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INSIDE THE BEGINNING: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CANADIAN FORCES AND UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RECRUITING PRACTICES

Maj M.G.R. Roberts

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Exercise Solo Flight

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INSIDE THE BEGINNING:

A Comparative Analysis of the Canadian Forces and United States Marine Corps Recruiting Practices

“We don’t promise you a rose garden”

- Marine Corps Recruiting Poster, circa 1980’s

INTRODUCTION

On November 10th 1775 the first United States Marine Corps recruiter walked into local Philadelphia brewery Tun Tavern in an attempt to sign up young men into what would later come to be known as the world’s finest fighting force. What better place to recruit an individual to fight than in a bar where inhibitions are minimized and fighting is accepted. As the tale goes, the recruiter offered an incentive - a beer to every applicant who enlisted on the spot. One lowly Philadelphian signed up and sat at the recruiter’s table alone. Struggling to meet his quota of two recruits that day, the recruiter upped his enticement plan and offered two beers. With the new pitch a second enlistee signed up, received his two beers and went to sit with the initial enlistee. As the two men started discussing how they were recruited, the first enlistee discovered that he only received one beer while the second enlistee received two. The first enlistee leaned over to the second enlistee and said “Two beers!?! Back in the old corps we only got one beer to sign up.” And so the raillery began between ‘old’ Marines and the new recruits about how difficult things used to be in the “Old Corps.”

The above story is almost certainly fictional lore, but the premise behind military recruiting and the need to attract the right people at the right times translates into the reality within the western world. Through the use of incentives, marketing and creative

thinking by human resource personnel to solve problems in an attempt to meet recruitment demands are foundational pillars of military recruiters today.

This paper identifies Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and argues that when examining Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for recruiting, the Canadian Forces are doing well given the handicaps thrust upon them and can act as an example to the USMC in certain aspects. Furthermore, this paper identifies a few adjustments to current recruiting approaches, which would enable the Canadian Forces to do exceedingly well in the current highly competitive work environment.

Using metrics gleaned from both military and civilian human resource sources, this paper examines the application of military recruiting practices, specifically within the Canadian Forces and the United States Marine Corps. Additionally, this paper is divided into four primary sections of comparative analysis: firstly, a look at both services vacancy rate is achieved; secondly an analysis of recruitment diversity within the forces is looked at; thirdly the subject of retention and job satisfaction is broken down; and finally brand strength is analyzed. By using these for metrics of comparison the forces investigated in a systematic process that brings light to both the strengths and weakness of both organizations recruiting practices.

COMPARING THE FORCES

The planned Canadian Forces military manpower strength is comprised of 68,000 regular force members augmented by approximately 27,000 reserve force personnel.¹ The USMC consists of approximately 187,000 active duty members supplemented by a

¹ Canada. Canadian Armed Forces, last accessed 9 May 2015, http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/faq/Answers_e.asp#four

reserve force that was roughly 39,000 in late 2010.² ³ The above numbers represent what the current respective governments state is the desirable force strength required to meet the national defense needs inherent to the respective forces.

When conducting force structure planning the Canadian government assumes the Canadian Forces may be over or under its goals by as much as 500 active duty applicants within each recruitment fiscal year.⁴ The Marine Corps shoots to maintain its goal by plus or minus 2% in both the active and reserve components.⁵ As will become evident in the subsequent recruiting KPI comparisons, both the Canadian Forces and USMC are excelling in certain recruiting metrics while falling short in others.

Historically, economic conditions within a nation have a direct influence on military recruitment. Poor job markets drive the populous to the military for a steady income while prosperous times lead to challenging periods for military recruiters. At the time of this paper, both the Canadian and US economies are doing well and the civilian job market is strong. Another element to note is the USMC is in a post-war manpower draw down period while the Canadian Forces are attempting to maintain the current force structure goals.

VACANCY RATE

Every large organization runs on either a certain amount of vacancy or surplus in their ranks. Within large military organizations, the dynamics of the environment lead to influxes of personnel. The Canadian Forces and USMC are no different from other

² United States Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Operating Concepts: Third Edition* (Quantico: June 2010) 9.

