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## SEPARATION OF MARRIED SERVICE COUPLES: PROBLEM OR PART OF MILITARY LIFE

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**JCSP 43**

***Exercise Solo Flight***

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EXERCISE *SOLO FLIGHT* – EXERCICE *SOLO FLIGHT*

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Military life has always been challenging but families used to be simple. Military life is still challenging but now families are much more complex.

– A senior serving CF member

[Married Service Couples]<sup>1</sup> live at the juncture of two major social institutions, family and the military, both of which involve a complex set of roles and procedures, and both of which make great demands on the individual.<sup>2</sup> Segal<sup>3</sup> described these two social institutions as greedy in that they “both make great demands of individuals in terms of commitments, loyalty, time and energy.”<sup>4</sup> Segal argued that the greediness the military has towards its members has not altered with the changes in society and is more so at odds with military family patterns now than it was decades ago.<sup>5</sup> As such it is observed that changes in family structure and demographics, such as dual military service families, are not necessarily adequately reflected in current Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of National Defence, *Compensation and Benefits Instructions*. Ottawa: Director General Compensation and Benefits, 5 November 2007 version. A married service couple is when an officer or non-commissioned member is a spouse or common law partner of another member. For the purpose of this paper married service couple will be used to depict either married or common law relationships.

<sup>2</sup> René Moelker et al, *Military families and war in the 21st century: Comparative perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 22.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Mady Wechsler Segal is an Associate Director of the Center for Research on Military Organization, and a visiting Professor at the United States Military Academy, West Point. She has served as chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee for the U.S. Army Research Institute's Army Family Research Program, as a member of the National Academy of Sciences Committee on the Performance of Military Personnel, as a Human Resource Consultant to the Secretary of the Army, as a Special Assistant to the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army.

<sup>4</sup> Mady Wechsler Segal, “The Military and the Family as Greedy Institutions,” *Armed Forces & Society*, vol.13, no.1 (Fall 1986): 9.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

At the end of 2016 there were just over 66,000 regular force members in the CAF<sup>6</sup> of which 38,872 of them were married (5,518 women<sup>7</sup> and 33,354 men<sup>8</sup>). Of the married serving regular force members 3,565<sup>9</sup> women and 3,402 men<sup>10</sup> were part of a married service couples.<sup>11</sup> These figures equate to 65%<sup>12</sup> of married women being part of a service couple and only 10%<sup>13</sup> of married men in a married service couple. These statistics show a large population of women who are affected by a policy that is not satisfactorily compensating them when separated due to postings, something the CAF should investigate since it is trying to increase its number of women members. Not only could fairer policies attract more women, but it will also assist in retention of current women.

Married service couples make up 9%<sup>14</sup> of married couples in the CAF a trend that has been increasing over the past fifteen years. In 2001 there were only 2,046<sup>15</sup> women and 2,100<sup>16</sup> men who were part of a married service couple this equates to less than 6%<sup>17</sup> of the married people in the CAF at that time. “[Married service couples] have become increasingly common in

<sup>6</sup> Department of National Defence, “Count of RegF\_ResF by Gender\_Rank since 2001,” Ad Hoc Report Ticket Number 10580, 20 October 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Department of National Defence, “Count of RegF\_ResF by Mar Status\_3+ Dep Count since 2001- Female,” Ad Hoc Report Ticket Number 10580, 20 October 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Department of National Defence, “Count of RegF\_ResF by Mar Status\_3+ Dep Count since 2001- Male,” Ad Hoc Report Ticket Number 10580, 20 October 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Department of National Defence, “Count of RegF\_ResF by Mar Status\_3+ Dep Count since 2001-...”

<sup>10</sup> Department of National Defence, “Count of RegF\_ResF by Mar Status\_3+ Dep Count since 2001- Male” ...

<sup>11</sup> The delta between the two figures equates to same sex marriages, processing separations, recent marriages etc. all reflected in the precise time the data was collected).

<sup>12</sup> Department of National Defence, “Count of RegF\_ResF by Mar Status\_3+ Dep Count since 2001- Female.” Ad Hoc Report Ticket Number 10580, 20 October 2016. In 2016 there were 5518 married women and 3565 were in a married service couple which equates to 65% of married women are in a married service couple.

