon is not exclusive to contemporary SOF.¹⁵ In fact, SOF have been traditionally contested. Since antiquity, SOF, or what might now be labelled SOF, have been created temporarily to address unique or unusual problem sets that required solutions not readily apparent or available in conventional forces and were subsequently disbanded after their services were no longer required.¹⁶ In fact, until the restoration of the United Kingdom's 22nd Special Air Service (22SAS) in 1950, SOF had no place within the permanent peacetime military establishment of any Western nations despite the arguably crucial roles that it played in earlier conflicts.¹⁷

The opinion and argument that SOF are an unnecessary commodity was well articulated by Field Marshall Sir William Slim, who led the British forces in Burma during the Second World War, when he wrote that “formations, trained, equipped and mentally adjusted for one kind of operation only, were wasteful. They did not give, militarily, a worthwhile return for the resources in men, materiel, and the time that they absorbed.”¹⁸ Additionally, Slim had several grievances with the concept of Special Forces that stretched from his disdain for “skimming,” or simply stated, the recruitment of only the most talented soldiers from regular units, to the seeming absence of oversight and accountability of SOF organisations. Slim felt that “any well trained infantry battalion should be able to do what a

¹⁵ Derek Leebaert, *To Dare & To Conquer: Special Operations and the Destiny of Nations, from Achilles to Al Qaeda*. (New York: First Back Bay, 2007). For a short, but interesting discussion on the History of SOF and operators see Chapter 1: Who Dares Wins, 17-39.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ The British Special Air Service was disbanded on the 5th of October 1945. After some deliberation in the British Army it was decided that a long-range raiding unit should be established and 21 SAS was formed as a part of the British Territorial Army. The SAS was re-established within the regular army by Colonel Michael Calvert in 1950 during the Malayan Emergency, but would not be formally recognised on the British order of battle until 1952, see Anthony Kemp, *The SAS: The Savage Wars of Peace 1947 to the Present*. (London: J. Murray, 1994). Furthermore, in the US, the Office of Strategic Services, charged primarily with unconventional warfare in the European and Indochinese theatres of operation was deactivated in 1946. On the 19th of June 1952 the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) became the first SOF unit allocated to the regular army of the US commanded by Colonel Aaron Bank. For a more detailed history see Colonel (Ret'd) Aaron Bank, *From OSS to Green Berets: The Birth of the Special Forces*. (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1986).

¹⁸ *Field Marshall Sir William Slim, Defeat into Victory*. (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000), 546.

commando can do.”¹⁹ This experience is illustrative of the historical Canadian view on SOF. Interestingly, many of the criticisms leveled by Slim in 1956 continue to be cited by contemporary military commanders, public servants and politicians who question the necessity of such organisations.²⁰ Additionally, the view that well trained General Purpose Forces can conduct special operations seems to have some merit when viewed through the lens of the counterinsurgency campaigns of the Afghan and Iraq Wars. Certainly, the demands of the wars led to conventional force units being employed in what has been portrayed as “traditionally” SOF roles. In the Canadian context this manifested largely within the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams/Embedded Training Teams assigned to mentor Afghan National Security Forces during training and combat operations. This is an example of the evolutionary and complimentary roles played by conventional forces and SOF, but as we will see below, it would be an erroneous conclusion to assume that well-trained General Purpose Forces conduct Special Operations. To that end, this chapter examines the trajectory of current global security trends and the theories of Special Operations to arrive at how SOF differs from General Purpose Forces. Ultimately, this section intends to demonstrate that the value proposition of CANSOFCOM, or any SOF

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 546-549. The original name afforded to the raiding units developed by the British military in WWII were “Commandos” based on the name of the companies of Boer horseman that decimated British forces in South Africa. Churchill, in his early support for the Commando organisations, also referred to them as “storm troops” in reference to the German *strosstruppe* tactics developed in WWI that broke the stalemate of the Western Front, see Elliot A. Cohen, *Commandos and Politicians: Elite Military Units in Modern Democracies*. (Boston: Harvard University, 1978).

²⁰ For example, one such publicised debate within the CAF was Lieutenant General Andrew Leslie’s opposition to the creation of the Canadian Special Operations Regiment based on the argument that it drained the Army of valuable personnel, see Adam Day, “In Conversation with Andrew Leslie.” *Legion Magazine*. The perceived upsurge in the use of CANSOF as a foreign policy instrument has led to opposition parties in the House of Commons to call for further political oversight in Parliament, see David Pugliese “Accountability Sought for Canada’s Secret Soldiers: Special Forces Often Shrouded in Mystery.” *National Post*. December 29, 2014. More colloquial, the author of this research has been engaged in several conversations with his peers and senior officers in the CAF that question the utility of a SOF organisation within Canada based on resources. For a fulsome discussion on the historically strained relationship between General Purpose and Special Operations Forces see Colonel Bernd Horn, “When Cultures Collide: The Conventional Military/SOF Chasm.” *Canadian Military Journal*. Autumn 2004, 3-16. Also by Horn, see “Love ‘em or Hate ‘em: Learning to Live with Elites.” *Canadian Military Journal*. Winter 2007-2008, 32-43.

organisation, is derived not from doctrinal task lists or the employment of special equipment, but from special operators' ability to adapt and innovate to achieve a broad spectrum of strategic effects. Furthermore, this chapter will provide readers with the requisite knowledge to further examine SOF officer professional development requirements in subsequent chapters.

The Future Security Environment

It is not the intention of this paper to duplicate or even itemise the conclusions of the daunting amount of literature concerning the future security environment. However, it is important to summarise broad conclusions as they pertain to the future role of SOF and applications of Special Operations theories. Furthermore, the current trends and predictions can be used to inform the professional development requirements of SOF officers. The *Future Security Environment 2013-2040* published by Chief of Force Development dismisses the “exercise” of identifying novel future trends and threats based on the inherent unpredictability of such an undertaking.²¹ Instead, it focuses on predicting the pathway of current concerns; broadly categorising them into geopolitical trends, science and technology trends, military trends and economic, environmental and social trends.²² The *Future Security Environment* also expresses that unforeseen threats will continue to be a characteristic of the security landscape. An academic analysis of future conflict by strategic thinker Colin S. Gray in his analysis *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare* supports the representations made above. First, Gray concisely reinforces that “war and warfare do not always change in an

²¹ Canada. Department of National Defence. *Future Security Environment 2013-2040*. (Winnipeg: CDA Press, 2014),xvi.

²² *Ibid*, xv-xvi.

evolutionary linear fashion. Surprise is not merely possible, or even probable, it is certain.”²³ Secondly, he offers that, “irregular warfare between states and non-state foes may well be the dominant form of belligerency for some years to come, but interstate war, including great power conflict, is very much alive and well.”²⁴ These two points are relatively salient given the current situations in Eastern Europe, Iraq, Syria and the Arabian Peninsula and merit further, albeit brief, examination.

A useful model with which to expand Gray’s contention that surprise is a given in future warfare is a theory developed by Nassim Taleb in *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*. In this work and his subsequent book, *Antifragile: Things that Gain from Disorder*, Taleb develops the Black Swan Theory and strategies for how to respond, cope or benefit from the extraordinary impacts of these surprises. Simply stated, Black Swan events are “large-scale, unpredictable and irregular events of massive consequence.”²⁵ Taleb rejects the premise that science can be applied to uncertainty and used to predict the future. By using notorious examples such as the advent of the First World War, the rise of the Nazi Party and the 9/11 attacks, to name a few, he highlights the prevalence of Black Swan events and the consistent inability to predict said events. More recently, the Arab Spring, the rise of the Islamic State or the rapid decline of oil prices stand as a testament to Taleb’s claim. In considering how best to prepare for Black Swan’s Taleb proposes that little predictive effort should be made and instead that individuals and organisations should focus on building what

²³ Colin S Gray, *Another Bloody Century*. (London: Winston & Nicolson, 2005), 25.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 25.

²⁵ Nassim Taleb, *Antifragile: Things that Gain from Disorder* (New York: Random House, 2012), 7. Taleb summarises a triplet of attributes that must be present for an event to be a Black Swan: rarity, extreme impact and retrospective predictability – for a full discussion on the definition of Black Swan events see Nassim Taleb, *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*, 2nd Ed (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2010), xxi-xxiii. Note that Taleb also considers Black Swans to be events where the highly probable does not occur.

he terms *antifragility* – a combination of resilience and robustness.²⁶ His key deduction is that the future will continue to be characterised by unpredictability and that conflict will continue to evolve in ways that cannot be foreseen. Therefore, institutions must be prepared to confront unforeseen threats and those with the right organisational characteristics and qualities can prevail – even thrive – in the face of Black Swans.

The Future Security Environment does not rule out the possibility of interstate conflict, despite many analysts contentions that interstate war is on the general decline.²⁷ This is predicated on two major theories. First is theory is the democratic peace or Kantian Peace. In 1795, Immanuel Kant forwarded that “republican constitutions” and “commercial spirit” leading to a federation of interdependent states would provide a basis for perpetual peace.²⁸ The foremost theory that trade promotes peace contends that trade interdependencies between states will lead to increased communication; reducing misunderstanding and providing alternative conflict resolution mechanisms.²⁹ However, Gray questions this assertion by highlighting that no country has reorganised its military forces to reflect this anticipated reality. Additionally, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the United States assesses that the probability of interstate conflict *will* increase over the next decade –

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 519.

²⁷ Canada. DND. *Future Security Environment 2013-2040*, 90.

²⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay*, Translated by M. Campbell Smith 3rd Edition (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1917).

²⁹ Katherine Barbieri, “Economic Interdependence: A Path to Peace or a Source of Interstate Conflict?” in *Conflict War and Peace: An Introduction to Scientific Research* eds Sara McLaughlin Mitchell and John A. Vasquez (United States of America: CQ Press, 2013), 232. Another position forwarded by a small school of neorealist thinking is that increased trade will lead to increased conflict as more powerful states are eventually forced to vie for scarce resources. See page 232-236 for other alternative theories on trade interdependence and its potential impact on interstate conflict. A second theory espoused by International Relations theorist Kenneth N Waltz, called Nuclear Peace, suggests that the proliferation of nuclear weapons will increase peace, stability and security through the widespread application of deterrence. Essentially, the cost of conflict is too high for the actors involved because of the employment of nuclear weapons. This theory is not discussed in the FSE, but is an interesting addendum to peace theories and is often used to discuss why “great-state” conflict is unlikely in the future. For more on Nuclear Peace see Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz. *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002).

particularly in Asia. Here the geography is less germane to the observation than the general prediction based on regional militarization.³⁰ Furthermore, recent disputes that have the potential to manifest as interstate conflict abound. For example, the Saudi brokered Arab League military alliance could bring the regional power struggle being played out between Saudi Arabia and Iran through proxy wars to a conventional interstate war. Gray also raises the spectre of conventional conflict within insurgency. Using the example of “people’s war” theory espoused in Mao’s *On Protracted War*, Gray presents the possibility that insurgent groups will reach the final stage of conflict and field conventional capabilities that lead to sub-state conflicts that resemble interstate conflict.³¹ The *Future Security Environment*, underscores a trend whereby “state and non-state actors alike will seek to combine conventional, irregular and high-end asymmetric methods concurrently, often in the same time and space through the land, air, sea, space environments and the cyber domain.”³² This concept has been espoused by military theorists as Hybrid Warfare or less popularly, Fourth Generation Warfare. Currently, Daesh³³ provides an example of this development as its rapid successes in Syria and Northern Iraq led to the adoption of conventional weapons and tactics in addition to the terroristic methods employed by the group.

Ultimately, the *Future Security Environment* forecasts a “complicated, [and an] ever-mutable international environment in which uncertainty remains a primary feature.”³⁴ This is not dissimilar to the US Army War College’s framing of the global security climate as volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) in response to the post-Cold War

³⁰ United States. Department of Defense. *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014*. (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2014), 61.

³¹ Gray, *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare*, 168-169.

³² Canada, DND, *Future Security Environment 2013-2040*, 93.

³³ The acronym for *ad-Dawlah al-Islamiyah fil- Iraq wash-Sham* (Daesh or Da’ish) also known as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL); the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria or the Islamic State in Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS); or simply the Islamic State (IS).

³⁴ Canada. DND, *Future Security Environment 2013-2040*, 127.

upsurge of violence and instability;³⁵ a characterisation that has endured in the post-9/11 era.³⁶ To meet the challenges presented by this security climate both General Purpose and Special Operations Forces will be required to address broad spectrum of potential and emerging threats.

Theories of Special Operations

Unlike the Land, Air and Maritime domains there are no widely accepted theories of Special Operations or SOF Power. Earlier in this chapter it was noted that most of the professional and academic literature on SOF is historically based. More recently, however, a body of theoretical work on the nature of Special Operations has emerged. This research will emphasise two main theories developed in the United States. The first is *Spec Ops, Case Studies in Special Operations: Theory and Practice*, by the former Commander of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) Admiral William McRaven, United States Navy (Ret'd) which was originally published as his dissertation at the Naval Postgraduate School titled "A Theory of Special Operations." The second is *A Theory of Special Operations: The Origin, Qualities and Use of SOF* by Robert G. Spulak who authored his monograph at the request of McRaven.³⁷ These are not the only theoretical works pertaining to SOF, and certainly other will be referenced, but these two theories are complimentary and present readers with different vantage points.³⁸ Ultimately, the theories provide a common thread:

³⁵ Colonel John Richard, "The Learning Army: Approaching the 21st Century as a Learning Organization." (Carlisle: US Army War College, 1997) <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf&AD=ADA327188> last accessed 10 March 2015. The author notes that during the Cold War the US deployed its military forces overseas only 25 times in 40 years, yet in the eight years following the Cold War the US had already experienced 25 deployments of combat forces and had non-combat forces deployed in up to 100 countries globally.

³⁶ Kirk Lawrence, "Developing Leaders in a VUCA Environment" (UNC: Kenan-Flager Business School, 2013), 3.

³⁷ Robert G Spulak Jr, *A Theory of Special Operations: The Origin, Qualities and Use of SOF*. (Tampa: JSOU Press, 2007), xi.

³⁸In August 2011 the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) hosted a "SOF Power" workshop. One of the aims of this workshop was to deliberate and work toward a Military Theory of Special Operations

the centrality of the *human* in Special Operations. It is this reality which forms the basis of subsequent chapters.

William McRaven: *Spec Ops, Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice*

McRaven's *Spec Ops* draws exclusively on historical case studies. In order to elucidate his theory, McRaven deliberately proposes a narrow definition of special operations as those operations: "...conducted by forces specially trained, equipped and supported for a specific target whose destruction, elimination or rescue (in the case of hostages) is a political or military imperative."³⁹ This definition, by McRaven's own admission, can be used to interpret the actions of General Purpose Force personnel as Special Operators.⁴⁰ Moreover, his narrow definition of Special Operations roots this theory in a single mission profile that is assigned to SOF units, namely, *direct action*. However, USSOCOM currently identifies eleven core Special Operations activities including: "direct action, special reconnaissance, counterproliferation [sic] of weapons of mass destruction, counterterrorism, unconventional warfare, foreign internal defence, security force assistance, counterinsurgency, information

that could be agreed upon. See Joseph Celeski *Report of Proceedings: Joint Special Operations University SOF-Power Workshop* (Tampa: JSOU Press, 2011).

³⁹ Admiral (Ret'd) William McRaven, *Spec Ops Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice*. (New York: Presidio Press, 1996), 2. At the time McRaven published his Theory JP 3-05, *Doctrine for Special Operations*, defined special operations as "operations undertaken by specially organised, trained and equipped military or paramilitary forces to achieve military, political, economic or psychological objectives by unconventional military means in hostile, denied or politically sensitive areas. These operations are conducted during peacetime competition, conflict, and war, independent or in coordination with operations of conventional, non-special operations forces. Politico-military considerations frequently shape special operations, requiring clandestine, covert or low-visibility techniques and oversight at the national level. Special operations differ from conventional operations in the degree of physical and political risk, operational techniques, modes of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets." The current definition of special operations contained in JP 3-05 is thematically similar although it has been paired down. One additional nuance has been included that states "[Special Operations] can be tailored to achieve not only military objectives through application of Special Operations Forces (SOF) capabilities for which there are no broad conventional force requirements, but also to support the application of

the diplomatic, informational and economic instruments of national power." United States. Joint Chiefs of Staff. . *United States Joint Publication 3-05: Special Operations*. Vol. 3-05. (United States, Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2012), ix.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 3. The author uses the example of the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo and the submariners piloting submersibles in the attacks on the *Tirpitz*.

operations, military information support operations and civil affairs operations.”⁴¹

Immediately one can recognise that the utility of McRaven’s theory is limited in scope, however, it should not be dismissed outright. Spulak, for example, rebrands McRaven’s work as a “theory of direct action” and builds on some of these initial concepts in his own theorem.⁴² McRaven’s major contribution is the idea of *relative superiority*, which can be leveraged to overcome Clausewitzian friction and gain a decisive advantage over the enemy. In short, McRaven proposes that small units adhering to “Special Operations” principles, distilled from his historical analysis, can achieve relative superiority over a numerically larger and prepared enemy; achieving mission success.⁴³ The principles that he advances are simplicity, security, repetition, surprise, speed and purpose, which are expanded on in Table 2.1 below.⁴⁴ He summarises the concept as “a simple plan, carefully concealed, repeatedly and realistically rehearsed, and executed with surprise, speed and purpose.”⁴⁵

Table 2.1 – McRaven’s Principles of Special Operations

| Principles of Special Operations | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Simplicity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the number of objectives • Good intelligence to limit unknown factors and limit variables that must be considered • Innovations in equipment and tactics to enhance speed and surprise |
| Security | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denying the enemy any advantage from foreknowledge of an impending attack • Conceal timing and insertion method as opposed to the possibility of attack (most defenders expect, or at very least believe it plausible, to be attacked at some point) |
| Repetition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realistic practice and rehearsal • Hones individual and unit skills • Reveals weaknesses in the plan |
| Surprise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deception • Timing • Exploit weaknesses |

⁴¹ United States. Joint Chiefs of Staff. . *United States Joint Publication 3-05: Special Operations*. Vol. 3-05. (United States, Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2012), II-5 to II-19.