³ US Department of Defense, *United States Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request: Overview* (Washington DC: 2015), 15 & A-2.

⁴ Lee Berthiaume. "Canadian military facing shortfall of personnel," *Ottawa Citizen*, 15 December 2014.

⁵ US Department of Defense, *United States Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request: Overview* (Washington DC: 2015), 15 & A-2.

organizations in that they forecast personnel strength and strive to hit target numbers within a certain tolerances. By how much an organization misses its target recruitment goal is termed vacancy rate and is one of the KPIs surrounding recruiting efforts, especially when the vacancy rate is rising. According to The Human Resources Metrics Service interpretation guide this “metric measures both recruitment volumes and the demand for labor” within an organization.⁶ It is important to note that “vacancy rate is calculated at a point in time” thus it may be inaccurate based on the recruiting period.⁷ However, “tracking and benchmarking vacancy rates over time will provide important trends within your organization and the market in general.”⁸

Currently the active duty recruiting shortfall for the Canadian Forces is nearly 900 enlistees while the reservist deficit is over 4,500 members.⁹ These numbers represent large vacancies within the forces and highlight a major concern for senior leadership within the organization. The government has stated it recognizes the problems and has put in place adjustments to correct these deficiencies. It is, however important to recognize that a measure of success is the key indicator of a policy shift, not a measure of effort.

Vacancy rate statistics represent a snapshot in time of a problem that is more accurately depicted over a time horizon. When viewed over the recent past, the vacancy rate statistics of regular forces are trending positively in response to what the government has done to address it. As Craig Morehead points out “backed by positive legislation,

⁶ Human Resources Metric Services, “HR Metrics Interpretation Guide.” Last accessed 10 May 2015, <http://www.hrmetricservice.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/HR-Metrics-Interpretation-Guide-v7.1.pdf>

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Lee Berthiaume. “Canadian military facing shortfall of personnel,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 15 December 2014.

work has been done to improve the condition of Canada's military via concerted recruitment efforts.”¹⁰ But he goes on to further to clarify “...yet despite these gains there is still a great deal of room for improvement when it comes to revitalizing the Canadian Forces.”¹¹ Mr. Morehead points out that there is effort, but that effort is producing minimum performance. Although the Canadian Forces active duty vacancy rate has begun to dwindle, the reserve vacancy rate has been increasing and the Canadian Forces are still struggling to meet target recruitment goals in both the regular and reserve components. This problem must be addressed in the near future.

The Canadian Forces are often described as a force that punches above its weight. They have talented officers and non-commissioned members with a desire to succeed at the profession of arms. If the Canadian military wants to continue the successful legacy of their forefathers, they must reduce their vacancy rate in both the regular and reserve forces through well aimed recruiting adjustments to meet tomorrow's challenges. They must make a concerted effort that has effects in order to keep up with the demands of a nation that provides a key component of the world security framework.

A sensational headline referring to US military recruiting practices that was published on the Russia Today website reads: “Military turns down 80 percent of applicants as armed forces shrink.”¹² However, the headline is misleading when attempting to characterize the US military recruiting statistics. The US military has always turned away a large number of ineligible applicants for things such as drug use,

¹⁰ The Atlantic Council of Canada, “Recruitment Woes and Officer Attrition in the Canadian Forces,” last modified 17 July 2014, <http://natocouncil.ca/recruitment-woes-and-officer-attrition-in-the-canadian-forces/>

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Russia Today, “Military turns down 80 percent of applicants as armed forces shrink,” last modified 15 May 2014 <http://rt.com/usa/158992-military-80-percent-rejection-rate/>

obesity, medical issues or lack of a high school education. The actual refusal rate of eligible applicants is much lower than 80%, and military recruiters are known as some of the hardest working members within the US military. They seek out and find the most eligible members of society to serve the country.

Current statistics put the active duty component of the USMC over its desired manpower strength while the reserve component is slightly under manpower goals.¹³ In essence this creates a negative vacancy rate or a force surplus for the regular force constituent. However, the USMC is in a drawdown of its active component and a buildup of its reserve component. It is also pertinent to point out that the USMC plans for approximately 63% turnover rate in the first term Marines, all of whom must be replaced by fresh recruits¹⁴ The burden of replacement placed on USMC recruiters often far exceeds that of other national militaries who have significantly lower turnover rates.