<sup>13</sup> Department of National Defence, “Count of RegF\_ResF by Mar Status\_3+ Dep Count since 2001- Male.” Ad Hoc Report Ticket Number 10580, 20 October 2016. In 2016 there were 33354 married men and 3402 were in a married service couple which equates to 10% of married women are in a married service couple.

<sup>14</sup> Department of National Defence, “Count of RegF\_ResF by Gender\_Rank since 2001,” Ad Hoc Report Ticket Number 10580, 20 October 2016. In 2016 there were 38872 married people in the CAF 3565 were part of a married service couple which equates to 9% of married people were in a married service couple.

<sup>15</sup> Department of National Defence. “Count of RegF\_ResF by Mar Status\_3+ Dep Count since 2001-...”

<sup>16</sup> Department of National Defence. “Count of RegF\_ResF by Mar Status\_3+ Dep Count since 2001- Male...”

<sup>17</sup> Department of National Defence, “Count of RegF\_ResF by Gender\_Rank since 2001,” Ad Hoc Report Ticket Number 10580, 20 October 2016. In 200 there were 39938 married people in the CAF 2100 were part of a married service couple equates to 6% of married people were in a married service couple.

the past [decade], however there is little research on this type of military family and how their work and family roles are interrelated in achieving a work-family fit.”<sup>18</sup> This is a main reason why it is felt that policies and regulations are not sufficiently reflecting this demographic.

“People are Defence’s most important resource. Both the Department and the Forces rely heavily on the work and expertise of dedicated personnel to ensure the operational effectiveness of the military.”<sup>19</sup> As the CAF recruits, trains, employs and then posts their valuable human resource assets throughout Canada in the quest to meet its priorities of “defending Canada, defending North America and contributing to international peace and security.”<sup>20</sup> These valuable human resource assets must be adequately compensated for the stress they incur when they are separated from their dependants at no choice of their own to meet CAF’s mission. Currently just over 1,100<sup>21</sup> military members are on Imposed Restriction (IR), meaning that they are not located with their dependants. Of those members, 37<sup>22</sup> (74 people) are married service couples that are separated. Again another small group within the CAF however married service couples are providing two assets for the CAF and it should treat them as the valuable resource in which they are. If the CAF is committed to retain these assets, it must start recognizing this group and adapting policies to reflect their distinct needs.

Data extracted from the *Fall 2008 Your-Say Regular Forces Survey and the 2008 Quality of Life Among Families: A Survey of Spouses/Partners of Canadian Forces Members* shows an overwhelmingly higher number of senior members, both senior non-commissioned officers and senior officers on IR than the amount of junior members, both non-commissioned and officers on

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<sup>18</sup> René Moelker et al, *Military families and war in the 21st century: Comparative perspectives* ,... 59.  
<sup>19</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy* (Ottawa: National Defence, 2008), 16.  
<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 7  
<sup>21</sup> Steven Kiroopoulos, (personal email - *Questions Regarding IR Policy*), 13 April 2017  
<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

IR<sup>23</sup>. A main factor for this difference in numbers is that separation is expensive and only senior non-commissioned officers and senior officers whom have a better pay rate can afford to be separated. The extra expenses of being separated would cause financial stress on junior members.

This paper will examine how the current CAF separation expense allowances for married service couples should be changed to better compensate these dual service couples that are separated at no choice of their own. It will outline the background of Separation Expense (SE) allowances and IR policies and detail the changes that took place in 2012 that decreased some of the SE allowances. It will examine the CAF's current policies and see if it is truly taking care of its people. It will look at the fact that married service couples do not have a choice in the separation from their partner. It will explore what can be done better to keep married service couple together, what separation really costs the CAF and what splitting a married service couple really costs the members. It will also evaluate how being separated is affecting quality of life for married service couples. As well, because there is little information on the separation stress faced by married service couples it will be compared to the well studied deployment cycle. Finally, it will compare the raising trend in civilian industry for dual career couples, commonly referred to as commuter marriages, to the separation faced by married service couples.

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<sup>23</sup> Jason Dunn, *Spousal/Partner Employment and Income (SPEI) Project: Phase Three Findings and Final Report* (Ottawa: Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of National Defence, 2011), 174. The report does not delineate between IR and restricted postings.