⁴² Spulak, *A Theory of Special Operations: The Origin, Qualities and Use of SOF*, 4.

⁴³ McRaven, *Spec Ops Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice*, 4-23. McRaven’s emphasis on small units is predicated on Clausewitz’s observation that “the greater the magnitude of any event, the wider the range of forces and circumstances that effect it.”

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 8-23.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Speed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close on objective as fast as possible to limit vulnerability and enhance the opportunity to achieve relative superiority. |
| Purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear mission such that individual soldiers understand the prime objective • Instill personal commitment to the mission |

Source: Adapted from McRaven, *Spec Ops Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice*.⁴⁶

In addition to utilising these principles to gain relative superiority and diminish the effects of friction, McRaven also briefly introduces the idea of moral factors in which courage, boldness, intellect and perseverance of special operators play a role in determining the outcome of an operation.⁴⁷ However, the discussion concerning the impact of special operators and their leaders is dreadfully short. Fortunately, McRaven gives us some insight into his thinking in a future essay titled “Special Operations: The Perfect Grand Strategy.” In this paper he states that “if we deny the human element, then we fail to grasp what is so essential in understanding why special operations succeed.”⁴⁸ He expands that the selection of individuals that are not just capable of, but thirst to, function in high risk environments and their subsequent training as a cohesive unit is indispensable to the success of SOF.⁴⁹

In sum, students of McRaven are left with an excellent tactical concept for direct action missions, but, overall, his theory is limited by its specificity. Harry R. Yarger, a senior fellow at the Joint Special Operations University summarises that this theory is useful as “all policy and strategy is ultimately implemented through tactical action – someone physically doing something... [and McRaven’s] insights and conclusions inform a broader and more unifying theory of special operations.”⁵⁰ Undeniably, McRaven’s concepts established a

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 8-23.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 11, 390-391.

⁴⁸ William McRaven, “Special Operations: The Perfect Grand Strategy?” in *Force of Choice: Perspectives on Special Operations*. Eds. Bernd Horn, Paul de b. Taillon and David Last (Kinston: Queens University Press, 2004), 67.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 66-67. McRaven observes that “Innate courage and long familiarity with danger are certainly not the sole purview of such forces, but what allows them to be so successful that the entire unit is trained to function in this environment.”

⁵⁰ Harry R. Yager, *21st Century SOF: Toward an American Theory of Special Operations*. (Tampa: JSOU Press, 2013), 29.

foundation that subsequent Special Operations theorist have been able leverage and build upon.

Robert Spulak: *A Theory of Special Operations: The Origin, Qualities and Use of SOF*

As alluded to in the introduction to this section, Dr Robert Spulak's *Theory of Special Operations* builds directly on McRaven's work. In that vein, Spulak's theory emphasises the capacity and capability of SOF to overcome Clausewitzian friction as a key-defining element in his theory:

Special Operations are missions to accomplish strategic objectives where the use of conventional forces would create unacceptable risks due to Clausewitzian friction. Overcoming these risks requires special operations forces that directly address the ultimate sources of friction through qualities that are the result of the distribution of the attributes of SOF personnel.⁵¹

With this definition Spulak adds two distinct dimensions to McRaven's theory that warrant further discussion. The first is that his definition is based on the enduring limitations of military forces. Second, Spulak stresses enormously the centrality of the special operator in his theory. By briefly examining both Clausewitzian friction coupled with its impact on military forces and the selection of SOF operators we can effectively summarise Spulak's theory.

Spulak's examination of the limitations of military forces accepts author Barry D Watts' conclusions that in modern warfare frictions' underlying causes are the physical and cognitive limitations of humans, informational uncertainties and nonlinearity of combat processes. He expands that these frictions "are not pesky difficulties better technology and engineering can eliminate, but *built-in* and *structural* features of... war."⁵² Although he

⁵¹ Spulak, *A Theory of Special Operations: The Origin, Qualities and Use of SOF*, 1.

⁵² Spulak, *A Theory of Special Operations: The Origin, Qualities and Use of SOF*, 9-10. The author ultimately uses settles on three sources of friction that were developed by Barry D Watts in his piece *Clausewitzian Friction and Future War (Revised Edition)*, McNair Paper 68 (Washington, DC: National Defence University, 2004), 1.

recognises the potential impact of information technology to reduce unknowns and, by extension, friction, Spulak argues that the radical changes in warfare throughout history have not changed select principles of war – mass, manoeuvre, logistics and intelligence for example. By this line of reasoning he deduces that despite advances in information technology, war's enduring nature, the tension between the need to position forces to destroy the enemy whilst minimising risk and averting our own destruction, will not be fundamentally changed as information technology cannot address the root causes of conflict.⁵³ For Spulak, this tension is one of the fundamental reasons why conventional military forces are large – a large military is better suited to both destroy its enemy and defend against its attack. However, and much like McRaven, he offers that it is the characteristics of large conventional forces that contribute to increased friction on the battlefield.⁵⁴ Spulak does not conclude that conventional forces are not required or that they cannot contend with friction, quite the contrary, but he notes that conventional forces are more prone to Clausewitzian friction, which can have a limiting effect.

The second feature of Spulak's definition is the centrality of the operator. More to the point, Spulak contends that SOF selection methodologies lead to a higher density and distribution of personnel with select physical, mental and psychological attributes that correlate positively to success. SOF culture further cultivates and develops these attributes

Constraints imposed by human physical and cognitive limits, whose magnitudes and effects are inevitably magnified by the intense stresses, pressures, and responses of actual combat; 2. Informational uncertainties and unforeseeable differences between perceived and actual reality stemming, ultimately, from the spatial temporal dispersion of information in the external environment, in friendly and enemy military organisations, and in the mental constructs of individual participants on both sides; 3. The structural non-linearity of combat processes that can give rise to the long-term unpredictability of results and emergent phenomena by magnifying the effects of unknowable small differences and unforeseen events (or conversely, producing negligible results from large differences in inputs).

⁵³ Spulak, *A Theory of Special Operations: The Origin, Qualities and Use of SOF*, 9.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

post-selection through training and experience.⁵⁵ Spulak's emphasis on SOF personnel in his theory is further buttressed by Dr Jessica Glicken Turnley in several of her monographs concerning special operations.⁵⁶ Turnley, in her analysis of SOF concludes that "textual and theoretical evidence make a strong case for locating the specialness of SOF in the quality of their people."⁵⁷ Spulak identifies three distinct qualities of SOF that ultimately set them apart from conventional forces. He outlines these qualities as:

- *Warriors* – SOF are engaged directly in the fundamental nature of war and the implementation of strategy, destroying the enemy or creating his fear that he will be destroyed;
- *Creative* – SOF can immediately change the combat process, altering the way in which tension is accommodated between threatening or performing destruction and avoiding it;
- *Flexible* – SOF units have a much larger range of military capabilities and are more independent of other military forces than conventional units.⁵⁸

Additionally, these qualities better equip SOF operators to contend with the three modern sources of friction outlined above. Spulak contends that the attributes that contribute to making special operators elite warriors also better equip SOF personnel to mitigate the stress, pressure and physiological/psychological responses that present during combat.⁵⁹ Second, he asserts that SOF flexibility in terms of both personal attitude and organic unit capabilities allow SOF to overcome information uncertainties.⁶⁰ Lastly, SOF creativity is used to diminish and exploit the effects of structural nonlinearity in combat by eschewing

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 9-14.

⁵⁶ See both Jessica Glicken Turnley *Cross-Cultural Competence and Small Groups: Why SOF are the way SOF are* (Tampa: JSOU Press, 2011) and *Retaining a Precarious Value as SOF go Mainstream*.

⁵⁷ Turnley, *Retaining a Precarious Value as Special Operations go Mainstream*, 8.

⁵⁸ Spulak, *A Theory of Special Operations: The Origin, Qualities and Use of SOF*, 14-21.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 20. Here Spulak is inferring that the organic intelligence collection capabilities within SOF units or organisations can reduce informational deltas and allow SOF organisations greater freedom of action through knowledge.

structures and processes that hinder problem-solving and mission success.⁶¹ However, not all talented military personnel volunteer or are selected for SOF. Indeed, conventional forces are capable and Spulak adeptly explains that conventional forces can adapt tactics or adopt technology and eventually take over “traditionally” SOF roles.⁶² In fact, Spulak cautions that institutionalising SOF doctrinal tasks is limited in utility as “it is not the missions that define [Special Operations] SO, but rather the personnel.”⁶³ Understanding that this statement may leave readers wanting something more concrete, Spulak expands that as conventional forces incorporate new technologies and tactics their mission sets will evolve to include those tasks that are currently the purview of Special Operations Forces and that SOF will shed the tasks they currently perform in pursuit of new challenges. Preston B. Cline, a doctoral candidate at the University Of Pennsylvania Graduate School Of Education, reminds us that SOF belong to a parent organisations who has the responsibility to ensure SOF continues to innovate and divest “those tasks that have become normalised into technical processes and no longer require adaptive or generative thinking.”⁶⁴ Moreover, SOF operators will continue to apply their warrior ethos, flexibility and creativity to overcome the changed limitations of conventional forces or address what Cline calls

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 13. In this regard Spulak discusses the proliferation of technology that often begins within domain of special operations due to scarcity, cost, security considerations, training requirements and/or risk. He uses the example of night fighting capabilities and the diffusion of night vision devices from SOF to GPF. The second aspect Spulak considers is the migration of Tactics, Techniques and Procedures from SOF to the conventional forces that better prepare them for certain mission profiles heretofore not undertaken by GPF.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 2 and 13. Spulak offers that “SOF cannot theoretically be defined in terms of specific and unchanging missions, skills or capabilities. In practice, special operations have been defined in the context of the contemporary war.”

⁶⁴ Cline, Preston B. “What Happens when the Rate of Change Exceeds the Rate of Learning: A Mission Centric, University Assisted Professional Development Framework for the U.S. Army Special Operations Command.” University of Pennsylvania, 2014, 10, with permission.

“emergent adaptive problem sets.”⁶⁵ For Spulak, it is the operators’ qualities that set them apart and that will always be in demand.

Before summarising it is useful to round-out Spulak’s arguments by considering the five distinctive characteristics of SOF that Spulak proposes within his theory. Relative superiority, certain access, unconventional operations, integrated operations and strategic initiative are all considered features of SOF that are a direct result of the personal attributes and resultant qualities of special operators.⁶⁶ It is important to note that these characteristics also defy task specificity and are meant to endure as problem sets facing SOF evolve.

Table 2.2 – Spulak’s Characteristics of Special Operations Forces

| Characteristics of Special Operations Forces | |
|---|--|
| Relative Superiority | Previously developed by Admiral McRaven. This characteristic is the ability for smaller forces using certain principles of special operations to achieve an advantage over a numerically superior and defended enemy resulting in mission success. |
| Certain Access | This refers to the ability of SOF to insert and extract from areas that are denied to conventional forces. This can include the undetected insertion and extraction of personnel. |
| Unconventional Operations | Is the ability to alter the way in which the tension between threatening and avoiding destruction is managed to conduct operations. The examples provided by Spulak include the use of surrogate forces, sabotage and subversion to accomplish missions. |
| Integrated Operations | The ability of SOF to integrate elements of national power and operate with other forces and other government agencies to address threats. |
| Strategic Initiative | This characteristic is the ability to create and maintain the initiative against an enemy’s strategic level by engaging carefully selected targets unavailable to conventional forces. |

Source: Adapted from Robert G Spulak Jr, *A Theory of Special Operations: The Origin, Qualities and Use of SOF*. (Hurlburt Field, Florida: The JSOU Press, 2007),23.

In summary, Spulak’s *Theory of Special Operations* emphasises that conventional forces and SOF are different not because of the tasks they perform, but by the manner in which they generate capabilities to and the skills that allow them to overcome risk and perform strategically important tasks (when organised into special and small units) that conventional

⁶⁵ Spulak *A Theory of Special Operations: The Origin, Qualities and Use of SOF*, 13 and email exchange between Author and Preston B. Cline “Draft White Paper Query” 9 April 2015.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

forces cannot.”⁶⁷ Thus, in the case of Special Operations Forces, it is the qualities and characteristics of SOF that result from selecting and developing operators with choice physical, mental and psychological attributes that set them apart.

Variances in Leadership Approaches between the Services – Navy, Army, Air Force & SOF

Although not a theory of Special Operations, a section of Dr. Alan Okros’ monograph, *Leadership in the Canadian Military Context*, discusses how the nature of military leadership varies across the services within the Canadian Armed Forces.⁶⁸ Okros’ study is focused on leadership with the Canadian context, but his findings are generic enough to be applicable to the broader examination of how SOF differs from GPF. In order to understand why different leadership styles are required within the services, Okros uses six factors to frame the services unique operating environments.⁶⁹ Ultimately, he concludes that there are commonalities across all four services, yet each service has a distinctive “profile.”⁷⁰ Furthermore, by applying the nine Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) cultural dimensions to the different environments Okros is able to illustrate the different services approaches.⁷¹ As a baseline, he submits that militaries tend to

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁸ Alan Okros, *Leadership in the Canadian Military Context* (Kingston: Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2010), 22. Okros notes that, although SOF is not formally recognized as a service in the Canadian Military, there is a distinct SOF community that has emerged and therefore groups SOF distinct from the other services in the Canadian Armed Forces.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 22-25. The operational differences that are determinants of leadership within the four services are considered through six lenses: application of lethal force, interdependencies, teeth and tail, generating capacities, task versus social cohesion and addressing uncertainty (fog of war).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 26. The following nine factors are presented by and taken from Okros: “1. *Performance orientation* [emphasis added] reflects the extent to which a community encourages and rewards innovation, high standards, excellence, and performance improvement; 2. *Uncertainty avoidance* [emphasis added] is the extent to which a society, organization, or group relies on social norms, rules, and procedures to alleviate the unpredictability of future events; 3. *Power distance* [or *Power Concentration*] [emphasis added] is the extent to which a community accepts and endorses authority, power differences, and status privileges; 4. *Gender egalitarianism* [emphasis added] is the degree to which a collective minimizes gender inequality; 5. *Humane orientation* [emphasis

place a high emphasis on performance orientation, power distance, in-group collectivism, institutional collectivism and assertiveness. Moderate emphasis is placed on uncertainty avoidance and future orientation. Lastly, low emphasis is placed on gender egalitarianism and humane orientation.⁷² With this baseline established we can ascertain where the services converge and diverge.

Okros offers that provided all is functioning well, that Air Force leadership is focused on improving technical systems vice motivating people.⁷³ He also contends that in the Air Force leadership seeks to flatten hierarchical structures to ensure that all personnel are able to warn and pre-empt dangers (i.e. technical failure of an airframe). Overall therefore, Okros characterises Air Force Leadership as “*optimising systems performance.*”⁷⁴ On the GLOBE scale the Air Force exhibits high uncertainty avoidance and low power distance compared with the other services and based on the baseline explicated above.⁷⁵

Alternatively, the Army’s operating environment is typified by violence and uncertainty which causes leaders to develop in a wholly different manner. The “fog of war” that is typical of land combat means that army leadership is trained to embrace their intuition

added] is the degree to which an organization or society encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring, and kind to others; 6. *In-group collectivism* [emphasis added] is the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families; 7. *Institutional collectivism* [emphasis added] is the degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action; 8. *Future orientation* [emphasis added] is the degree to which a collectivity encourages and rewards future oriented behaviours such as planning and delaying gratification; 9. *Assertiveness* [emphasis added] is the degree to which individuals are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in their relationships with others.” For a more detailed discussion on the literature that led to these cultural dimensions and how they are applied outside a military context see Chapter 2 of House, Robert J.,

Paul J. Hanges, Mansour Javidan, Peter W. Dorfman, and Vipin Gupta, eds. *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004).

⁷² Okros, *Leadership in the Canadian Military Context*, 26.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 28

when faced with uncertainty.⁷⁶ Additionally, land combat tends to be fraught with adversity that must be borne by individual soldiers. Therefore, Army leadership is about “*improvising in chaos*,” it is preparatory while focused on individual and collective combat capabilities.⁷⁷

Okros labels the preparative aspect of Army leadership *anticipatory socialization*, which involves motivating soldiers for the hardships of combat through individualized attention and leveraging customs and tradition to inspire.⁷⁸ In terms of the GLOBE dimensions the Army scores high on power distance, in-group and institutional collectivism and assertiveness.⁷⁹ It also scores lower on gender egalitarianism and humane orientation compared to the reference point.⁸⁰

The Navy presents elements of both the Army and the Air Force based on the various roles and requirements of their operating environment. Its leadership is centred on “*signalling shifting identities*,” or in simple terms, determining which identity most appropriately addresses their situation and motivating sailors to adopt the most apposite disposition.⁸¹ For these reasons the Navy’s score on the GLOBE dimensions are not higher or lower when mapped against the baseline.⁸²

Lastly, Okros maintains that SOF share many aspects of the Army’s baseline profile because of similarities in the operating environments.⁸³ However, where they differ is in SOF’s ability to leverage chaos into opportunity through flexibility, adaptability and creativity

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 28

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 30.