Over the last 15 years, with the exception of the military hypertrophy for the war in Iraq, recruiting for the USMC has been less challenging than in years past. A poor US economy, a military force strength draw down and an immense national pride surrounding the Global War on Terror all made recruiting relatively simple for the USMC. But as alluded to previously, vacancy rates only prove useful over time horizons. The last 15 years have been good in terms of having low vacancy rates but as the top Marine Corps' recruiter, Major General Mark Brilakis, points out "to meet overall spending targets, we've made some economies and that will be a challenge in the

¹³ US Department of Defense, *United States Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request: Overview* (Washington DC: 2015), A-2.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, A-2.

future.”¹⁵ Time will ultimately tell if the USMC recruit surplus is an accurate reflection of the Marine Corps recruiting system.

An organization’s vacancy rate is a clear indicator of what manpower shortfalls or surpluses are present at any given time. Through observation of vacancy rates over a period of time, an organization is able to assess trends in manpower, which can be related to recruiting efforts. Long term surpluses show good recruiting techniques, tactics, procedures and policies while continual shortfalls point to a need for change. Both the USMC and Canadian Forces are at critical crossroads in the recruiting realm. The Canadian Forces needs to decrease vacancy rates, the USMC needs to keep a surplus, both of which are subject to ever increasing fiscal constraint.

DIVERSITY IN RECRUITMENT

As workforce demographics shift within the North American recruiting pool, workplace diversity becomes more of a necessity than a banner to serve political figureheads. Both within the Canadian Forces and the Marine Corps, the need to show a commitment to embracing difference and change is greater than ever. Both countries face a growing immigrant population that makes up a substantial part of the talent pool and within that pool the millennial generation serves as the biggest group of possible employees. Mike Rickheim points out that the unique skills and capabilities millennials can bring to an organization are both societally and economically due to being the most ethnically diverse, well-educated, and technically savvy generation which has ever

¹⁵ Russia Today, “Military turns down 80 percent of applicants as armed forces shrink,” last modified 15 May 2014 <http://rt.com/usa/158992-military-80-percent-rejection-rate/>

existed.¹⁶ Millennials are the future of any organization that wishes to exist over the next 20 years.

According to Statistics Canada, the Canadian immigrant population was 20.6% in 2011 and has continued to grow since the last census.¹⁷ The percentage is considered much larger in urban areas where small diasporas allow for present easier assimilation into new communities. Asia and the Middle East make up the largest portion of the immigration influx.¹⁸ While visible minorities make up nearly 20% of the Canadian population, they only represent 6.4% of the Canadian Forces.¹⁹

The disparity between civilian and military statistics is due to several factors but of growing concern is the inability of the Canadian Forces to permeate certain communities. Large portions of the Asian communities fall into this realm. They view the military as corrupt, harsh, and a poor career choice. While initially this view only appears to be a first immigrant generation perspective, the large diasporas tend to pass their value system down multiple generations with little effective influence from the outside world.

Challenges lie ahead for the Canadian Forces in terms of visible minorities. Militaries seek to be a representation of their nation, both in character and in diversity. Community involvement to break the diaspora misperceptions and barriers is crucial to a successful recruiting process that represents the Canadian populous.

According to Major Clinton D. Alexander “organizational experts tend to agree that diversity fosters multiple points of view with which to solve problems and decreases

¹⁶ Mike Rickheim, “Capturing the Minds and Hearts of Millennials,” *Profiles in Diversity Journal* (November/December 2011): 76.