## BACKGROUND

The CAF has policies regarding members being separated from their dependants, which in many cases results in reimbursement for some costs of living. The CAF has created a status of IR which is the “approved delay of moving dependants and household goods and effects ((D)HG&E) for a specific period of time”<sup>24</sup> and has given career managers the authority to approve this status.<sup>25</sup> IR applies only to instances where one member of a married couple is in the military; it gives the member the option to avoid moving his or her family when posted. It is a status that must be requested by the member and is often asked for due to a family reason such as spouse’s employment or a child’s education, regardless of the reason it is a choice the military member makes. If the IR request is approved these members are granted SE.

“SE is the benefit which flows from IR status to reimburse Canadian Forces members for some additional living expenses resulting from the short-term separation from their ((D)HG&E) as a result of relocation within Canada for service reasons.”<sup>26</sup> SE benefits are governed by Treasury Board (TB) regulations. In general CAF members are eligible for SE if the following circumstances are met: the member’s last position of employment was in Canada and he or she is posted to a new position in Canada, the member is entitled to a move of (D)HG&E to his or her new position but does not move his or her (D)HG&E, the member occupies accommodations

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<sup>24</sup> Department of National Defence, *Canadian Forces Administration Order 209-28*, “Removal Benefits – Movement of Dependants, and/or Furniture and Effects” (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1987), 1.

<sup>25</sup> Military Grievances External Review Committee, “Administration of Imposed Restriction and Separation Expense,” last modified 20 September 2015, <http://mgerc-ceegm.gc.ca/rec/065-eng.html>.

<sup>26</sup> Department of National Defence, *Compensation and Benefits Instructions*, (Ottawa: Director General Compensation and Benefits), 5 November 2007 version.

at his or her new posting and a dependant inhabits the member's principal residence on a full-time basis.<sup>27</sup>

There is often a misconception within the CAF for married service couples regarding IR. It is widely believed by CAF that married service couples when separated by different postings are placed on IR. This is untrue, when posted away from each other married service couples are placed on a restricted posting,<sup>28</sup> but are afforded the same allowance given to members who are approved IR. A restricted posting is demanded by the CAF and IR is a member's choice, meaning that they have requested to be moved away from their dependants. SE allowances changed in 2012 to its current status, which is simply covering accommodations and parking up to a certain amount depending on location within Canada. Prior to 2012 meals, furniture rental expense utilities and daily incidentals were covered as part of the SE benefits. At the end of July 2012 it was announced that all allowances except for rent and parking would cease as of 1 September 2012 due to a "critical review of personnel programs."<sup>29</sup> However, at the end of August that same year it was announced that the implementation of these cuts would be delayed because "the limited time between the release of [the announcement] and its intended 1 September 2012 implementation date did not allow our personnel to adequately prepare themselves or their families for the impact."<sup>30</sup> As such Treasury Board approved delaying the implementing the cuts until 1 February 2013.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Department of National Defence, *Compensation and Benefits Instructions*, (Ottawa: Director General Compensation and Benefits), 5 November 2007 version. A restricted posting means the move of the member's (D)HG&E at public expense to the new place of duty is, for service reasons, prohibited or restricted, in accordance with orders or instructions issued by the Chief of the Defence Staff.

<sup>29</sup> Department of National Defence, *CANFORGEN 145/12 – CF Compensation and Benefit Framework* (Ottawa: ADM (HR-Mil), 2012).

<sup>30</sup> Department of National Defence, *CANFORGEN 159/12 – Changes to Separation Benefits*. (Ottawa: ADM (HR-Mil) 2012).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



## CHOICE

As there is no choice regarding separation for married service couples on restricted postings, SE benefits should be different for these members. Married service couples face many stressors but they are not truly compensated for the stress of being posted apart from their spouse when it is no choice of their own. In the 37 cases noted earlier one or both members of the married service couple would have received a posting message stating where their new position would be, and it would have stated that their new positions are in different geographical locations from each other. Regardless of the sequencing or wording the married service couple is separated due to service requirements not through choice.