⁸³ It is important to note that although a great deal of Special Warfare occurs in the “land” environment SOF are considered joint officers and do share aspects of the “air” and “maritime” operating environment depending on the mission profile/or problem set that they seek to address.

in problem solving. Ross Pigeau and Carol McCann, in their study of Command and Control define Command as “the creative expression of human will required to complete the mission.”⁸⁴ Okros builds on this definition, expressing that the SOF approach to leadership embodies this idea.⁸⁵ The SOF approach to leadership is concerned with “*focusing creative excellency*.”⁸⁶ SOF has a collaborative leadership attitude, which is reflected in their general “bottom-up approach to planning” that is not seen elsewhere in the military. In terms of GLOBE ranking, Okros places them similar to the army, but with greater emphasis on performance orientation and in-group collectivism, as well as a lower weight on power distance.⁸⁷ It is this author’s opinion that SOF would also score higher on future orientation and humane orientation whereas they may score lower on assertiveness. Low emphasis on Humane Orientation and high emphasis on Assertiveness agitate directly against the many Special Operations tasks including the indirect approach to warfare the use of the “by, with and through” methodology to Special Forces Assistance and Irregular Warfare.

This brief overview of the different styles of leadership that emerge in each service based on their operating environments and resultant cultures reinforce the conclusions made in our examination of the theories of Special Operations. Despite of the land-centric view of Special Operations that is often offered in literary treatments of and propagated by the recency effect of the Afghan and Iraq conflicts this study illustrates the direct differences between the Army and SOF cultures and leadership. In closing, SOF offer different, yet complimentary capabilities, that militaries can apply to emergent national security problem sets.

⁸⁴ Ross Pigeau and Carol McCann. "Re-Conceptualizing Command and Control." *Canadian Military Journal* 3, no. 1 (2002): 56.

⁸⁵ Okros, *Leadership in the Canadian Military Context*, 31.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

Conclusions

For the purposes of this research, three major themes of consequence present. The first is somewhat evident, but worth stating: however ephemeral Canadian SOF organisations have been in the past, the significant investment in CANSOFCOM since 2006 is a clear signal that SOF will feature prominently in Canadian Armed Forces operations and Government of Canada security apparatus well into the future. The second theme is the central role of the human in special operations. This has been belaboured already, so suffice it to emphasise Jessica Glicken Turnley's apt observation that "it is the people that make SOF special."⁸⁸ Moreover, that the task is largely irrelevant to the discussion of what makes an operation *special* – what is relevant is the operators' aptitudes *vis-à-vis* problem-solving. Lastly, although it is immediately unlikely, there is a continuing possibility that Canada will engage in interstate or sub-state conflicts that must be addressed in a complimentary interdependent manner by the joint force including both SOF and traditional conventional military capabilities that cannot be realised by SOF – including the ability to mass significant forces, conduct large-scale manoeuvre and apply overwhelming fires. Nonetheless, novel threat streams and complex adaptive problems will likely be the predominant challenge to Canada's national interests in the future security environment. If we accept the conclusions forwarded in the theories of Special Operations and the study of leadership and culture in the Canadian military examined above then SOFs ability to reduce Clausewitzian friction through creativity, flexibility and a warrior ethic, position CANSOFCOM as a choice organisation to address emergent threat streams.

CANSOFCOM profits from its unique selection processes, which results in a high density of operators with physical and cognitive attributes favourable to resolving emergent

⁸⁸ Turnley, *Retaining a Precarious Value as SOF go Mainstream*, 8

problems. Notwithstanding the benefit garnered from this selection, there remains an obligation for CANSOFCOM to “nurture and develop” these attributes to maintain the competitive advantage over adversaries.⁸⁹ In the introduction to this monograph, it was noted that CANSOFCOM’s establishment of a professional development system for Non-commissioned members is well-underway. The next chapter will examine the nature of professional development in the Canadian Armed Forces, culminating in an assessment of a CANSOF officer professional development scheme.

⁸⁹ Spulak, *A Theory of Special Operations: The Origin, Qualities and Use of SOF*, 12.

CHAPTER 3 - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Profession of Arms

The practice of establishing standing military forces in the service of the state dates back to antiquity, but was not widespread until the 18th century. In 1776 Adam Smith, in his treatise *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, observed that “it is only by means of a well regulated standing army, that a civilized country can be defended.”⁹⁰ As rapid advances in military technology made 19th century warfare more complex and costly, the aristocracy’s traditional privilege to command military forces diminished and employment based on merit, training and education was deemed more appropriate.⁹¹ The resultant conditions were an incubator for the professionalization of military forces and by mid-century most Western nations boasted a professional corps of full-time officers and Non-commissioned officers.

However, a *military profession* comprises more than persistent presence. Thomas-Durell Young writes that, at its simplest, the military profession “describes volunteers who choose to serve, as distinct from conscript soldiers.”⁹² The Canadian Armed Forces offers a further nuanced definition that states, in addition to the concept of volunteers dedicated to the service of Canada:

The profession of arms is distinguished by the concept of service before self, the lawful, ordered application of military force and the acceptance of the concept of unlimited liability. Its members possess a systematic and specialized body of knowledge and skills acquired through training, education and experience, and they apply this expertise competently and objectively in the accomplishment of their missions. Members of the Canadian profession

⁹⁰ Smith, Adam. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Feedbooks.com. Accessed 05 May 2015, <http://www.feedbooks.com/book/210/an-inquiry-into-the-nature-and-causes-of-the-wealth-of-nations>, 695.

⁹¹ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada* (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy, 2009), 5-6.

⁹² Thomas-Durell Young. "Military Professionalism in a Democracy." In *Who Guards the Guardians and how*, edited by Bruneau, Thomas C. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 18.

of arms share a core set of values and beliefs found in the military ethos that guides them in the performance of their duty and allows a special relationship of trust to be maintained with Canadian Society.⁹³

In *The Soldier and the State*, Samuel P. Huntington theorises that professions are defined by three characteristics: *expertise*, *responsibility* and *corporateness*.⁹⁴ *Expertise*, according to Huntington, includes experience and education based on a broad liberal education of the professional and complimented by specialised education.⁹⁵ Young divides this characteristic into two distinct parts. In addition to expertise, he believes that professions have *essential duties*, which in the case of the military comprises organizational mastery, technological appreciation, the ability to plan operations, the capacity to command and lead, and finally tasks, standards and conditions.⁹⁶ In Canada expertise is derived from professional bodies of knowledge. The core body of knowledge is the General System of War and Conflict, which is a method to organise warfare into tactical, operational, strategic and political strata.⁹⁷ The two other professional bodies of knowledge the Canadian Armed Forces leverages are supporting and specialised.⁹⁸ Supporting knowledge encompasses the information and skill required to operate and maintain large organisations – *exempli gratia*: human resources, logistics, and communications.⁹⁹ Specialised knowledge is not exclusive to the profession of

⁹³ Canada. DND, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, 10. In addition, Samuel Huntington, one of the first authors to try and characterise a profession of arms excludes Non-commissioned members and reservists from

his discussion of the profession for reasons outlined at Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 17-18. The CAF has chosen to take a different view and includes primary reservists and Non-commissioned members as distinct corps that make up the collective profession.

⁹⁴ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military*, 8. Huntington is focused on the officer corps and builds on work by Michael Lewis, *England's Sea Officers: The Story of the Naval Profession* (London, 1939) by incorporating studies on professions, bureaucracy, militarism, and sociology to round out his view of officership as a profession.

⁹⁵ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, 8-9.

⁹⁶ Young. "Military Professionalism in a Democracy" 20-21.

⁹⁷ Canada. DND, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, 52.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 52-54.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

arms.¹⁰⁰ This applies to *dual professionals* within the Canadian Armed Forces that are beholden to civilian professional bodies in addition to the profession of arms such as medical doctors, chaplains, lawyers and engineers. *Responsibility*, the next characteristic is a two-fold proposal. Foremost, militaries are responsible to the society that they represent through the democratically elected government of their nation.¹⁰¹ Second, individual military professionals have a responsibility to apply violence with discipline, as irresponsible behaviour combined with access to lethal weapon systems and equipment result in a potential to inflict lethality that is greater than the other citizens.¹⁰² The last characteristic of military professions espoused by Huntington is *corporateness*. This element of a profession is perhaps unfortunately named, as negative connotations related to careerism and over-bureaucratisation have been ascribed to the term *corporate*.¹⁰³ However, Huntington's description of corporateness includes institutional loyalty, a military ethos rooted in society's norms and values, and *esprit de corps*.¹⁰⁴ The Canadian Armed Forces has selected very similar attributes to describe the Profession of Arms in Canada, but explained using a military lexicon within a Canadian context. These attributes are outlined in *Duty with Honour* as responsibility, expertise, identity and military ethos.¹⁰⁵ *Duty with Honour* explains the individual characteristics and expands on the interdependent relationship between the

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁰¹ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, 15.

¹⁰² Andres Pfister, Miriam C. de Graaf and Marc J. van Gils, "The Dynamic Five-Factor Model as a Compass for Military Professionalism: a Comparison Between Switzerland and the Netherlands." *Threats to Military Professionalism: International Perspectives* (Winnipeg: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2012), 201.

¹⁰³ Huntington does discuss the bureaucratic nature of military forces and the powers assigned to office based on the hierarchical nature of militaries. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, 16-17. For an interesting opinion on the negative cultural socio-cultural connotations attached to corporate terminology see Gwyn Morgan, "Corporation is not a bad word: How to fight against pervasive anti-business rhetoric" *Globe and Mail* Accessed 05 May 2015 <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob-commentary/corporation-is-not-a-bad-word-how-to-fight-against-pervasive-anti-business-rhetoric/article20463404/>.

¹⁰⁴ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, 10 & 16. See also Young, "Military Professionalism in a Democracy," 22-23.

¹⁰⁵ Canada. DND, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, 14-22.

various attributes.¹⁰⁶ In many ways the differences between Huntington, Young and the Canadian Armed Forces attributes that have not already been highlighted are semantic and therefore this paper will not delve beyond our current assessment of these characteristics. For ease, however, the models and similarities are mapped in table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 – Characteristics of Military Professions Mapped

| Conceptualizations of a Military Profession | | |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| Huntington (1957) | Young (2006) | CAF (2009) |
| Responsibility | Responsibility | Responsibility |
| Expertise | Expertise | Expertise |
| | Essential Duties | |
| Corporateness | Corporateness | Identity |
| | | Military Ethos |

Source: adapted from Samuel P. Huntington, Thomas-Durrel Young and Canadian Defence Academy.¹⁰⁷

Another similarity that these authors share is their emphasis on training, education and experience as a foundation to develop these characteristics within professional militaries.

Young, for instance, implores “the creation, education and training of a professional military staff” believing this indispensable to the profession of arms in democratic state.¹⁰⁸ The Canadian Armed Forces broadly titles this formation *professional development*.

Professional Development in the Canadian Armed Forces

The professional development system in the Canadian Armed Forces is a mature process that is captured in *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives* and summarized in the *General Specifications* for both officers and Non-commissioned members.¹⁰⁹ In Canada, the professional development system “is a career-long comprehensive, integrated and sequential

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁰⁷ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, 8; Young, "Military Professionalism in a Democracy," 18-23; and Canada. DND, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, 14-22

¹⁰⁸ Young, "Military Professionalism in a Democracy," 22. This specific quote is in reference to the characteristic of corporateness; however, throughout the part of the chapter dealing professionalism this theme of skill development, training and education are central to how these characteristics are created.

¹⁰⁹ The DAOD 5031 series govern learning and professional development in the CAF. DAOD 5031-8 is the principle DAOD that outlines the CAF Professional Development System.

development process of education, training, self-development and experience.”¹¹⁰ This is not dissimilar to the career development models espoused by close allies such as the United States.¹¹¹ Though education and training are sometimes used interchangeably the desired outcomes of these activities are dissimilar. *Training* teaches mechanical reactions to predictable situations; whereas *education* imparts the analytical skills that enable personnel to reason through unpredictable situations.¹¹² *Employment experience* is the practical application of the skills and aptitudes developed in training and education.¹¹³ Lastly, *self-development* is the avenue through which CAF members expand their competencies through training, education or experiences that are self-directed.¹¹⁴ These four delivery methods afford the Canadian Armed Forces’ flexible approaches to provide professional development.

These instruments are only part of the equation. The Canadian Armed Forces Professional Development System leverages two additional models: the *Developmental Period* (DP) structure and the *Leadership Development Framework* (LDF). These mechanisms help determine when and what training, education and employment experience is required to enable members to assume increasing accountability, responsibility and authorities as they progress in their career.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, the frameworks establish development objectives and competencies that correspond to the increasing complexity within the strata of the General System of War and Conflict. The DP structure and LDF are complimentary

¹¹⁰ Canada. Department of National Defence. *Defence and Administrative Order 5031-8 – Canadian Forces Professional Development* (Ottawa, 2012).

¹¹¹ The United States Navy for example uses a model outlined in *The Navy Leader Development Strategy* that includes experience, education, training and personal development. The United States Army uses leader development framework that includes the “training, education, and experiences acquired through opportunities in the institutional, operational and self-development domains.” United States Navy Department, *The Navy Leader Development Strategy* (Washington, DC: n.d. [January 2013]), 7-8 and United States Department of the Army, *Pamphlet 600-3: Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management* (Washington, DC: December 2014), 5.

¹¹² Canada. DND, *Defence and Administrative Order 5031-8 – Canadian Forces Professional Development*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

systems. DPs clarify expected learning outcomes and required competencies as members increase in rank and seniority.¹¹⁶ The LDF articulates the leadership proficiencies necessary at increasing levels of authority and responsibility within the Canadian military – from leading individuals and small teams to leading the institution.¹¹⁷ The LDF’s “meta-competencies” are expressed as expertise, cognitive capacities, social capacities, change capacities and professional ideology.¹¹⁸ The changing expectations of officers within the meta-competencies and the requirements relationship to the General System of War and Conflict are represented in figure 3.1 below. Although several documents feature these frameworks, it is the *Officer General Specification* that details the performance requirements that map to the frameworks.

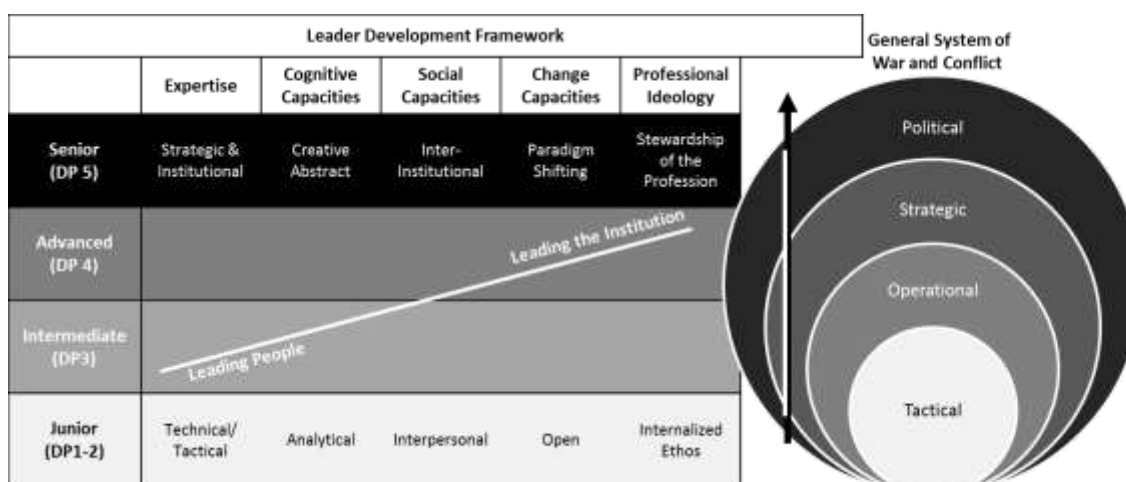


Figure 3.1 – Leader Development and the General System of War and Conflict

Source: Adapted from Canada, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Leading the Institution*, 2007.

The *Officer General Specification* (OGS) is the authoritative and foundational document governing the performance and professional development requirements of officers in the Canadian military. In addition to a primer on leadership and the profession of arms that draws heavily on *Duty with Honour* and the *Leadership in the Canadian Forces* series, the OGS

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

provides two sets of tasks and competencies that officers are required to achieve.¹¹⁹ The first are the common performance requirements, which are exclusive of universality of service conditions. The OGS contains some 266 common officer requirements that have varied definitions and importance throughout an officer's progression through the developmental periods.¹²⁰ The second collection of officer performance requirements are unique to an officer's assigned environment – sea, land or air (Navy, Army or Air Force), but not SOF. A detailed examination of the requirements by environment is of little consequence to this investigation. However, when coupled with the conclusions in the last chapter, it becomes increasingly evident that the absence of distinct SOF considerations within the OGS may be problematic as it fails to address the unique circumstances within which SOF are employed.

Socialisation

One aspect of professional development that is highlighted in *Conceptual Foundations* is the role of training and education in the socialization of members into the Canadian Armed Forces. However, socialization, as a goal of the wider Canadian Armed Forces Professional Development System is not discussed at length in any of the core professional development literature. *Conceptual Foundations* defines socialization as the “formal and informal processes of teaching and persuading others to accept the core beliefs, values, behavioural norms, and roles of a particular culture.”¹²¹ For members of the Canadian Armed Forces this socialisation process begins at the Canadian Forces Leadership and

¹¹⁹ Canada. Department of National Defence. A-PD-055-000/PP-003 *Canadian Forces Officer General Specification*. (Chief of Military Personnel, 2013), 2-1 to 2-3, 2-7. A **task** is defined as “a discrete segment of work forming a logical or necessary part of a duty and has a definite beginning and end,” whereas, **competencies** are observable and measurable knowledge, skills, abilities or other characteristics that can be defined in terms of behaviours required by Canadian Armed Forces personnel to accomplish the required performance outcome.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Canada. Department of National Defence. *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*. Vol. 2. (Ottawa: Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2005), 132.