¹⁷ Statistics Canada, “Immigration and Ethno-cultural Diversity in Canada,” last accessed 6 May 2015, <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011001-eng.cfm>

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Jungvee Park. “A profile of the Canadian Forces,” *Perspectives: Statistics Canada* 75-001-X, (July 2008): 18.

groupthink.”²⁰ He goes on to further state “Organizations that foster diversity also tend to have better teamwork, mission accomplishment and increased recruitment.”²¹ Diversity within the USMC is emphasized with target recruitment goals mirroring continental United States demographics. The US government is in alignment with Alicia Blain when referring to minorities and millennials: “this is a group that will not only be happy seeing diversity in an organization but will almost demand it.”²²

US census data indicates that roughly two thirds of the population is non-Hispanic white, 12.2% is non-Hispanic black or African American, 16.4% is Hispanic or Latino while 4.7% is Asian.²³ The rest of population is mix of other races but make up significantly less of the populous.²⁴ The Marine Corps is comprised of whites making up 66.85% of the force, Hispanics are at 12.38%, blacks constitute 10.65% and Asians make up of fewer than 5%.²⁵ These statistics indicate that USMC recruiting is targeting specific metrics that are aligned to the US population, but when looking further into the statistics a slight disparity arises. The majority of senior officers tend to be white while senior Staff Non Commissioned Officers (SNCOs) tend to be minorities. The deduction is that recruiting is targeting the appropriate demographics but retention isn’t aligned with USMC demographic goals. As will be mentioned further in this paper, retention and recruiting are closely aligned missions that deeply affect each other.

²⁰ Clinton D. Alexander, “Racial Diversity within the Marine Corps” (Master of Military Studies Paper, United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 2008), 6, 7.

²¹ *Ibid*, 6, 7.

²² Alicia Blain, “The Millennial Tidalwave: Five Elements that will Change the Workplace of Tomorrow,” *Journal of the Quality Assurance Institute* 22, no. 2 (April 2008): 12.

²³ United States Census, last accessed 9 May 2015. <http://www.census.gov/>

²⁴ *Ibid*.

²⁵ Clinton D. Alexander, “Racial Diversity within the Marine Corps” (Master of Military Studies Paper, United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 2008), 6, 7.

While USMC recruiting demographic targets appears to be better off than the Canadian recruiting efforts, one glaring inconsistency becomes evident, women in the forces. The Marine Corps is comprised of just 6.8% of women while the Canadian Forces as of January 2014 is made up of 14.8%.^{26 27} Canada is clearly the leading organization at female recruiting when compared to the USMC. By offering excellent benefits such as long periods of maternity leave and a family friendly environment the Canadian Forces both attract and retain many more females than the USMC.

As apparent from the above information, both the Canadian Forces and the USMC are leading agencies in certain aspects of recruiting while falling behind in others. The Canadian Forces should implement a more targeted and focused visible minority recruiting effort similar to the USMC while the Marine Corps needs to address some the recruiting deficiencies surrounding recruitment of females. Both forces can learn from each other in the minority recruitment arena.

RETENTION AND JOB SATISFACTION

A third metric by which to measure the success of any major organization is retention. There are many factors that contribute to the issue of retention, and while the focus of this paper is recruiting, it is essential to have solid retention policies in place in order to recruit the right people initially and keep recruiting requirements low. Ideally, recruit the right people, ensure they are well informed of the military vision for them so

²⁶ Statistic Brain Research Institute, "Women in the Military Statistics," last accessed 2 May 2015, <http://www.statisticbrain.com/women-in-the-military-statistics/>

²⁷ National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, "Women in the Canadian Armed Forces, last modified 6 March 2014, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/news/article.page?doc=women-in-the-canadian-armed-forces/hie8w7rm>

that their vision of life in the military matches reality. This section of the paper reviews several aspects of retention in the Canadian and USMC forces.

“Social realities today are such that the all-volunteer military must compete for a declining population of young Americans whose expectations and aspirations are rising.”²⁸ The discussion of Canada’s retention issues surround the topics of job satisfaction compared to opportunities in the civilian sector and a new generation of recruits – the millennials. The US Marine Corps job satisfaction is high due to great pride of ownership surrounding the title United States Marine, but the issue of a lack of meritocracy does play into recruiting and retention. Additionally, the Canadian forces do have policies that the Marines could benefit from.

Retention in the Canadian Forces is a problem. “The Canadian Forces is short hundreds of full-time members and thousands of reservists, due in part to an unexpected spike in the number of personnel hanging up their uniforms and difficulties attracting and training new recruits.”²⁹ The first aspect of retention requiring assessment is job satisfaction. “Previous research has indicated that measurements of job satisfaction are the most reliable predictor of one's intent to remain with an existing employer.”³⁰ According to Statistics Canada, the main issue surrounding the Canadian Forces is not in job security or peer support, but the psychological and work strain that Canadian Forces duties put on the military members and their family. “Compared with the overall working

²⁸ Elyse W. Kerse, “Quality of Life in the US Marine Corps,” *Navy Personnel Research and Development Center* (1996): 1.

²⁹ Lee Berthiaume, “Early retirements and weak recruitment has the Canadian military facing a shortfall of personnel,” *The National Post*, 16 December 2014.

³⁰ Daniel J. Sullivan, “Job Satisfaction Among United States Navy and Marine Corps Aviation Officers – A Study on the Impact on Career Retention” (Naval Post Graduate School Paper, United States Naval War College, 1998) 11.

population, they [Canadian Forces] reported higher rates of life and job dissatisfaction, job strain, major depression, and self-perceived negative mental health.³¹ The difficulties associated with being away from home and in harm's way can tax both military members and their families. Additionally work stress can lead to alcohol dependence and depression and is noted as being much higher in the military than in the civilian sector.³² Often, military members realize the need to weigh the benefits of the military versus civilian lifestyle. Opportunities in the civilian sector are plentiful given the current economy. Whether due to the strain of a military lifestyle, the drawdown of Afghanistan, or fiscally challenging military environment, many people are opting for better opportunities in the civilian world. The issues that the Canadian Forces face must be dealt with, particularly to the younger generation if the force is to remain a credible employer of choice.

The new generation of youth, dubbed the millennials, creates new challenges for recruiters and retention policy makers. "The demographic shift of the workforce with the increased number of millennials will and does have a large effect on the motivations of younger members of the Canadian Forces for retention."³³ A highly technical group that sees a highly technical future, the millennials have different expectations for their careers than many previous generations. Most don't see themselves in one career for a lifetime, but aspire to have multiple different jobs. While easy to lump together, the millennials are

³¹ Jungvee Park. "A profile of the Canadian Forces," *Perspectives: Statistics Canada* 75-001-X, (July 2008): 27.

³² *Ibid*, 25.

³³ Andrejs Skaburskis, "The Origin of 'Wicked Problems'," *Planning Theory & Practice* 9, no. 2 (2008), 278.

a diverse group with an increasing number of minorities, thus making recruiting something of a wicked problem.

One benefit in which the Canadian Forces offers that serves as an attractive recruiting and retention carrot is the maternity benefits. With almost 15% women in the Canadian forces the ability to take 17 weeks of maternity leave is quite attractive to men and women alike, especially when compared with the USMC maternity leave policy of 6 weeks.³⁴ According to CBI 205.461, “An eligible member is entitled to be paid the allowance prescribed under paragraph (6) to a maximum of 364 days...” consisting of 105 (or 126) days of maternity allowance and up to 259 days of parental allowance.³⁵

The Canadian Forces have some challenges needing response with respect to job satisfaction if they want to retain the experienced force. In addition they will have to make policy changes to accommodate the needs of a new generation if they want to recruit and maintain that younger talent. The maternity policy however is one that the USMC should review as a potential process improvement.

The Marine Corps recruits a very specific type of person, thus making the issues of retention policies and job satisfaction much easier to attain. In general, recruiting for the Marines is directed towards young, motivated youth with a tendency towards excitement, adventure, personal challenge, the desire to be elite and the desire to serve one's country. In her quality of life research within the USMC, Ms. Kerse notes that “... self-esteem and satisfaction with personal development are essential...” to job

³⁴ National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, “Women in the Canadian Armed Forces,” last modified 6 March 2014, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/news/article.page?doc=women-in-the-canadian-armed-forces/hie8w7rm>

³⁵ National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, “Allowances for Officers and NCMs”, last accessed 6 May 2015, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/about-policies-standards-benefits/ch-205-officer-ncm-allowance-rates.page>

satisfaction.³⁶ She goes on to state that a majority of Marines do have these feelings.