Recruit School where the training inculcates new members with the expected beliefs, values, behaviours and roles required of the Canadian Armed Forces writ large. The US Army calls this psychological development the “soldierization” process and, although poorly named for the joint-nature of the Canadian Armed Forces, this terminology accurately reflects the development that occurs during basic training whereby the members’ old values, beliefs and norms are being vetted and, where necessary replaced or augmented by the Canadian Military’s.¹²² But socialization does not end with the Basic Military Qualification or Basic Military Officer Qualification courses. If we recall the discussion of leadership and culture in last chapter it was determined that each service has its own particular culture that is a result of the exigencies inherent in the service’s disparate operating environments.¹²³ The implication of this is that socialisation, rooted in the core Canadian Armed Forces beliefs and values, can occur at several junctures in member’s career (e.g. for each of these groups socialization to distinct beliefs and values occur for individuals: the Canadian Armed Forces, Army, Infantry and Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry or Royal Canadian Navy, Boatswain, Maritime Forces Atlantic, HMCS Toronto). Furthermore, socialisation is a concept that is generally applied only to newcomers, but it can affect serving members as well.¹²⁴ Re-socialisation can be particularly important when institutions undergo fundamental transformations. Take for example the re-professionalization of the Canadian Armed Forces in the wake of the Somalia Affair.¹²⁵ Extreme examples notwithstanding,

¹²² M. Glenn Cobb, David M. Sluss, Stephanie T. Muraca, Brandy A. Brown, Margaret S. Salter, and Raine M. Rutti. *Improving the Trainee Socialization Process in Basic Combat Training*. (Arlington, VA: US Army Research Institute, 2011).

¹²³ Okros, *Leadership in the Canadian Military Context*, 23-26.

¹²⁴ Hart, Zachary P., Vernon D. Miller, and John R. Johnson. "Socialization, Resocialization, and Communication Relationships in the Context of an Organizational Change." *Communication Studies* 54, no. 4 (2003): 483.

¹²⁵ Significant changes to the professional development system were instituted and an almost complete re-alignment of military values and ethos to make them more congruent with Canadian society writ

even simple change, such as a posting or an occupational transfer can require re-socialisation of members. The primary implication for this discussion is that any prospective professional development model must account for members' (re-) socialisation.

Current CANSOF Officer Professional Development Model

Within CANSOFCOM the professional development of officers varies by unit and individual. Due to the absence of SOF-specific performance requirements within the OGS, SOF officers are beholden to the professional development regimes accorded by their environmental DEU for career progression. In turn, this limits the opportunity to provide SOF-specific training and education as a function of time (or too little time). This is further exacerbated when the Occupational Specifications (OS) and Specialty Specifications (SS) are layered on a SOF officer's development.¹²⁶ Generally, the professional development of SOF officers respects the Infantry officer specifications, as the preponderance of SOF officers in the Canadian Armed Forces possess an Infantry or combat arms background, which share many features. To that end, training and education opportunities, less the obvious requirement of a baseline Special Operations qualification (i.e. SFC, SOCBRN, and SOAC), are driven by Infantry requirements. Notwithstanding, the experience pillar of SOF professional development is distinctive by virtue of the problem-sets SOF face, but there are still a number of similarities – command and staff billet lengths for example. While no CANSOFCOM documentation details the challenges associated with rationalising the competing demands between parent occupations and CANSFOCOM officer requirements, the challenge is well documented for Non-commissioned members. For example, in

large was required. For a full discussion see David Bercuson, "Up from the Ashes: The Re-professionalization of the Canadian Forces after the Somalia Affair," *Canadian Military Journal* 9, no. 3 (2009): 31-39.

¹²⁶ Canada. DND. *Officer General Specification*, 1-3. OS are duties and tasks that are required of officers based on a Job Based Specification (JBS) or Job Based Occupational Specification (JBOS). SS are even more finite performance requirements that are related to specific positions within one or more occupations in the CAF.

September 2008, CANSOFCOM submitted a Problem Definition Paper to Chief of Military Personnel as part of a request to assess the feasibility of a distinct occupation for SOF Non-commissioned members. The Military Employment Structure Implementation Plan (MES IP) for Special Forces Operators summarized that “as operators gained corporate knowledge and experience their progression in the SF OP [Special Forces Operator] vocation were not synchronized with the needs of the SF OP employment or leadership since personnel continued to be managed by parent occupations.”¹²⁷ It is not the contention of this paper that the same depth of issues exists for the SOF officer corps. In this case, the challenges are muted as a result of the small number of SOF officers, which makes individual negotiation possible, and an attractive, means to resolve the preponderance of career-management related conflicts between CANSOFCOM and the officers’ parent environment or branch. However, this friction point has prevented a deliberate SOF-specific officer professional development model from emerging. Moreover, no wider contemplation has occurred about what an optimised SOF officer professional development model might include.

Conclusions & Implications

The Profession of Arms in Canada is at the foundation of the professional development models in the Canadian Armed Forces. It emphasises the Force’s responsibility to Government, and, by extension, to the People of Canada for the management and ordered application of violence on their behalf. It also makes clear the grave consequences of failure. Furthermore, it bounds the Profession within the larger

¹²⁷ K.W. Wenek. Director Personnel Generation Requirements. *Military Employment Structure Implementation Plan: To Create the Special Forces Operator Occupation (MOSID 00369)*. (Ottawa: DND, 03 July 2012), 3. The issues identified in the problem definition paper were: operational & personnel tempo management, recruiting, retention, return on investment, career management, career progression, succession planning and compensation.

societal framework of Canada, recognizing differences, but ensuring that the Canadian Armed Forces ethos and identity are anchored in broader Canadian norms and respect for the rule of law. The Profession of Arms demands continuous learning from its members and the profession is nurtured through a combination of training, education, experience and self-development. However, the Canadian professional development model assumes a linear progression that corresponds with a straightforward General System of War and Conflict. In this model *advanced and senior officers* contend with complexity at the strategic-political level and *junior to intermediate officers* leverage linear analytical competencies to solve straightforward tactical and operational problems.¹²⁸ Yet the contemporary operating environment blurs the line between the tactical and the strategic-political. Regardless of the operating environment, SOF agitate directly against these assumptions, as they are employed in a manner that further removes the distinction between traditional levels of war. The implication of these findings is that CANSOFCOMs current approach to officer professional development, though ostensibly workable, is suboptimal as it is not custom to SOF needs and does little to directly cultivate or foster the “SOF Profession of Arms.”¹²⁹

¹²⁸ *Duty with Honour* acknowledges the increasing complexity of contemporary operations and that systems thinking and complexity are no longer the sole purview of senior ranking commanders. However, beyond a simple paragraph little has been done to adapt the DP structure or LDF to incorporate these observations. Canada. DND, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, 18.

¹²⁹ A term used by Commander CANSOFCOM, Brigadier-General Mike Rouleau while addressing JCSP 41 on 16 April 2014 whilst describing his responsibilities as both an Operational Commander of Canadian SOF and a “proto-environment” Commander within the larger context of the Canadian Armed Forces.

CHAPTER 4 – CONSIDERATIONS FOR A CANSOF OFFICER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL

So far, this study has focused on establishing the distinct nature of Special Operations within the Profession of Arms and defining the broad characteristics of the Canadian Armed Forces Professional Development System. We briefly examined the professional development of CANSOF officers, or more accurately, the way in which CANSOF officers conform to already established professional development systems based on their parent environmental and branch requirements; deducing that the current approach is not optimised as SOF professional development needs have not been considered. However, ascertaining the actual extent of the problem is impeded by a lack of quantifiable data and a lack of consensus on the SOF professional development requirements between units (i.e. specialties) within CANSOFCOM. To that end, the following chapters will not attempt a panacea solution to CANSOF officer professional development. Instead, it will offer recommendations that follow from developing research on general military professional development and through an analysis of the unclassified literature on SOF professional development that has emerged in the United States. In keeping with the structure of the Canadian Armed Forces Professional Development System and the lexicon within the Officer General Specification, this analysis will endeavour to leverage the four defined pillars of training, education, experience and self-development to make recommendations. The ultimate goal of these arguments is to act as a catalyst for further deliberation and introspection within the Canadian SOF officer corps writ large.

SOF Training

Currently, CANSOFCOM's training requirements are the most mature area of professional development for SOF officers. In fact, outside of some of the experiential gateways inherent in being employed within a SOF unit, this is the only deliberate and

codified SOF element in a CANSOF officer's professional development. In general, the training of CANSOF officers begins with their selection to attend the one of the SOF basic operator courses – the Special Operations Assaulter Course (SOAC), the Special Forces Course (SFC), or the Special Operations Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear Operator Course (SOCBRN).¹³⁰ Ultimately, these training courses serve two significant purposes: first is SOF-socialisation and the second is technical task and skill acquisition. Not blind to the differences between Non-commissioned member and officer employment, officer-specific requirements have materialised to supplement the basic operator courses. Therefore, potential SOF officers undergo additional screening for specific attributes prior to attending a basic operator course. Additionally, each unit has established, or is in the process of codifying, specific courseware that officers must master in addition to the common tasks and skills taught as a part of their basic course.¹³¹ A unique aspect of SOF officer training in Canada is that all units recruit from a *joint* pool of applicants. The result is that no baseline-level of tasks (e.g. small unit tactics) or skills (e.g. small arms proficiency) can be assumed for training and the programs are predicated on delivering all of the skills necessary to be an effective operator(-officer) at the completion of core coursing. Another distinctive

¹³⁰ Officers must apply (volunteer) for service with SOF and are loaded on the basic operator courses based on their successful completion of an assessment phase or selection. Due to the current means by which Pilot Officers are selected for 427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron (SOAS) and the unique Pilot-specific training requirements this discussion is less relevant those officers. However, there are some broader conclusions that will remain important to Pilot Officers within 427 in subsequent paragraphs. Additionally, it must be reinforced at this juncture that when referring to CANSOF officers in this document the examination is specifically singling-out those officers who that have completed the Special Operations Assaulter Course (SOAC – JTF 2), the Special Forces Course (SFC – CSOR) or the Special Operations Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (SOCBRN - CJIRU). This paper deliberately does not address the requirements of specialists or support officers employed within the Units or the Command and will not discuss the Special Operations Common Element Training in the overall examination.

¹³¹ The details of the additional training requirements are classified, but focus on leader development and SOF tactics, techniques and procedures. The Special Operations Command Course (SO Comd C), Special Forces Platoon Commander Course (SFPPC), and the SOF Planning Course are all examples of additional training afforded to SOF officers during their early development within the SOF community. In addition to these training programs, SOF officer candidates must complete the same training packages as the Non-commissioned members with no deviation in expectation/training standards.

characteristic is that all SOF units require prior service within the Canadian Armed Forces. Although the service requirements vary between units it does mean that members have already been socialised into the Forces and into another service or branch. Officers applying for service in CANSOF generally hold the rank of Captain/Lieutenant (Navy), and regardless, are somewhere in Developmental Period 2 (DP2). Therefore, the only guarantee is that officers have completed their trade-specific training prior to arriving on basic operator training. These considerations taken together mean that the baseline training for SOF is a time-consuming endeavour as each member is essentially re-socialised and retrained as a member of CANSOF and then further specialised based on their unit's primary role. This re-socialisation completes an officer's transition from their previous service or branch into the SOF service. For officers, it endows them with new leadership approaches based on a more collaborative model. Furthermore, it indoctrinates inexperienced officers into their new operating environment. In effect, these baseline courses represent the sum of SOF-specific individual training afforded to SOF officers.¹³² However, SOF officers remain beholden to their environmental requirements for advancement and, in order to move into DP3, or beyond, must complete other individual training and education based on environment/branch requirements.

Late to Need? The Current Common and Environment Requirements

In 2005 Booz Allen Hamilton, a consultant company in the United States, completed an analysis for the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) to aid in defining their educational requirements. This report made several findings that resonate beyond the US Special Operations community. One observation, based on a wide survey of special

¹³² Some SOF officers will be afforded the opportunity to attend other individual training and further specialise, but this paper focuses on the general pattern.

operations personnel, noted that “more and earlier joint, interagency, and multinational education should be available [to SOF] and that the education should be timed to precede key assignments in which those competencies would be necessary.”¹³³ The challenge for US SOF, like CANSOF, is that service requirements drive timelines for delivery of training and education. However, when compared to their GPF counterparts, SOF officers confront problem-sets that demand aptitudes earlier in their career development than the current environment and branch delivery timelines that are centred on GPF professional development needs.¹³⁴ For example, former Commander of the US 1st Special Forces Group and current academic Russell D. Howard notes that:

Unlike their conventional counterparts – who have highly specified and controlled mission, terrain and authority... and are “backed up,” supplied, and supervised by a hierarchical succession of headquarters – the Special Forces captain is often “out there.” In no other branch of the army – or any other service – are captains expected to function above the tactical level.¹³⁵

Howard expands, that SOF officers can find themselves implementing or shaping foreign policy with very little military-strategic or political guidance.¹³⁶ The same can be said of CANSOF officers who operate in isolated areas and who must coordinate with allied and host nation forces. It is not uncommon for CANSOF officers to be in a position where they are asked to offer advice to Defence Attachés and other diplomatic staff; including High Commissioners, Heads of Mission and Chargé d’affaires. Lastly, many SOF missions occur outside of secure environments making chance engagement with hostile forces a probability. The strategic reverberations, both positive and negative, that can result from SOF actions in these scenarios are significant. While some may simply liken this to General

¹³³ --. *Joint Special Operations University Strategic Plan Academic Years 2006-2013* (Tampa: JSOU Press, 2006), 11.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹³⁵ Russell D. Howard. *Educating Special Forces Junior Leaders for a Complex Security Environment* (Tampa: JSOU Press, 2009), 14.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 14

Charles C. Krulak's notion of the *strategic corporal* and characterise these challenges as an inevitable feature of contemporary military operations, there is a distinct difference: junior leaders in the conventional forces are shielded from these situations as much as possible, whereas in SOF, junior leaders are deliberately placed in these circumstances. Despite the increased ability to leverage global reach-back communications to seek clarity from the chain of command, these systems are not guaranteed and nor is there any guarantee of clarity in the counsel SOF officers receive. For these reasons forward-deployed SOF need the capacities and knowledge to operate completely isolated from their higher headquarters. Okros explains this in terms of SOF leadership as “the capacity to ‘pass the leadership baton’ to the individual who is in the best position to ensure mission success.”¹³⁷ As Thomas Donovan, a US Naval Special Warfare (NSW) officer summarized succinctly, “educational opportunities tend to come later in an [sic] SOF Officer’s career path; yet, most tactical action – with often operational and strategic implications – happens at relatively junior ranks.”¹³⁸

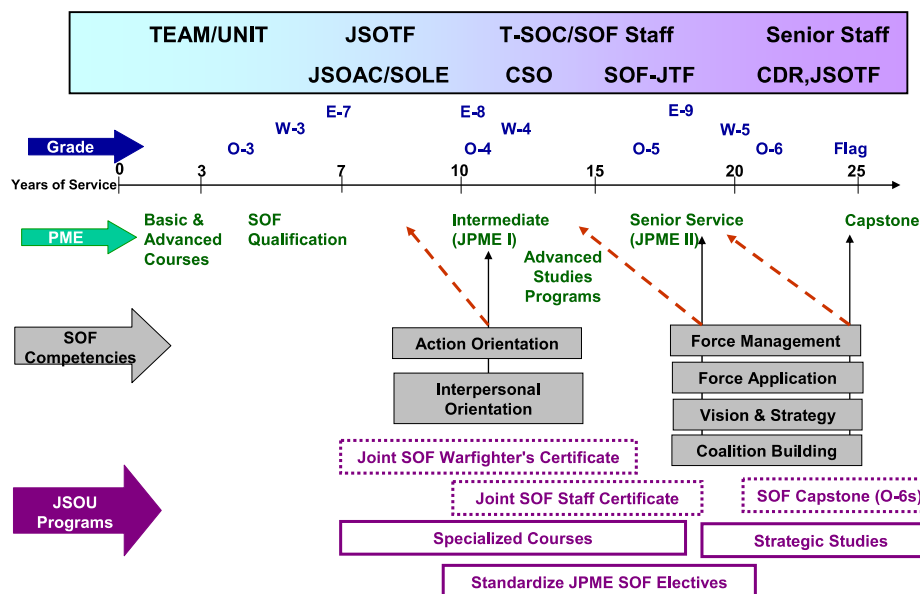
JSOU, building on the Booz Allen Hamilton report, framed these gulfs as *late-to-need* deltas. They were able to map required SOF knowledge and competencies by clustering SOF professional requirements by rank and found that the US service schools and Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) programmes had the potential to deliver the training and education required.¹³⁹

Figure 4.1 – The Late-To-Need Diagram for SOF Leader Development

¹³⁷ Okros, *Leadership in the Canadian Military Context*, 31.

¹³⁸ Thomas A. Donovan. “Structuring Naval Special Warfare Junior Officer Professional Military Education.” Naval Postgraduate School Dissertation (Monterey, CA: 2007), 15.

¹³⁹ *Joint Special Operations University Strategic Plan Academic Years 2006-2013*, 12. JSOU’s report addresses both Non-commissioned officer (enlisted) and officer leader development. Although this paper is focused on the implications for officers, the draft SOF NCM GS Chapter includes the requirement for SOF NCMs to acquire aptitudes not normally needed within the GPF and/or ahead of GPF NCMs due to their operating environment and responsibilities. Citation.