“These positive perceptions were related to the idea of the Marine Corps as an elite group, and to satisfaction with training and personal development in the Marine Corps.”

³⁷ Ms. Kerse also notes in her paper that married Marines and Marines with children have different needs surrounding quality of life and as such, strategic policies can be changed to accommodate those demographics.³⁸

As noted earlier in the paper, the Marine Corps only 6.8% of women serving in uniform. For that small percentage one area that could help recruitment, retention and job satisfaction is better maternity benefits. Convalescent leave for female Marines after childbirth is 42 days compared to that of the Canadian Forces which is up to 364 days.³⁹

⁴⁰ Additionally, only 10 days of paternity leave is granted to male Marines and it must be charged as annual leave.⁴¹ Even male Marines would benefit from more lenient regulations surrounding childbirth.

The Canadian Forces and the Marine Corps both have areas from which they could glean important information from each other. Retention and job satisfaction of this young, diverse group of millennials may be improved with slight policy shifts that allow better recruiting and retention in a highly competitive environment.

BRAND STRENGTH

³⁶ Elyse W. Kerse, “Quality of Life in the US Marine Corps,” *Navy Personnel Research and Development Center* (1996): 3.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 3.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 3.

³⁹ National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, “Allowances for Officers and NCMs”, last accessed 6 May 2015, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/about-policies-standards-benefits/ch-205-officer-ncm-allowance-rates.page>

⁴⁰ United States Marine Corps, Marine Corps Order 1050.3J, last modified 19 May 2009, <http://www.marines.mil/Portals/59/Publications/MCO%201050.3J.pdf>

⁴¹ *Ibid*.

Brand Strength is an idea that encompasses the development of a distinctive and memorable brand image – a promotional and marketing tool that reflects the ethos, behavior and culture of the organization – and incorporation of that brand image into vast array of recruiting promotional materials. The release of a national ad campaign using the distinctive brand image is one important aspect of recruiting the desired people into an organization.

The representation of the Canadian Forces in advertisement campaigns directly affects the development and portrayal of their image, thus affecting recruitment.⁴² Over the years, the image that the government wants to display has evolved. One of the significant challenges faced is overcoming disagreement as to the public presentation of the military. Are the Canadian Forces an international fighting force, an international peacekeeping force, or a domestic caretaking force?

The brand strength of the Canadian forces declined significantly after the Somalia Affair in 1993. The traditional representation of the Canadian Forces as a peacekeeping force focusing on the softer, gentler side of the military appeared in the late 90's to have declined in its effectiveness. In the early 2000s, focus groups were recruited to re-define the target audience and determine what type of image to present.⁴³ These groups argued that ads would be more effective if they portrayed “real-life scenarios”⁴⁴ Three 60-second TV ads were aired in the mid-2000s that suggested the political disagreement surrounding the representational shift of the Canadian Forces is still quite high.

⁴² Janis L. Goldie, “Fighting Change: Representing the Canadian Forces in the 2006-2008 Fight Recruitment Campaign,” *Canadian Journal of Communications* 39, no. 3, (2014): 416.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 418.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 418.

The first of the three ads had an international assistance theme. While the ad was well received by its target audience and recruitment surged, it was virtually eliminated by 2008 because of political backlash for focusing too much on combat.⁴⁵ The narrative of the next two ads during that period were focused on domestic issues but maintained the ideas of adventure and danger in addition to helping and rescuing civilians.

“Ideologically, this latter representation may be more palatable for Canadians... [and] are much less of a challenge to prior constructions of the Canadian Forces image and myths...”⁴⁶

These ads demonstrate a shift in the Canadian public, which gravitates towards a new idea: that of the helpful hero. Through the use of imagery and music, the ads highlighted the idea of adventure and danger, but rather than the experience of combat it relies on the idea of helping or rescuing civilians.⁴⁷ “This construction of the Canadian Forces as helping people carries a great deal of ideological weight within the political context of the Canadian people”⁴⁸

The general attitude of the Canadian public is quite different from the American public. However, the target audience is typically the same: 19-29 year olds of every ethnicity and both genders. This audience is typically idealistic, desiring adventure and a sense of importance. The USMC advertisement caters to this desire.