Source: *Joint Special Operations University Strategic Plan Academic Years 2006-2013* (Tampa: JSOU Press, 2006), 12

However, as noted earlier SOF officers are constrained by their service development models, which do not recognize the requirement for combined, joint and interagency education at lower rank levels. Within both the US Marine Corps Special Operations Forces (MARSOFF) and US Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOFF) the *late-to-need* disparity begins with the Army's Manoeuvre Captain's Career Course and the Marine Expeditionary Warfare School – where the skills delivered could be useful to SOF officers, but are delivered too far into their career to be of utility.¹⁴⁰ This incongruence is even greater in the NSW community where no such equivalent US Navy course exists. This encouraged NSW to develop the SEAL Lieutenants Career Course for O3's (DP2).¹⁴¹ Figure 4.1 above depicts the *late-to-need* divergence as it is connected at the US SOF Intermediate (DP3), Senior (DP4) and Capstone

¹⁴⁰ Donovan. "Structuring Naval Special Warfare Junior Officer Professional Military Education," 17-18. Donovan expands that the United States Navy (USN) has no such equivalent opportunities and makes a case that Naval Special Warfare (NSW) needs to develop these programs. NSW has since developed courses aimed at the tactical leaders to address these shortcomings.

¹⁴¹ Brad Voight and Joseph Butner. "Bridging the Gap: From the Classroom to the Battlefield, the SEAL Officer Education Continuum," *Ethos: Naval Special Warfare* 5, (2009): 27.

(DP5) levels.¹⁴² In response to these deltas, NSW augmented their O4 (DP3) professional development with the Joint Special Operations Warfare certification prior to attendance at a service school or an equivalent institution for JPME I.¹⁴³ This certification is delivered by JSOU in three two-week modules that cover Strategic Thinking for SOF Planners, an Irregular Warfare Course and the Joint Special Operations Collaborative Planning Course.¹⁴⁴ Ultimately, the aim of these stopgaps are to ensure SEAL officers have avenues other than *on the job training* to prepare their leaders for the operational environment in which they will work. It should be noted that these programs vary between NSW Commands and are not codified. Instead, the officer professional development schemes are left to the discretion of the commanders.¹⁴⁵ The GPF US professional development and Canadian professional development models follow similar training and education gateways. Therefore, it follows that the US SOF *late-to-need* challenge is analogous to CANSOF's situation.¹⁴⁶ Additionally, Dr. Okros makes a similar statement about training requirements in his discussion of military

¹⁴² *Joint Special Operations University Strategic Plan Academic Years 2006-2013*, 12. The author added the Canadian DPs in order to ensure readers understand the parallels within the CAF/PDS. The actual *late-to-need* gaps are noted at the JPME I (Intermediate or O4 (Major)), JPME II (Senior Service or O5/O6 (Lieutenant-Colonel/Colonel)), and the Capstone (General/Flag Officer) stages of US SOF officer development. Memorandum CM 0184-14 from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the Chiefs of Military Services titled "Program for Joint Professional Military Education Phase I Equivalent Credit" (27 June 2014) amplifies the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 1800.01D "Officer Professional Military Education Policy" (15 Sep 2011) stating that Canadian Forces College Joint Command and Staff Program is considered a JPME I equivalent.

¹⁴³ Voight & Butner. "Bridging the Gap: From the Classroom to the Battlefield, the SEAL Officer Education Continuum," 27.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 26-27. The article also infers that the modularization of the course helps to balance deployments with professional development requirements. Detailed descriptions of Joint Special Operations Warfare Certificate constituent parts can be found at the JSOU Course Description Website <https://jsou.socom.mil/Pages/Courses.aspx>.

¹⁴⁵ Commander (USN) John C Cowan email to Lieutenant-Colonel Todd Scharlach, CANSOFCOM J7 and author dated 23 January, 2015.

¹⁴⁶ In the interest of fairness it should be noted that this *late-to-need* concept has also been noted in the US Army GPF elements. A 2011 RAND publication observed that "most officers also observed that critical thinking skills were very important for success in JIIM contexts, and that education in critical thinking came too late in their careers." See M. Wade Markel, Henry A. Leonard, Charlotte Lynch, Christina Panis, Peter Schirmer, and Carra S. Sims, *Developing US Army's Officers' Capabilities in Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental and Multinational Environments*. RAND Report (2011).

leadership. Through his examination of Air Force leadership styles he observes that its technological focus makes them prone to *Taylorism*.¹⁴⁷ He expands that in the 20th century Frederick Taylor devised scientific management principles (read: checklists) to increase industrial efficiency and, by extension, production. This concept of Taylorism, coupled with the Royal Canadian Air Force's inclination toward singular job focus (as oppose to multi-tasking) has permeated the Canadian Forces Individual Training and Education System (CFITES) and the *General Specifications* which has resulted in a system of professional development that is predicated on "just-in-time" delivery of training.¹⁴⁸ Several senior CANSOF leaders have echoed this challenge and the junior officer courses developed within CANSOF units to compliment the basic operator training have been at least a partial response to the *late-to-need* and *just-in-time* challenges.¹⁴⁹ However promising these CANSOFCOM unit programs, they remain Band-Aid solutions and do not address the systemic causes for the chasm between SOF and GPF requirements within the Canadian Armed Forces Professional Development System. Ultimately, this observation cast aspersions on the value of the Army Tactical Operations Course (ATOC), the Army Operations Course (AOC) and the Joint Command and Staff Program (JCSP) to CANSOF officers as a consequence of the timeline that the programs are delivered (vice content). As a result, CANSOFCOM should explore options to leverage JSOU programs to bridge deltas in training, alternatively explore earlier loading of officers (all trades and environments) on the AOC and JCSP. As a last option, CANSOFCOM could utilize Canadian Special Operations Training Centre or the CANSOFCOM Professional Development Centre to develop programs that appropriately addresses the *late-to-need* delivery of training.

¹⁴⁷ Okros, *Leadership in the Canadian Military Context*, 27.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 27. He expands that the Army has struggled with this model due to its inability to rationalize CFITES "just-in-time" philosophy with the Army's need for "just-in-case" development.

¹⁴⁹ Conversations and email exchanges between Senior CANSOFCOM members and the author.

The Learning Continuum

We have already established that training is about instilling technical skills and tasks in learners and education fosters critical thinking capacities so that learners can work through complex problems. As officers mature, and the challenges they face become increasingly complex, the balance between training and education tilts in favour of the latter. Cline distinguishes training from education by framing education through B.F. Skinner's behavioural theory of Operant Conditioning.¹⁵⁰ In Skinner's 1938 study *The Behaviour of Organisms*, operant behaviour is distinguished from classic (Pavlovian) behaviour by the absence of external stimulus.¹⁵¹ Essentially, Skinner contends that behaviours can be modified through a system of reinforcement and punishment (both positive and negative). Cline expands that operant conditioning "fosters convergent (linear) thinking and problem solving, while expressly discouraging divergent (nonlinear) thinking and problem solving."¹⁵² This is the system used during military basic training courses and is one of the historical bases for the modern public education system, which is designed to prepare students to join the workforce of the industrial revolution.¹⁵³ Ultimately, operant conditioning plays a key role in the formation of military members and has applications that range from instilling

¹⁵⁰ Cline, "What Happens when the Rate of Change Exceeds the Rate of Learning: A Mission Centric, University Assisted Professional Development Framework for the U.S. Army Special Operations Command," 5.

¹⁵¹ B.F. Skinner, *The Behavior of Organisms* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts Incorporated, 1938), 21. Skinner's theory is predicated on the idea that spontaneous behavior occurs and can be changed based on the consequence – essentially learning occurs through trial and error. Pavlov's classical conditioning, on the other hand, is based on eliciting behavioral responses by introducing specific external stimulus. See also Frances K. McSweeney and Eric S Murphy (Eds), *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Operant and Classical Conditioning* (United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons Limited, 2014).

¹⁵² Cline, "What Happens when the Rate of Change Exceeds the Rate of Learning: A Mission Centric, University Assisted Professional Development Framework for the U.S. Army Special Operations Command," 5.

¹⁵³ Cline, "What Happens when the Rate of Change Exceeds the Rate of Learning: A Mission Centric, University Assisted Professional Development Framework for the U.S. Army Special Operations Command," 5.

obedience to ensuring life-saving behaviours in combat such as immediate action drills. This framing of training as operant conditioning distorts the traditional line that is drawn between training and education in the Canadian Armed Forces Professional Development literature.

Perhaps a more nuanced approach is to look at training and education as a continuum of learning. There are several theoretical learning models that are used in psychology to discuss the nuances surrounding different depths, or levels, of learning that range from simple to complex. One of the earliest paradigms proposed was by Gregory Bateson in his work *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology*. Bateson offers “Logical Categories of Learning and Communication” using five learner types.¹⁵⁴ In 1974, Chris Argyris and Donald Schön presented a theory of *single loop* and *double loop* learning, which has since been expanded by researchers to include a *third loop*.¹⁵⁵ Preston Cline adapted a review of the major learning theories made of Paul Tosey, Max Visser and Mark Saunders into three levels of learning. Table 4.1 below attempts to capture and simplify the nuances involved.

¹⁵⁴ Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology* (Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc, 1987), 205-224. Bateson originally published this work in 1972.

¹⁵⁵ Paul Tosey, Max Visser, and Mark NK Saunders. "The Origins and Conceptualizations of 'triple-loop' Learning: A Critical Review." *Management Learning* (2011): DOI 1350507611426239, 1-17.

Table 4.1 – Learning Models Comparison

| Learning Models Compared | | |
|--|--|---|
| Bateson ¹⁵⁶ | Argyris & Schön ¹⁵⁷ | Cline ¹⁵⁸ |
| Learner 0 - “is characterised by specificity of response, which—right or wrong—is not subject to correction.” | | |
| Learner I “is change in specificity of response by correction of errors of choice within a set of alternatives.” | Single-Loop Learning occurs when individuals to look for another strategy that will address and work within the governing variables. “ <i>In other words, given or chosen goals, values, plans and rules are operationalized rather than questioned.</i> ” | Level 1 Learning or technical learning is focussed on error correction or incremental improvements within a closed system. Cline notes that there is an inherent diminished perspective associated with these detailed problem sets. |
| Learner II “is change in the process of Learning I, e.g. a corrective change in the set of alternatives from which choice is made, or it is a change in how the sequence of experience is punctuated.” | Double-Loop Learning, according to Argyris & Schön, occurs when learners question the to governing variables themselves, to subject them to critical scrutiny. “ <i>Such learning may then lead to an alteration in the governing variables and, thus, a shift in the way in which strategies and consequences are framed.</i> ” | Level 2 Learning or adaptive learning requires a meso-perspective of the larger patterns and variables, enabling learners to reframe the problem set. It is still largely reactionary and considers those factors that are immediately evident. |
| Learner III “is change in the process of Learning II, e.g. a corrective change in the system of sets of alternatives from which choice is made’.. Learning 0 ‘is characterised by specificity of response, which—right or wrong—is not subject to correction.” | Triple-Loop Conceptualization: Beyond and superior to double-loop learning a level that is beyond, and considered by proponents to be superior to, Argyris and Schön’s single-loop and double-loop learning in that it concerns underlying purposes and principles. <i>It does not appear in Argyris and Schön’s work</i> | Level 3 Learning or generative learning requires even greater perspective and allows learners to disrupt or change the patterns, systems and structures around the problem sets. This learning addresses the root causes of problem sets. |
| Learner IV “would be change in Learning III, but probably does not occur in any adult living organism on this earth.” | | |

Sources: Adapted from Bateson, Tosey et al, Smith and Cline – see footnotes.

In all of these models, the early levels of learning are defined in a similar manner to operant conditioning and progress to complexity. At the level of generative (or systems) thinking,

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁵⁷ Mark K Smith, "Chris Argyris: Theories of Action, Double-Loop Learning and Organizational Learning." The Encyclopaedia of Informal Education. Accessed 27 April 2015, <http://infed.org/mobi/chris-argyris-theories-of-action-double-loop-learning-and-organizational-learning/>. The third-loop conceptualisation was taken from Tosey et al. “The Origins and Conceptualizations of Triple Loop Learning: A Critical Review,” 11.

¹⁵⁸ Cline, "What Happens when the Rate of Change Exceeds the Rate of Learning: A Mission Centric, University Assisted Professional Development Framework for the U.S. Army Special Operations Command," 5.

learners are able to grasp the structures and systems that bound problems, resulting in solution sets that address the underlying sources of problems.¹⁵⁹ Cline proposes that SOF operators need the capacities to undertake all three levels of learning and the ability to quickly determine the appropriate level that should be applied to a particular task or challenge.¹⁶⁰ He warns that “education, while filled with possibilities can also be misapplied to simple and complicated problem sets... sometimes the answer really is ‘hit it with a hammer.’”¹⁶¹ SOF will continue to confront fluid and ambiguous operating environments, requiring officers who have the mental agility to overcome novel challenges. The challenge then is in deciding how and when to deliver professional military education in a manner that equips SOF officers with faculties to address problems across this spectrum.

Alternative Routes to Building SOF Cognition – Education Opportunities

In practice, the Canadian Armed Forces Professional Development System provides a blend of education and training through the various Professional Military Education gateways programmed into the system. However, there is an evolving trend in the US Military to supplement Professional Development with interagency, intergovernmental, nongovernmental and multinational assignments. These assignments range from fellowships, exchanges and secondments to training and education programs. For instance, the US Army will implement a graduate-level university program in 2015 – the Performance-Based Graduate School Incentive Program – that creates opportunities for top-performing Captains and Majors to attend fully funded 15-18 month resident master’s programs at

¹⁵⁹ Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday Currency, 1990), 52-53.

¹⁶⁰ Cline, "What Happens when the Rate of Change Exceeds the Rate of Learning: A Mission Centric, University Assisted Professional Development Framework for the U.S. Army Special Operations Command," 5.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

accredited US universities outside of traditional joint military and service institutions.¹⁶² Although the Canadian Armed Forces certainly sponsors full graduate education these programs are not normally offered to those individuals identified as top performers – in fact, culturally post-graduate education is eschewed.¹⁶³ In July 2007, the Journal *American Interest* published two articles that outline the prevailing attitudes toward education in the US military. (Now retired) General David Petraeus penned the pro-education argument in “Beyond the Cloister: Civilian Graduate Programs Broaden and Soldiers Horizon” and retired Lieutenant-Colonel Ralph Peters provided the counter-point in “Learning to Lose: Social Science Doctorates Kill Warriors.” Petraeus, a Princeton graduate who holds a Doctorate in International Relations and Economics, credits his successes as a commander in Iraq on his education.¹⁶⁴ Peters’ counterpoint is that graduate level education generally fails to achieve the results that it advertises. He contends that “the right master’s degree broadens horizons,” but is unwilling to concede that it can offer more.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, he is highly skeptical of the benefits related to Ph.D. programs as he considers “professors out of touch with the real world [and that they] teach officers outdated [sic] theories and ignore valuable field lessons.”¹⁶⁶ Dr. David Last, a retired Canadian Lieutenant-Colonel and

¹⁶² Jim Tice, “Army Launches New Graduate School Program.” *Army Times* 15 December 2014. Accessed 27 April 2015. <http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/officer/2014/12/08/performance-based-grad-school/19843661/>.

¹⁶³ Bernd Horn, “A Rejection of the Need for Warrior Scholars,” *Canadian Military Journal* 11 no. 2, (2011): 48-53. Horn discusses the “anti-intellectual” attitudes that persist in the Canadian Armed Forces despite the preponderance of evidence that supports education’s value in the formation of military officers.

¹⁶⁴ Petraeus, David H. “Beyond the Cloister: Civilian Graduate Programs Broaden Soldiers Horizon.” *American Interest*. Accessed 27 April 2015, <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2007/07/01/beyond-the-cloister>.

¹⁶⁵ Peters, Ralph. “Learning to Lose: Social Science Doctorates Kill Warriors.” *American Interest*. Accessed 27 April 2015, <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2007/07/01/learning-to-lose/>.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.* Peters, who holds a Master of International Relations, suggests that officers should instead study languages and cultures of regions relevant to the U.S. military operations.

professor at the Royal Military College of Canada, lends some support to Peters argument *vis-à-vis* doctoral-level education for military professionals:

How many philosophical doctors do we want in uniform? A North American PhD entails several years of study leading to comprehensive exams in two or more fields within a discipline, followed by extensive research to produce an original work of scholarship (previously unpublished facts and original ideas). It is a long and lonely journey usually implying a narrow depth of scholarship culminating in doubt. It entails three to five years of isolated study in the prime of one's professional development. Doctoral study is a good preparation for life as an academic, which entails research, teaching, and service to the academic profession. It is not a good preparation for life as a leader, a soldier, or an officer, though some may survive a doctoral programme and thrive in these other pursuits. That they do so should not be accepted as a recommendation. Clearly the doctoral path is not for everyone.¹⁶⁷

Petraeus argument, however, is not that Ph.D.-level education is required for officers. He is concerned with graduate-level programs in general, which includes the Master-level.

Petraeus outlines six advantages that he believes officers' gain from experience in civilian graduate programs. The first and second are related concepts. Essentially, Petraeus argues that, much like learning a foreign language, the best way to learn about other worldviews is to be *immersed* in an environment where *divergent viewpoints* are voluminous.¹⁶⁸ The third advantage articulated by General Petraeus is the idea of *general intellectual capital*. Here he is referring to an officer's ability to benefit from the interdisciplinary nature of these programs and apply the general knowledge proffered at later junctures in their career.¹⁶⁹ The fourth and fifth points are well recognized in the discussion of graduate education: *communication* skills and *critical thinking* aptitudes.¹⁷⁰ Lastly, Petraeus offers that civilian graduate education instils *intellectual humility* in officers. He expands that while attending the Command and

¹⁶⁷ David Last. "Military Degrees: How High is the Bar and where's the Beef?" *Canadian Military Journal* 5 no. 2 (2004): 35.

¹⁶⁸ David Petraeus, "Beyond the Cloister: Civilian Graduate Programs Broaden a Soldiers Horizon."

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

General Staff College he graduated at the top of his class of approximately a thousand students. Nevertheless, his first paper for Professor Richard Ullman received the following feedback: “ ‘this paper is reasonably well written and has some merit, it is relatively simplistic’, he observed, ‘and I am left feeling that the whole is less than the sum of the parts.’”¹⁷¹ For Petraeus, “grad school forces a person to redefine upward one’s own internal standards of excellence.”¹⁷² Notwithstanding Petraeus’ positive assessment of graduate education, Peters’ observations are symptomatic of a larger cultural rejection of education by a preponderance of military officers. David Last submits that this is a result of career management systems that values degrees over education and challenges officers in the Canadian Armed Forces to change their philosophy in this regard.¹⁷³ Recent calls for a “second master’s” at the DP4/DP5 level is demonstrative of the misguided emphasis on degrees and underscores the general misunderstanding of the potential education can have to the Profession of Arms. Max Boot, in his article “More Small Wars: Counterinsurgency Is Here to Stay” credits Petraeus’ and, then US Ambassador to Iraq, Ryan Crocker’s, non-traditional formation for the successes in Iraq and the strategic acumen that they displayed by recommending the 2007-2008 troop surge.¹⁷⁴ Boot, while being realistic about the number of US forces personnel that can attend Ivy League Colleges, states that this “should encourage up-and-comers to pursue diverse experiences rather than follow a well-trodden

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.* Petraeus’ career was not devoid of professional military education, he attended the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth in 1983 and was later its Commandant from 2005-2007 before assuming command of Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I).

¹⁷³ Last. “Military Degrees: How High is the Bar and Where’s the Beef?,” 29. Last is further challenging the Royal Military College and the Canadian Armed force to think through the “degrees-as-required” architecture that currently frames the Officer Professional Military Education system in Canada.

¹⁷⁴ Max Boot, “More Small Wars: Counterinsurgency is here to Stay.” *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 6 (2014): 8. Boot also credits Ryan Crocker, then US Ambassador to Iraq, as his background was also divergent from the regular State Department diplomat’s archetype.

path.”¹⁷⁵ Although these are most certainly not the only factors involved, Petraeus and Crocker also credit their advanced education for their ability to thrive in Iraq.¹⁷⁶

As most graduates of the Canadian Forces College (CFC) Joint Command and Staff Program (JCSP) also are awarded a Master of Defence Studies (MDS) one might believe the issue of graduate-level education should be moot in the Canadian Armed Forces. However, two additional points for SOF emerge from Petraeus’ example. The first relates back to the *late-to-need* framework discussed in the section above. In addition to the cognitive abilities cultivated during graduate level education, skills such as cross-cultural communication, negotiation, mediation, networking and diplomacy are nurtured.¹⁷⁷ These are all skills that are required for SOF officers at relatively junior ranks. Currently, the SOF officers acquire and improve these skills through on the job training in trial and error situations that can have lasting operational impacts.¹⁷⁸ It is with this in mind that graduate-level bridging strategies, should be explored by CANSOFCOM for junior members. Programs akin to the Joint Special Operations Warfighter Certificate or the CANSOFCOM Professional Development Centre could create tailored programs conceived, designed and implemented with operator input. Alternatively, CANSOFCOM should consider challenging the current Army policy that allows only post-sub-unit command officers to attend JCSP. Other services, and joint

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* Boot offers that militaries should also consider promotion criteria that includes strategic intelligence and is not predicated on operational performance alone. For a longer discussion on the US Army’s strategic leader development in this regard see Colonel Thomas D. Boccardi’s US Army War College Monograph “Polyester Culture: The US Army’s Aversion to Broadening Assignments.” USAWC Dissertation (2012).

¹⁷⁶ Petraeus, “Beyond the Cloister: Civilian Graduate Programs Broaden a Soldiers Horizon.” In this article in particular, Petraeus is discussing his success in Mosul in 2003 and cites an advanced ability to discuss the challenges of democracy and capitalism within the context of nation-building as central to those achievements.

¹⁷⁷ Howard, *Educating Special Forces Junior Leaders for a Complex Security Environment*, 15.

¹⁷⁸ In a discussion with field-grade JTF 2 officers the most concerning deficiencies noted in their formation as junior officers were in the realms of communication, negotiation and mediation. They also cited challenges related to interagency understanding as a result of low cross-cultural (author’s interpretation) understanding.

branches, are not beholden to similar structural constraints. Instead, individual experience, performance together with the potential benefit to both the individual and CANSOFCOM should be the determinants of which SOF officers attend JCSP.

This discussion also brings the role of civilian education and alternative graduate programs within CANSOFCOM's officer professional development to the fore. Within CANSOFCOM, succession-planned officers are exclusively selected to attend Canadian Armed Forces institutions for professional development. Although there are many positive aspects to this approach, there are also opportunities that can be exploited outside of this system. The JCSP and the National Security Program (NSP) are vehicles to ensure that CANSOF officers are active participants within the wider Canadian Armed Forces dialogue and that SOF features in the joint force discussion. Additionally, it provides these SOF officers with exposure to their peer group from which they have often been absent due to high deployment and training tempo in addition to the naturally isolated nature of CANSOF units. Indeed, active participation in joint force education is critical to ensuring that CANSOFCOM's equities are accurately represented and to ensure that the Command's current and future capabilities are relevant to the Canadian Armed Forces writ large.¹⁷⁹ However, the selection of SOF officers for these programs can be more nuanced and civilian or alternative education pathways need to be considered within the context of providing learning and development to our SOF officers as oppose to "ticket-punching" – there is a need to ensure that CANSOF is going beyond making SOF officers promotable.¹⁸⁰ Allowing

¹⁷⁹ For a wider discussion on Joint Force Development see Paul Brooks, John Myers and Scott Stephens. "Learn Together." *Armed Forces Journal*. Accessed 27 April 2015, . <http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/learn-together/>. Though this article is US-centric it reinforces retired General James Mattis call for more and earlier joint training in US officers' careers and professional development. The authors propose that the key to effective Joint Operations is in Joint Education.

¹⁸⁰ Last, "Military Degrees: How High is the Bar and Where's the Beef?," 29. Dr. Alan Okros also discusses the prevailing approaches to PME in *Leadership in the Canadian Military Context*. He specifically calls

some high-potential CANSOF officers to attend Canada's top-tier civilian universities in liberal arts programs such as International Relations could have a positive overall effect for the Command. Not only do we provide selected individuals with equally formative, or enhanced, educations to that offered by CFC, we also potentially expand the CANSOFCOM dialogue beyond the Canadian Armed Forces. One of the major benefits of CFC is the ability to build a professional network at a juncture in an officer's formation where their peer group is reset. However, at the JCSP level this professional network is a Joint and Multinational military network as there is no wider participation from intergovernmental and interagency involvement. While the value of this network should not be understated, it is a very narrow network that could arguably be cultivated through other means.¹⁸¹ Alternative networks of importance can be created in civilian and other education programs. For example, Professor Dane Rowlands the current Director of the Norman Patterson School of International Affairs (NPSIA) discusses the contributions of NPSIA alumni currently working at all levels of the Canadian and international private and public sector and who are leverage to deliver the multi-disciplinary Master of Arts program.¹⁸² Liaison and participation in a program of this ilk would enable promising senior SOF officers to cultivate national security contacts and public service contacts that are more difficult to access, yet are critical for both deployed operations and as senior institutional leaders at the DP4/DP5 level

the standard approach to JCSP as "tick in the box" and states that most NSP student's philosophy toward the curriculum is "avoid embarrassing anybody."

¹⁸¹ Discussions with senior staff and officers within CSOR has revealed that they rely on the informal networks built at JCSP for all manner of support ranging from support to the Army (as they are lodgers on an Army Base) to Tactical through Strategic fixed wing airlift support for CSOR/CANSOFCOM training and operations.

¹⁸² Dane Rowlands, "Director's Message." Norman Paterson School of International Relations. Accessed 27 April 2015, <http://carleton.ca/npsia/about>. NPSIA also offers Ph.D. program and MA-JD program emphasizing International Law. Furthermore this study only examined NPSIA as its graduate programs in International Affairs based on its reputation in Canada, membership in the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs and the number of notable Alumni. Other alternatives that could be explored in Canada include the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs or the University of British Columbia's Master of Public Policy and Global Affairs Program.

in the Canadian Armed Forces. This is of particular import to CANSOF unit leadership who are charged with interagency coordination and planning at a relatively junior rank-level.¹⁸³ A second option that should be examined is to further embrace the US Naval Postgraduate School Special Operations/Irregular Warfare Postgraduate Program. This program's curriculum is sponsored by the USSOCOM and includes advanced studies in counterinsurgency, terrorism and counterterrorism and has JPME I built into the program, which satisfy Canadian DP3 requirements normally attained through JCSP.¹⁸⁴ There is further potential in this program to strengthen the *SOF Profession of Arms* in Canada by leveraging a mature US program and reinforcing the Global SOF Network by participating in the international discourse. Though this section has focused on the DP3-level of Canadian SOF officer professional development these observations and alternative education pathways should be active considerations for DP4/DP5 professional development.

The Experience Factor

In 1781 Immanuel Kant declared, "that all our knowledge begins with experience, there can be no doubt."¹⁸⁵ Kant expands that not all knowledge results from experience, but that our knowledge is shaped and formed by our experiences. Philosophy aside, experience plays a central role in the formation of officers and is an area that CANSOFCOM can

¹⁸³ Canada. DND, *Defence and Administrative Order 5031-8 – Canadian Forces Professional Development*. According to the Canadian Armed Forces Officer Professional Development model the level of Joint, Interagency, and Multinational activities undertaken by CANSOF Commanding Officers (and in some cases Officer's Commanding) are reserved for DP4/DP5 ranks – Colonel through General/Flag Officer.

¹⁸⁴ ———. "Naval Postgraduate School Special Operations and Irregular Warfare." Naval Postgraduate School. Accessed 01 April 2015, <http://www.nps.edu/Academics/Schools/GSOIS/Departments/DA/Academics/SpecOps.html>.

¹⁸⁵ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by F. Max Müller (London: MacMillan & Co, 1922), 715.

manipulate to professionally develop its officers. A collaborative study led by Lisa Dragoni from the University of Cornell found that accumulated work experience enhances strategic thinking competency as it develops problem-solving abilities as a result of repetition and the introduction of novelty.¹⁸⁶ Novelty is fundamental in this regard as it forces learners to contend with unknown structures and systems developing their overall cognition. Several options, beyond the educational opportunities outlined above, exist to provide CANSOF officers with this novelty. Overseas deployments and operational experience must figure prominently into career management and experience calculus. It goes without saying that SOF officers' tactical excellence and, by extension tactical formation, is most critical – especially where Canadian lives and national interest are in the balance. Nevertheless, in the US Navy SEAL officer survey conducted by Donovan, a prevailing opinion disclosed by respondents was that a SEAL junior officers experience on deployed operational staffs were instrumental to future success.¹⁸⁷ Mentorship was closely related to this consideration. The challenge for Naval Special Warfare is that their junior officers are oft deployed without the appropriate experience or preparation. The consequence is that under-performing SEAL junior officers can have an enduring deleterious effect – undermining the reputation of the NSW institution (in addition to the officer) in the eyes of the command the officer failed.¹⁸⁸ CANSOFCOM also deploys junior officers with relatively little *SOF experience* and should heed the experience of NSW. While early in a junior officers formation tactical employment should be a central feature it should be supplemented and complimented by experiences at the operational level. Every opportunity to provide deployed mentorship in this regard for

¹⁸⁶ Lisa Dragoni, In-Sue Oh, Paul Vankatwyk, and Paul E. Tesluk. "Developing executive leaders: The relative contribution of cognitive ability, personality, and the accumulation of work experience in predicting strategic thinking competency." *Personnel Psychology* 64, no. 4 (2011): 837.

¹⁸⁷ Donovan, "Structuring Naval Special Warfare Junior Officer Professional Military Education," 71.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

CANSOF officers should be pursued – including acting as staff within GPF and allied operational-level commands. The recent expansion of CANSOFCOMs Global SOF Network through exchange and foreign postings (OUTCAN) opportunities provides another avenue. *All* of these positions need to be viewed as developmental, particularly the US Theatre Special Operations Commands (TSOC) or equivalent headquarters that provide officers with opportunities to be exposed to joint, interagency and multinational operations at the component command-level. Lastly, to exploit these opportunities CANSOFCOM should consider regular rotations into these TSOCs as a vehicle to provide officers with deployed operational-level experience.

While the need for deployed experience is somewhat self-evident there have been calls in US military circles to explore alternative career pathways that include more service outside of the military. As recent as March 2015, US Secretary of Defense Ash Carter called for fundamental changes to the evaluation, promotion and retention practices in the US military.¹⁸⁹ Central to this section of the examination is Carter's appeal for more flexible career paths. One of the more controversial proposals that Carter makes is the expansion of the sabbatical pilot programs that are currently being run in the US Military. In 2008, the US Congress approved the Duncan Hunter Defense Authorization Act which includes provisions for the Services to implement a Career Intermission Pilot Program.¹⁹⁰ This measure was implemented as part of a retention strategy and meant to provide service members with an unpaid break in their service to participate in other pursuits – e.g. family, education or leisure. The program was immediately implemented in the US Navy in 2009

¹⁸⁹ Tilgham, Andrew. "Carter: Change Promotion and Retention Rules." *Military Times*. Accessed 23 April 2015, <https://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/03/30/secdef-promotion/70667178>.

¹⁹⁰ United States. Congress. Committee on Armed Services. *Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act*. 110 Cong. Cong 110-417. US Government Printing House, 14 Oct. 2008. Accessed 27 April 2015, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-110publ417/html/PLAW-110publ417.htm>.

and later in 2014 by the US Army and Air Force. Carter's call was for these programs to be expanded beyond the currently limited scope of forty members per year from each service.¹⁹¹ Eschewing a career where military officers spend "twenty plus years enveloped in the military culture," Commander James Gerlach writing at the US Army War College proposed a comprehensive sabbatical program that would force officers to take leave of the military at specified junctures in their careers.¹⁹² He proposes three mandatory sabbaticals of two-three years in a full career to pursue education, start a family or work in another career field.¹⁹³ He also proposes that the military expand possible access to formal and informal education opportunities through agreements with local, state and federal government agencies, in addition to schools and colleges and other defence-related industries.¹⁹⁴ A program such as this would also allow for more comprehensive self-development plans to be established within an individual's career pathway. Although the concept of two-three year sabbaticals is thought provoking, it would be an extremely challenging model to implement in CANSOFCOM due to the scarcity of SOF officers in Canada.

However, secondments and exchanges, particularly with organizations that can reciprocate individuals may achieve a similar effect in terms of providing SOF officers with novel development opportunities to help build operational and strategic-level competencies. Most policy is now in place for interagency secondments and the Canadian Armed Forces fills a number of key positions within the national security apparatus, but outside of the Department of National Defence in departments such as the Privy Council Office, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to name but two. Although these will clearly not always be

¹⁹¹ Andrew Tilgham, "Carter: Change Promotion and Retention Rules."

¹⁹² James M. Gerlach, "A Comprehensive Sabbatical Program: Rethinking the Military Officer Career Path." USAWC Dissertation (2009), 3.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 3. Gerlach proposes that two of the three sabbaticals should occur prior to the 20 years of service mark, which when factoring sabbatical time, would be two in the first 24-26 years of service.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 12-16.

reserved for SOF officer development, CANSOFCOM should seek to leverage these positions for select officers as they provide not only an irreplaceable experiential component, but also unique mentorship and networking opportunities.

Conclusion

This analysis has highlighted the requirement to diversify SOF officer experiences and introduce novelty as a means to develop valuable problem-solving aptitudes and strategic *savoir-faire* as SOF officers' progress in their careers. Although, sabbaticals are outside current Canadian human resource management envelope,¹⁹⁵ there are further options that can be explored to enhance operator-officers' deployed experience, while also building competencies that can be leveraged by CANSOFCOM writ large. Furthermore, this chapter considered the timing and critical role played by professional military education in the overall development of officers. This paper strongly contends that civilian education should be introduced and made available to some, but not all, succession-planned officers in order to strengthen their cognitive abilities, communications skills and strengthen their professional network outside of the Department of National Defence. The next chapter will examine, in more detail, the potential career pathways and talent management methodologies that could be leveraged by CANSOFCOM for SOF officers.

¹⁹⁵ Leave without pay (LWOP) "for personal reasons" or "education" could be leveraged through Director General Military Careers (DGMCC) – see Chapter 8 of Canada. Department of National Defence. A-PP-005-LVE/AG-001 *Canadian Forces Leave Policy Manual* (Ottawa: 2014).

CHAPTER 5 – CANSOFCOM HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Introduction

Human resource management as a concept dates back to the 1970's, but many of the fundamental concepts related to managing people pre-date the introduction of this term. Author Alan Price describes human resource management as a flexible approach to people management vice a focused framework.¹⁹⁶ From a definitional standpoint he provides that human resource management is "...a philosophy of people management based on the belief that human resources are uniquely important to sustained business success. An organization gains competitive advantage by using its people effectively, drawing on expertise and ingenuity to meet clearly defined objectives."¹⁹⁷ Additionally, human resource management includes the recruitment, management and development of personnel.¹⁹⁸ The current Director of the Special Operations Forces Branch (DSOF) is actively engaged in the discussion pertaining to CANSOF career management with the services and other branch directors. Yet, CANSOFCOM, as we have previously discussed, remains beholden and to the services for officer career management. As such, no CANSOF-specific officer professional development model has emerged despite the differences in the SOF operating environment and development requirements that were elicited in previous chapters. Ultimately, this begs the question, what improvements can be made or formalization added that would ameliorate officer career management for a very asymmetric grouping of SOF Officers?¹⁹⁹ With this question in mind this chapter will summarize the foundational concepts of human resource management, followed by an overview of several approaches to

¹⁹⁶ Alan Price, *Human Resource Management*. (Cengage Learning, 2011), 23.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁹⁹ The question literally asked by DSOF was "what improvements can be made or formalization added that would hit the sweet spot for a very asymmetric grouping of SOF Officers?"

succession and career management found in Canadian Armed Forces and US Military research.