The Marine Corps prides itself on service to the nation and strives to live up to the ideal of the “epitome of military virtue.”⁴⁹ Advertisement campaigns focus on recruiting those who want to make a difference and are looking for a challenge. Marine Corps

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 423.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 425.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 423.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 423.

⁴⁹ United States Marine Corps, *Brand Guide* (16 July 2009), 2.

officials agree that while money and duty-station incentives may help, the most important reason cited young Marines re-enlist is the sense that they're making a difference.

Marines are proud of what they are doing both for the USMC and for their country.

The physical symbol of the Marine Corps is unmistakable. While the general public may not be aware of the symbolism of the colors and objects in the logo itself, they are aware of what it stands for. Perhaps due to the legends and folklore over the past two centuries, the image it conjures up is that of "quiet power and reverence befitting an institution this country has looked to as its protector."⁵⁰ Young men aspire to the Marine Corps because of the image presented that "every Marine is regarded as a respected member of an elite military organization akin to a large family. Marines revel in the feeling of closeness they share, and are steadfastly committed to each other and to the country they serve."⁵¹

Although image presented is one of military lethality, but it does not neglect the virtues of helping those in need. The home page of the USMC recruiting website displays a picture of a young Nepalese boy with the title "We Stand With Nepal" in order to bring into focus on the humanitarian aid provided after the 7.8 magnitude earthquake on 25 April 2015.⁵² While the USMC prides itself on being the best fighting force on the planet, the humanitarian hero mission is often at the forefront of today's media outlets.

Brand Strength is an invaluable tool with regard to public recognition and respect. In order to leverage their advertisement campaigns for recruiting, the Canadian government would be greatly served by agreeing upon a clear vision and image through which to portray their military. The political conflict between branding images of an

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 2.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 2.

⁵² United States Marine Corps homepage, last accessed 12 May 2015. <http://www.marines.mil/>

international fighting force verses a domestic natural disaster force is clear. Whichever way that the government decides to lean, recruitment seems to be increased when idealizing the narrative of the “helpful hero” and the inherent adventure and excitement in those real life situations.

Throughout this section, a comparative analysis was made between four key metrics: vacancy rate, diversity, retention/job satisfaction and brand strength/recognition/respect. As evident from the above, both the USMC and Canadian Forces have strengths and weakness in multiple areas. By looking at each other’s successes, but forces can improve upon their deficiencies. As the next section will point out, other militaries have also seen great success in conquering some of the above challenges.

CONCLUSION

Recruiting is a difficult undertaking for a military, especially in a fiscally challenged military environment that must compete with a booming and vibrant economy. This paper analyzed four Key Performance Indicators from both the Canadian Forces and the US Marine Corps to demonstrate areas in which each military force is deficient and where they excel. Through this analysis, concepts were brought forth to demonstrate that creative solutions to complex problems do exist. The purpose was to provide some common ground between countries and find solutions that improve policies regarding recruiting and retention.

The Canadian Forces are reducing their vacancy rate, and do exceptionally well at recruiting and retaining women, but they struggle to recruit minorities and millennials. They also face a political challenge regarding the representation of the forces to the

public. The US Marine Corps maintains a low vacancy rate, does well at recruiting minorities, and provides exceptional brand strength and recognition for its members. However they do very poorly in recruiting and retaining women.

Despite handicaps of the fiscal environment, political disagreement, and a booming economy, the Canadian Forces are actually doing quite well in their recruiting and retention efforts. The US Marines can learn a lesson from both the Canadians and their policies to recruit and retain women as well as from the Australian Gap Program.

The story of the Marine recruiter and his challenges at Tun Tavern parallels the challenges of the two current militaries, although on a much smaller scale. But the concept of adjusting his recruiting techniques and employing a no-fail attitude still linger and we can learn a lesson from it. If your policy is not working, adjust, and try again. Failure is not an option; the optional is an alternate solution.

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