Human Resource Management Foundations

This paper has already established that human resource management is made up of several activities. However, the literature can often be confusing, particularly in the military where terminology such as succession planning, talent management and human capital management are used interchangeably. Yet in the academic literature distinctions are made between the different processes and taxonomy of human resource management activities.

Human capital as a concept underscores the importance of intangible resources that employees bring to an organization. According to Nick Bontis, a leading international business strategy and management expert, human capital:

...represents the human factor in the organization; the combined intelligence, skills and expertise that gives the organization its distinctive character. The human elements of the organization are those that are capable of learning, changing, innovating and providing the creative thrust which if properly motivated can ensure the long-term survival of the organization.²⁰⁰

He has also framed human capital in terms of three main resources: competencies, attitude and intellectual agility.²⁰¹ Very briefly, competencies are skills and expertise; attitude is motivation and leadership attributes; and intellectual agility is innovation, entrepreneurialism and adaptability.²⁰² It goes without saying that human capital is the most valuable asset managed within CANSOFCOM. The focus of this chapter is *succession planning and management* of CANSOF human capital – specifically the SOF officer corps.²⁰³ Succession

²⁰⁰ Nick Bontis, Nicola Dragonetti, Kristine Jacobsen and Goran Roos, “The Knowledge Toolbox: A Review of the Tools Available to Measure and Manage Intangible Resources.” *European Management Journal* 17 No. 4 (1999): 393.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 397.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 397.

²⁰³ Although the focus of this study is officers, many of the concepts are equally applicable to Senior Non-commissioned member management.

planning and management is a proactive process that attempts to guarantee a "...continuity of leadership by cultivating talent from within the organization through planned developmental activities."²⁰⁴ Academically speaking, *talent management* is a relatively immature field of study that is focused on clarifying the ambiguity surrounding what is meant by *talent*.²⁰⁵ Conversely, human resource practitioners have been using individual talent management processes for some time. We can therefore leverage this literature to this study's advantage.

Succession Management and Planning in the Canadian Armed Forces

There is no integrated succession management framework in the Canadian Armed Forces. The services, branches and, in some cases, occupations have established and maintain succession plans that address their requirements.²⁰⁶ This is not without its challenge for building institutional strategic leaders, yet the divergence remains unaddressed at the Armed Forces Council level.²⁰⁷ Nevertheless, it does offer CANSOFCOM an opportunity to examine other services and models for succession planning and allow it to *cherry pick* best practices.

CANSOFCOM's current approach to succession management and planning is based on risk managing to ensure that Commander CANSOFCOM is prepared for planned and

²⁰⁴ See Annex G to Canada. Director Military Personnel Strategies and Coordination. *Succession Management: A Concept Paper*. Ottawa: n.p., reviewed 12 June 2013, 1-2.

²⁰⁵ See Carole Tansley. "What do we mean by the term "talent" in Talent Management?" *Industrial and Commercial Training* 43, no. 5 (2011): 273, 266-274. Tansley looks at all at over 100 global interpretations of talent management through the paradigms of language and culture and through organisational processes that classify talent in both group and individual senses. She concludes that there is no universal definition of talent and that organisations classify talent differently, but that management consultants have influenced the development of the term to mean the managing people with unique knowledge and skills.

²⁰⁶ Canada. DMPSC, *Succession Management: A Concept Paper*, 6.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 6. This study presented evidence that the current career and succession management practices utilized by the Canadian Armed Forces "are based on poorly defined criteria, lack transparency and fairness and do not properly develop officers for employment as strategic leaders." This report remains unpublished and unendorsed

unplanned losses of knowledge in key positions in the short and long term.²⁰⁸ In this regard, DSOF conducts both replacement planning and succession planning. *Replacement planning* is a risk management process that aims to avert disaster as a consequence of an immediate and unforeseen loss of an officer in a key position.²⁰⁹ This is coupled with the succession planning and management framework, which for CANSOF officers is focused at the Major-Lieutenant-Colonel level. Akin to the Canadian Army Succession Plan, it consists of both a short-term succession plan (0-2 years) managed at the unit level by Commanding Officers and a long-term succession plan (2-6 years) that is unit informed, DSOF driven and based on Commander CANSOFCOM's intent.²¹⁰ For post-unit command Lieutenant-Colonel's a separate succession planning system has been implemented which is overseen by a board that includes the SOF senior serving and Commander CANSOFCOM. The entire system is predicated on transparent and honest feedback loops up and down the chain of command and year-around engagement. Yet the system is challenged by the limited annual intake of personnel into SOF officer positions, which necessitates a tenuous balance between depth and upward or lateral mobility of personnel. The challenges are exacerbated by the fact that SOF officer succession planning can only be completed by leveraging "...relationships, mutual benefit, [and by overcoming] historical/regimental baggage (related to SOF)."²¹¹ Nevertheless, the adoption of the CANSOFCOM succession management framework has increased synergy with the services by providing a coherent and predictable approach for SOF officer management. It should be noted that the CANSOFCOM succession

²⁰⁸ Director SOF email to Author, 27 April 2015.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Annex G, 1-2.

²¹⁰ Canada. Canadian Army, LFCO 11-79, *Army Succession Planning* (n.p. reviewed 01 July 2012). The Army Succession Plan is modelled on a short-term (1-3 year) and long-term (5-10) succession plan outlook. Most SOF succession-planned officers would be double banked within the Army and CANSOFCOM succession plans as a function of their Army background.

²¹¹ Director SOF email to author, 27 April 2015.

management and planning practices have yet to be codified in CANSOFCOM directives – though they are briefed annually to unit leadership at the Master Warrant Officer and above level and to key branch advisors and career managers. In contrast, the *bona fide* services have well-articulated and codified succession management practices.

Air Force Order 1000-7, *Royal Canadian Air Force Personnel Management – Officers*, for example, articulates a clear and coherent process of succession management.²¹² The objective of the Air Force’s management and planning processes is to identify, monitor and develop high potential officers toward senior command.²¹³ To achieve this, Air Force succession management employs two interdependent succession management activities: *succession planning* and the *appointment process*; whereby succession planning identifies officers with strategic leader potential and the appointment process matches these personnel to key leadership development positions.²¹⁴ In the Air Force, once high potential officers are identified a *generalist model* of professional development and career management is applied.²¹⁵ The generalist philosophy is the typical model used to manage and develop Western military officers.

Alternative Career Models

²¹² The Army functions through a succession management system outlined in Canadian Army, LFCO 11-79, *Army Succession Planning* (n.p. reviewed 01 July 2012) and in 2009 Vice-Admiral McFadden updated the Royal Canadian

Navy’s career direction and reaffirmed the use of the Naval Succession Planning Board for succession management and planning, see Canada. Chief of the Maritime Staff. *Naval Officer Career Progression*. National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa: 3371-5075-1 (DGNP/RDIMS #182808), 19 October 2009.

²¹³ Royal Canadian Air Force, AFO 1000-7, *Royal Canadian Air Force Personnel Management – Officers* (n.p. modified 26 January 2010), 2. The actual stated objective is “to ensure that individuals with the capacity 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 toward senior command.”

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1-3.

²¹⁵ For a full discussion of Royal Canadian Air Force Succession Management and Strategic Leader development see Lynne Chaloux, “RCAF Succession Management: A Strategic Perspective.” Joint Command and Staff Program Directed Research Project, Canadian Forces College (2014).

An analysis of officer career management conducted by RAND's Harry Thie, Margaret Harrell and Robert Emmerich described a single officer career model that was at the core of all US officer development as *managing the generalist*.²¹⁶ The various career progressions for the Canadian Armed Forces' officers follow this generalist approach to accruing as much diverse experience as possible or attaining the right "mix of military-specific and generic capabilities to achieve the primary outcome of winning the nation's wars."²¹⁷ In theory this better prepares officers for the flexibility required at strategic leadership levels. Okros, in his evaluation of institutional leader competencies builds on several of other studies of senior leader professional military education; suggesting that the Canadian Armed Forces model of *generalist* development for DP5 should be modified and more emphasis should be placed on specific competencies required for strategic leadership.²¹⁸ Although DP5 requirements are well-beyond the scope this examination, individual training, education and experiences at earlier professional development periods impact future competencies. The prevailing officer development approaches seem to ebb between the officer as a generalist and the officer as a specialist. Casey Wardynski, of the Strategic Studies Institute, warns that "there is a trade-off between breadth and depth of experience... [militaries] must avoid running to a 'corner solution' by declaring that everyone should be either a generalist or specialist."²¹⁹ Instead Wardynski recommends that militaries seek a distribution of talent – generalist officers, specialist officers and those that fall

²¹⁶ Harry J, Thie, Margaret C. Harrell, and Robert M. Emmerichs. *Interagency and International Assignments and Officer Career Management*. RAND Report (1999), 8.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

²¹⁸ Okros, *Leadership in the Canadian Military Context*, 41-43. This study will not delve deeply into the DP5 requirements, but Okros frames the required strategic leader competencies through the Canadian Armed Forces Effectiveness Framework and correlates each competency with a corresponding quadrant of that framework. Mission Success to Force Commander; Internal Integration to Systems Manager; Member Well-being to Steward of the Profession of Arms; and External Adaptability to National Security Professional.

²¹⁹ Casey Wardynski, David S. Lyle, and Michael J. Colarusso. *Towards a US Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: A Proposed Human Capital Model Focused upon Talent*. Vol. 1 (Strategic Studies Institute, 2009): 28.

somewhere in between.²²⁰ To that end, Thie's report identifies four informal variations to career management that emerge from the generalist approach in the US. These adaptations are described roughly as managing for critical capability, managing key resources, managing specialists and managing core support.²²¹ Notwithstanding the clumsy nomenclature these concepts reveal four career pathways that could be harnessed early in an officer's career and integrated into CANSOFCOMs succession management and planning process.

The first category of *managing critical capability* is about managing leader succession. The principal focus of this pathway is identification and development of future strategic leaders.²²² It is an intensification of the generalist approach and is typified by an increasingly select group of officers that are subjected to demanding assessment and vetting for command billets and employment in critical capabilities. Each position in this approach provides another opportunity for development and evaluation.²²³ The second category *managing key resources* deals with managing competencies of officers. The aim of this career model is to develop focused specialized competencies.²²⁴ Thie describes this career model as a "closed track" and offers that officers who enter generally do not exit.²²⁵ This career track is typical to dual professionals such as medical officers, legal advisors and chaplains. However, it has also been adapted for smaller professional groups where it is sensible to cultivate focused expertise. The professional development activities in this category are usually also limited to core competency development, conventions, symposiums, professional certifications and advanced or specialized education and training.²²⁶ The third

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

²²¹ Thie et al. *Interagency and International Assignments and Officer Career Management.*, 9.

²²² *Ibid.*, 15.

²²³ See *Ibid.*, 15-20.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

category of *managing specialists* is also titled managing skills. This career model focuses on developing and maintaining expertise.²²⁷ It is dissimilar from the last category in that the specialized skills generated fall short of those required of a profession or don't require as significant an investment. Officers in this category undergo vertical and horizontal development in a characteristic military career pathway taking on increasing responsibility while cultivating their expertise and knowledge. According to Thie, these officers are less likely to command, especially at higher levels, and spend much of their time in their functional area of expertise. As such, they require internal controls and protections to ensure these are officers are not substantially disadvantaged.²²⁸ The last career variation is *managing core support* or, more appropriately, managing the exception. Unlike the other models this adaptation deals with managing the position as oppose to managing the officer. These assignments require specific capabilities that only a limited number of officers possess – specific technical expertise, education, language skills or personal aptitudes may all be considerations for selection into one of these positions.²²⁹ In these cases, officers leave one of the other career tracks to assume these responsibilities and on completion of the assignment return to their previous pathway.²³⁰ The authors of the study admit that career model may be a strong characterization of this category, but underscore that the positions in this category are sufficiently important as to warrant special management and that the officer is still making an important contribution to the organization.²³¹

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 24. Here Thie suggest that promotion boards should be given supplementary guidance about how to deal with this category of officer or that “floors” (read: minimums) for promotion in this category must be maintained. Other areas where these officers may need protection is at selection boards for (J)PME.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 14. It should be noted that these positions are usually considered “less career-enhancing” and therefore may require by-name requests and officers selected to these positions will generally not be enhanced or developed.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

The current CANSOFCOM approach to succession management uses a system of boxes in which operator, operational specialist and support officers are grouped to provide career management. This model also bands officers by the amount of influence CANSOFCOM can exert over their career. Operator officers have a clear connection to CANSOFCOM and their continued employment within CANSOF is intuitive. In some cases, DSOF will be able to ensure that the direct and indirect investments made through SOF-socialization, specialized training and education can be leveraged at future junctures in specialist and support officer careers by asking them to return to CANSOFCOM in their next developmental period.²³² However, these officers may not be succession-planned within their own branch or occupation to return to SOF. Within the operator officer box there is further succession management and planning based on the potential of the individual officer – the feedback mechanism that CANSOF currently ascribes is tier letters. Tiers are a way to communicate the chain of commands assessment of potential to an officer.²³³ The approach tier letters take are to identify the rank to which an officer has been assessed to have the potential to achieve based on their current rank and performance (i.e. the assessment is bounded). Furthermore, these rankings can be sub-tiered to include the type of employment one can expect (e.g. command, key staff, etc.). This methodology is a useful feedback tool insofar as it provides officers with an appraisal of the future potential in the organization. As an alternative, the model offered by This would place officers into streams that clearly articulate the vision and career path that officers will be asked to follow. For CANSOFCOM this would aid in adding precision to succession management and talent

²³² In some cases it will also be inappropriate for specialist or support officers to return to service within SOF. This may be for reasons of previous (poor) employment, but is more likely a result of being inappropriate to the officers overall development within their occupation.

²³³ See annexes A and B of Canada. CA, *LFCO 11-79 Army Succession Planning* for an example. Although CANSOFCOM's approach has some minor differences, the Army's published example is representative.

development by eschewing rank or position fixation and providing career pathways for officers. It is also critical to consider that officers will be mobile between these streams based on changes in performance and potential. Table 5.1 below is a summary of the career models offered by Thie.

Table 5.1 – Potential Career Variations or Streams

| <i>Thie et al. Career Streams</i> | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|
| | Generalist | Leader Succession | Managing Competencies | Managing Skills | Managing the Exception |
| Major Focus | Developing general leadership competency | Selection of future senior leaders | Intensive utilization of specialized competencies | Development of specialized capabilities | Managing assignments rather than the officer |
| Structure | Positions integrated into the organization | Positions integrated into the organization | Positions generally organized as a separate functional organizational entity | Positions integrated into the organization | Positions integrated into the organization |
| Identification | Officer population-at-large | High potential officers; often central board selections for command | Membership in a profession or concentrated functional area; education often a prerequisite | Membership in a functional area | Availability |
| Assignments | Standard sequence of military service assignments | Standard sequence of assignments with periodic assignments to key positions outside service | Continuous assignments in narrowly defined area | Standard sequence of assignments, with periodic assignments to specialty areas | Assignment considered an interruption to standard sequence |
| Professional Development | Vertical development: increasingly responsible positions and standardized professional military education (PME) | Vertical development through increasingly responsible positions, including key assignments and specialized PME | Development largely provided through practice, profession-related activities, conferences, periodic certification, advanced education; PME is secondary | Vertical development through increasingly responsible positions and standardized PME (likely to be non-resident). Horizontal development through assignments and periodic educational opportunities | Training as needed for a particular assignment. |
| Promotion | Based on past performance and potential | Based on past performance and potential; specific assignments/education a prerequisite; promotion opportunity goals | Separate competitive categories or promotion opportunity goals and/or floors | Floors needed to off-set the assignments | Nil |

| Thie <i>et al.</i> Career Streams | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------|------------------------|
| | Generalist | Leader Succession | Managing Competencies | Managing Skills | Managing the Exception |
| Rewards | Nil | Rewards derived via promotion system | Special pay to reflect marketability and value to the organization | Nil | Nil |

Source: adapted from Thie et al. *Interagency and International Assignments and Officer Career Management* (1999), 11-12.

Talent Management & High Potential Officers

Previously, we noted that the Canadian Armed Forces does not have a standardized approach to succession management, though all services do have articulated orders or policies outlining their succession management frameworks. The Navy, Army and Air Force orders focus on identifying high potential individuals to fill pre-determined command or key billets. The management frameworks are focused on timelines, board compositions and outputs (feedback loops to the officer). However, these directives fail to identify how potential is assessed. Nor do they incorporate those assessment factors into their selection boards.²³⁴ A study on succession management completed by Director Military Personnel Strategies and Coordination (DMPSC) summarizes that “organizational best practices and the extant literature on succession planning both point to competency-based assessment as the preferred method for identifying high-potential talent.”²³⁵ Although developing the competencies to assess of SOF officers is beyond the scope of this examination we have already elicited several in the previous chapters: warrior ethic, creativity, flexibility, generative thinking, cross-cultural intelligence (partnering and emotional intelligence) are but a few competencies required for SOF officers to be successful as they progress within CANSOFCOM and the Canadian Armed Forces. In the human resource literature there is

²³⁴ Canada. DMPSC, *Succession Management: A Concept Paper*, 6.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

another paradigm through which high potential officers should be assessed. Carole Tansley, a Professor of Human Resource Innovation, offers that high potential employees are defined as “someone with the ability, engagement and aspiration to rise and succeed in more senior, more critical positions.”²³⁶ This introduces the concept of choice into career management and particularly as it applies to those in the *leader succession* pathway. Aspiration is the desire of the officer to advance along that pathway. While engagement is a three-fold concept focused on passion and motivation, which comprises emotional commitment (belief in the organization), rational commitment (belief that staying in the organization is in their self-interest) and intent to stay (desire to stay with the organization).²³⁷ If a SOF officer is not engaged or does not aspire to strategic leadership they still add value to the overall organization and should be employed within the bounds of their commitment. In this regard, CANSOFCOM must rise above knee-jerk colloquialisms such as *Peter Pan Syndrome*.²³⁸ Officers that decline career advancement should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. With the continual dearth of qualified and competent SOF officers, only those that fail on operations, demonstrate ineptitude or display characteristics of toxic leadership should be excised from the Command.²³⁹ Although succession management is centered on high performance officers the process is equally applicable to the development of leaders and competencies in all career pathways.

The DMPSC study proposes a five-step cyclical framework for succession management in the Canadian Armed Forces. The process begins with defining key positions

²³⁶ Carole Tansley. "What do we mean by the term “talent” in Talent Management?," 272.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 272.

²³⁸ *Peter Pan Syndrome* refers to the notion that officers can stay employed in tactical roles with little responsibility for the duration of their career within SOF.

²³⁹ See George E Reed, "Toxic Leadership." *Military Review* 84, no. 4 (2004): 67-71. Reed describes toxic leadership as an apparent lack of concern for the wellbeing of subordinates; a personality or interpersonal technique that negatively affects organizational climate; a conviction by subordinates that the leader is motivated primarily by self-interest.

including the competencies required or developed therein. Next, high potential officers are identified, assessed and placed according to their developmental needs and institutional requirements. Finally, high potential officers are monitored and evaluated.²⁴⁰



Figure 5.1 Succession Management

Source: Adapted from DMPSC, *Succession Management: A Concept Paper*, (Ottawa, 12 June 2013),9.

The succession model presented by DMPSC is a simplistic model, yet it adds depth to the succession planning process by establishing key inputs and outputs. A slightly more complicated approach is to see succession management as a subset of a comprehensive talent management model. Using a modified talent management framework, CANSOFCOM can ensure that year over year its succession management and planning addresses the evolving needs of the Canadian Armed Forces, the Command and the individual officers. One possibility is the modified talent management system in figure 5.2 below.

²⁴⁰ Canada. DMPSC, *Succession Management: A Concept Paper*, 8-10.

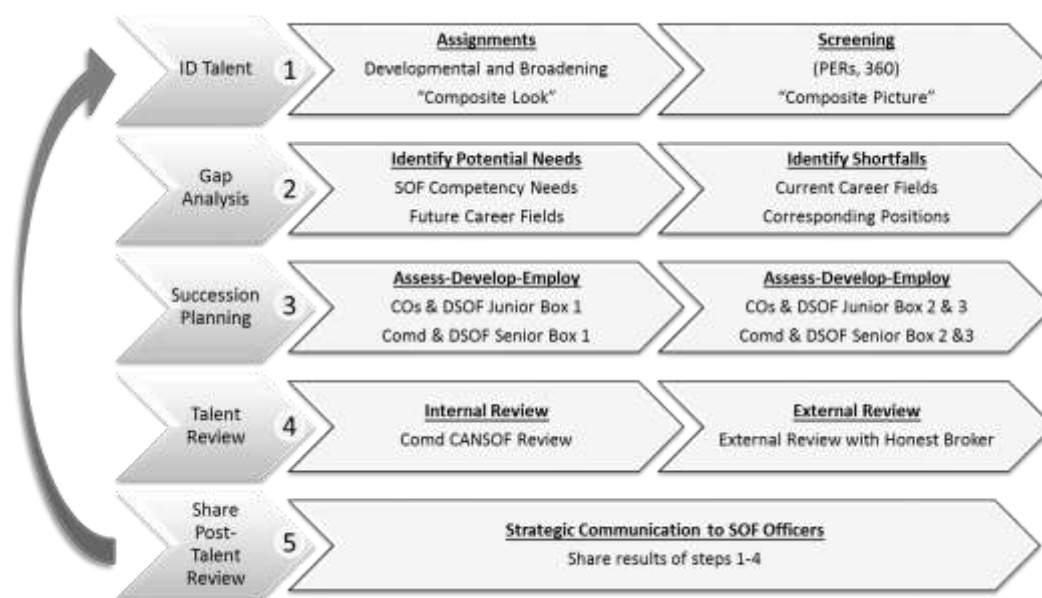


Figure 5.2 Strategic Talent Management Framework

Source: Thomas D. Boccardi "Polyester Culture: The U.S. Army's Aversion to Broadening Assignments," 2012.²⁴¹

Tenure

Although talent management and, by extension, succession management are ongoing processes organizations must guard high turnover in key positions. A constant point of consternation within CANSOFCOM is the issue of tenure. That is, how long officers should be afforded the opportunity to develop before being moved. In a study of joint officer development, Dr. Margaret C. Harrell concluded that organizations are healthier when there is not turnover in assignments every one to two years.²⁴² The challenge is to find equilibrium between breadth (number) and depth (length) of assignments. Routinely longer

²⁴¹ Thomas D. Boccardi, "Polyester Culture: The Army's Aversion to Broadening Assignments," 37. This is an extremely simplified version of talent management, but is demonstrative of the processes surrounding succession management. For the Canadian Public Service talent management model see Canada. Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. "Executive Talent Management Framework" Accessed 04 May 2015 <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/tal/tmfmw-cdrgt-eng.asp>.

²⁴² Margaret C. Harrell, Harry J. Thie, Sheila N. Kirby, Al Crego, Danielle M. Varda, and Thomas Sullivan. *A Strategic Approach to Joint Officer Management: Analysis and Modeling Results*. RAND Report (2009),128.

assignments for officers in CANSOFCOM govern vertical mobility and can limit an officers' careers. Harrell underlines that tenure is one of the few tangible metrics that we have to measure experience.²⁴³ However, she counsels that "experience is a by-product of organizational mission accomplishment."²⁴⁴ Here she infers that the quality of experience in an assignment must factor into the tenure calculus and will not be the same for every officer. Ultimately, it is difficult to draw an exact conclusion on the optimal amount of time that an officer should spend in any one billet as the accumulation of experiences will vary from position to position.²⁴⁵ Therefore, it would be more prudent to attempt to quantify the quality of experience that a SOF officer has and attempt a conditions or competency based approach to tenure.

Employment

Tenure may be difficult to quantify, but determining which assignments CANSOFCOM officers should fill may be less problematic as competencies can be mapped to positions. In this regard the CANSOF units already have well-developed career pathways based on Army models for building technical expertise and leadership competencies. Notwithstanding these frameworks, a formalized structure that categorizes these positions maybe an additional asset to CANSOF talent management. At the Captain and Major levels the infantry corps categorizes employment by high, medium and low impact, which is used as scoring criteria for promotion boards. Low impact positions are considered entry-level rank jobs, although core and necessary to an officers' development within the infantry they rest at the bottom of the hierarchy. Any employment that is not considered high-range

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 128.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 128.

²⁴⁵ The US Army recommends tenure length for key developmental positions as Infantry Company Commander (18 months +/- 6 months), Armoured Operations Officer (18-24 months) and Infantry Battalion Commander (24-36 months). See United States. Department of the Army. Pamphlet 600-3 *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*. (Washington, DC: 2014).

employment is automatically slotted into the medium-range band.²⁴⁶ Understanding that the majority of SOF officers will be subject to these positions it may still be useful for CANSOFCOM to examine the US Army's categorization of employment. In the U.S. Army uses three categories of assignment: key development employment, developmental employment and broadening employment.²⁴⁷ Key development positions correlate to the Infantry's low impact positions. However, broadening and developmental employment are less comparable to medium and high-range employment categorizations. Developmental positions encompass employment that enhances SOF skills, increases responsibility and provides Joint, Interagency, Multinational and/or Public exposure.²⁴⁸ Lastly, broadening assignments are a purposeful expansion of a leader's capability and includes Canadian Armed Forces institutional-level employment or embedding with academic, civilian, multinational, interagency or public institutions.²⁴⁹ When compared with the Infantry this taxonomy would better explain employment to CANSOF members and aid in charting competencies, positions and career pathways that can be utilized within a larger talent or succession management framework.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to clarify the lexicon surrounding human resource management while providing potentially useful tools for career, succession and talent management and planning. Throughout this chapter a central theme is the development of SOF officer competencies. Indeed, competencies drive succession management and planning. All of the frameworks that were presented had this concept at their core.

²⁴⁶ There is no Army (or Infantry) documentation that outlines these positions, however, the career managers keep running list based on direction from the Branch Director. Major John Summerfield, Infantry Career Manager email to author, 27 April 2015.

²⁴⁷ United States. DA, PAM 600-3 *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

Although some processes are incongruent with the practices of the services and branches, they have the potential to add a level of sophistication and precision to a competency-based CANSOF officer career management model not seen elsewhere in the Canadian Armed Forces. The frameworks within these chapters provide alternative means to examining and developing SOF officers throughout their career. The career management models clearly articulate tailored pathways, and by extension, institutional expectations for officers being developed therein. The succession and talent management examples presented above reveal the levels of analysis required in succession management and planning. And lastly, we examined the concept of tenure and employment categorization. Although the issue of tenure remains unresolved, the American classifications used to define employment are a further attempt to be exacting in language and process.

CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In Special Operations the most important tool is the operator. Although mantras about the centrality of people in the Profession of Arms are abound, nowhere outside of Special Operations is the human taken so seriously. It is the first SOF truth: *The Human is More Important than the Hardware*. The science and analysis that form the foundation of Special Operations selection and the effort taken to subsequently train and indoctrinate the successful into their chosen vocations are testament to this truth. Yet, this examination is critical of the steps taken after basic operator training to continue honing our operators, and specifically, the Special Operations officer corps. This paper is forthright in its assertion that the current SOF officer professional development model is sub-optimal. This is not indictment of the leadership within the Canadian SOF community, but instead aims to point out an evident incongruence: Special Operations officers advance within the bounds of their service and branch professional development models, which do not account for the needs of service within the Special Operations Branch. This paper demonstrates that a bespoke solution for operator-officer development and career management would benefit Canadian Special Operations Forces Command by sharpening its value proposition to the Canadian Armed Force and Government of Canada's National Security apparatus.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this paper. First, it must be stated that each unit within CANSOFCOM, due to further specialization, will require variance. Indeed, one professional development model or solution will not fit each unit or operator-officer. But the up-shot is that CANSOFCOM's officers are a small enough corps that they can be managed by exception. Second, this paper stops short of examining *the how*. That is, without the adoption of a SOF officer MES, how can separate career management and professional

development practices be implemented? Indeed, this is a future area of study that is required. What this author will offer is that the current Chief of Military Personnel management policies are just that: policy. With a degree of imagination and a sense of urgency, policy can be changed to compliment a small number of officers that do not fit neatly into the bureaucratic and rigid human resource management practices of the larger Canadian Armed Forces. However, the senior leadership of CANSOFCOM must decide whether the benefit is worth the institutional friction that it *may* have to weather in order to bring this to fruition. Lastly, are the author's own limitations and bias. As a career SOF-officer, I am clearly predisposed toward professional development and career management models that benefit the SOF-officer corps – even at some expense to (J)PME. Although some may critique that this is short-sighted, I will continue to offer that this is not an all or nothing venture. As my recommendations will make clear, I believe the future is in blended career models that service both CANSOFCOMs officer professional development requirements and the Canadian Armed Forces writ-large.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1 – SOF-officer Professional Development Model. A fulsome SOF-officer professional development model should be developed and implemented.

Recommendation #2 – Address the late-to-need training and education deltas for SOF-officers.

Address late-to-need training and education gaps through JSOU programs to bridge deltas in training. Programs akin to the Joint Special Operations Warfighter Certificate may be appropriate or the CANSOFCOM Professional Development Centre could create tailored programs conceived, designed and implemented with operator input. In cases where SOF-officers will attend Canadian Armed Forces (J)PME, explore earlier loading of officers (all trades and environments) on the Army Operations Course and Joint Command and Staff

Program. CANSOFCOM should consider challenging the current Army policy that allows only post-sub-unit command officers to attend Joint Command and Staff Programme. Other services, and joint branches, are not beholden to similar structural constraints. Instead, individual experience, performance together with the potential benefit to both the individual and CANSOFCOM should be the determinants of which SOF officers attend the Joint Command and Staff Program. In this case the author offers that Army Operations Course is a pre-troop/platoon command requirement (or immediately thereafter depending on the SOF unit) and that the Joint Command and Staff Program is a pre sub-unit command requirement if it is to be of full value to the SOF-officer.

As an outlier, *but not one this author recommends*, CANSOFCOM could consider re-visiting its ranks and positions to ensure that that the Canadian Armed Forces PME and training are aligned to the expected authorities, responsibilities and accountabilities of CANSOF officers and commanders.

Recommendation #3 – Start putting Succession-planned SOF-officers into the Naval Postgraduate Special Operations and Irregular Warfare Master’s. In order to better develop the global-SOF network of future CANSOFCOM leaders they should be immersed in programs with their contemporaries in the United States and other five-eyes communities. Additionally, the benefit of this program is that it satisfies JPME requirements while engaging future CANSOFCOM leaders in an intensive study of their chosen profession.

Recommendation #4 – Leverage civilian Graduate-level education to a greater extent. Allow some high-potential CANSOF officers to attend Canada’s top-tier civilian universities in sponsored liberal arts programs. This will satisfy the educational requirements of CANSOFCOM’s officers and it is probable this will push the potential of these officers further. Additionally, it also will expand the CANSOFCOM’s visibility beyond the Canadian

Armed Forces and allow CANSOFCOM's future strategic leaders to begin cultivating networks that expand beyond the Joint and Multinational military demesne into the intergovernmental and interagency realm. Participation in a program such as NPSIA's Master of International Relations would enable promising senior SOF officers to cultivate national security contacts and public service contacts that are more difficult to access, yet critical for both deployed operations and as senior institutional leaders in the Canadian Armed Forces. Although this paper has focused at the DP3 level, civilian graduate-level education the evidence in this paper suggests these programs should be considered a potential multiplier at the DP4/5 level as well.

Recommendation #5 – Consider experience outside of the military as value added to military career progression. CANSOFCOM should strongly consider finding placements and secondment to other government departments and civilian corporations where there experiences can be beneficial to future employment both within CANSOFCOM and the Canadian Armed Forces.

Recommendation #6 – Adopt a career management model that accounts for different career paths that are de-linked from tier-systems and that spell out career expectations and pathways clearly. The five pathways offered by Thie in this paper are a potential start-state to map career pathways for the different officers and levels of leader that are being developed within CANSOFCOM. By further adopting a US system of key, broadening and developmental assignments, CANSOFCOM can add granularity to the high, medium, low impact system employed by the Canadian Army and more easily map assignments to an officer's career requirements. The result should be bespoke career management for CANSOF officers within their pathway. Lastly, CANSOFCOM's leadership must consider high-potential officers through not just ability, but *equally* through the individual's aspiration and engagement.

Remembering that aspiration is the desire of the officer to advance along that pathway, while engagement is focused on passion and motivation of the individual. Just as the enemy gets a vote in combat, so too should officers get a vote in their career management without the fear of institutional retribution if there is a misalignment.²⁵⁰

Recommendation #7 – Adopt an Independent SOF Talent Management and Planning Process.

CANSOFCOM should study the results of the DMPSC *Succession Management* concept paper referenced herein to understand further some of the deltas within the current CAF succession management and planning practices. This should be coupled with the Chief of Military Personnel initiatives currently underway (e.g. Canadian Forces Personnel Appraisal System revamp, DP4/5 improvement initiatives, etc) to develop a comprehensive talent management and planning process.

Area for Future Study

Area for future Study - SOF Officer MES Alternatives. The only area for future study that this monograph recommends is a thorough examination of SOF-officer MES alternatives. This author has seen no evidence that under the current Chief of Military Personnel human resource management policies that CANSOFCOM stands to gain from developing a separate MES for SOF-officer trade. This stems largely from the (perceived?) inflexibility inherent in these systems that disadvantage small occupations. However, these policies must be systematically unpacked and evaluated to understand where opportunities exist and where policy must be changed or adapted to accommodate the small number of SOF officers in Canada.

Conclusion

²⁵⁰ So long as there has been an honest dialogue from day one.

This paper is the first open dialogue addressing Canadian Special Operations Forces Officer Professional Development. As such, it does not attempt to provide CANSOF with a panacea solution to the professional development conundrums nor the associated career management challenges for operator-officers. Instead, this monograph has attempted to open the discourse by explaining key concepts from civilian human resource management literature, Canadian Armed Forces policies, doctrine and studies; balancing them against a representative body of professional discourse that has emerged from the United States Special Operations Command – specifically United States Army Special Operations and US Naval Special Warfare. This monograph has offered some potential areas for improvement in CANSOFCOMs current processes, arguing that the size of the SOF-officer corps relative other environments, branches and occupations is small; making it well-positioned to be at the cutting edge of emerging human resource management and professional development practices in the Canadian Armed Forces. Ultimately, there is no doubt that CANSOFCOM will feature prominently in the Canadian Armed Force’s responses to threats to Canada’s national security. And the most significant investment the Command can make to ensure that it is prepared for these threats is in its people. To build on the excellent reputation of the visionaries that fostered and created SOF in Canada, CANSOFCOM must forge its own professional development path to retain its value proposition to the Canadian Armed Forces.

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