The 2002 the *Military HR Strategy 2020, Facing the People Challenges of the Future*, makes several references to putting people first and treating people as the important asset that they are within the CAF. It states “CF members have made a commitment beyond most other members of Canadian Society. They expect and deserve competent leadership and trust that personnel system will respond to their needs.”<sup>32</sup> With 2020 quickly approaching, the CAF has not met these aims within all demographics currently serving in the CAF. Understanding that this is a small component of the CAF, married service couples are falling off the radar regarding many policies. The CAF has direct influence on two valuable assets vice the standard one member family and should treat these two valuable assets as such. In the same document it speaks to fairness and equity and that “the full contribution of all members must be appreciated and recognised to ensure their continued sense of value and commitment to the CF.”<sup>33</sup> By lumping all separations from dependents into one category, even though one group is doing it by

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<sup>32</sup> Department of National Defence, *Military HR Strategy 2020: Facing the People Challenges of the Future*. (Ottawa: ADM (HR-Mil), 2002), 4.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

choice and one group is doing it because the organization is telling them to do so, and by only providing one level of allowances for separation; it is argued that the CAF is not recognizing the level of commitment and contribution its married service couples are making when they are requested to be posted apart.

There ought to be a priority placed on considering married service couples when making policy. Too often recommendations for policy changes are based on single members or members married to a civilian spouse and very little is ever set in place to consider the challenges married service couples face. According to the Compensation and Benefits Instructions (CBI) the intent of SE “is to reimburse Canadian Forces members for some additional living expenses resulting from the short-term separation from their ((D)HG&E) as a result of relocation within Canada for service reasons.”<sup>34</sup> However when a married service couple is separated it is most often not a “short-term” separation; it is more likely to be a minimum of a year. As a normal posting cycle is based on a year, it would not be until the next active posting season (APS) that the married service couple would hope to be reunited geographically.

## **PLANNING**

The CAF is in control of both assets in a married service couple, therefore the CAF should be able to better manage these assets, or they stand to lose one or both of them. In better managing these assets the CAF must do better at planning future postings in order to alleviate separation to the extent possible within service requirements, but if a separation is inevitable, proper benefits should be provided. The CAF, and thus Canada benefits from the employment of married service couples twice; the CAF does not reap the same benefit from a member with a

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<sup>34</sup> Department of National Defence, Compensation and Benefits Instructions, (Ottawa: Director General Compensation and Benefits, 2016) Chapter 208 – Relocation Benefits.

civilian spouse. “[Married] service couples are often seen as a problem for the career management system because most such couples desire “joint domicile,” which requires the military to coordinate assignments of two people.”<sup>35</sup> If married service couples are “seen as a problem for personnel management” in the CAF, it is hard to believe that they are given the proper consideration when postings and relocation are required. When changes in the SE allowance were issued the same CANFORGEN stated that “Career management authorities, in concert with force generators will explore innovative methods to minimize the effects [separation] by remaining vigilant for opportunities to reduce the demand for personnel to be separated from their families for protracted periods.”<sup>36</sup> The CAF career management process does require an Administrative Review (AR) when splitting a married service couple, which includes consult between the members’ career managers to try to find co-located postings and approval for the splitting of the married service couple from Director Military Careers (D Mil C).<sup>37</sup> However the AR is a human process, as such it can be completed at a different standard depending on who is completing the review. Essentially some reviews are merely cursory while others are really given the effort to co-locate the members.

“[Married service couples] face extra demands as the advancement of one career, usually that of the male, generally takes precedence over that of the military female.”<sup>38</sup> This is a harsh reality to face when 65% of married women in the CAF are part of a married service couple. “Separation and stress is magnified for dual member couples when both have mandatory career

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<sup>35</sup> René Moelker et al, *Military families and war in the 21st century: Comparative perspectives...*,27.

<sup>36</sup> Department of National Defence, *CANFORGEN 159/12 – Changes to Separation Benefits...*

<sup>37</sup> Department of National Defence, “Director Military Careers Standard Operation Procedures – Posting Married Service Couples” (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2012), 2.

<sup>38</sup> Elena M. Sherwood, and University of Calgary, “Marital strength in Canadian military couples: A grounded theory approach,” (Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada, 2008), 452.

requirements that must be accommodated.”<sup>39</sup> The demographics of military members are changing. The age-old humorous statement “if the military wanted me to have a family they would have issued me one” actually had a factual basis as many militaries prior to the Korean War predominately recruited young, single men. However this is quickly changing with almost 60% of all regular force members in the CAF married and 9% of them in married service couples. Therefore, the CAF needs to look at the changing demographics of its members and adjust policies to reflect this change. This is not simply something that the CAF members are stating but “Military ombudsman [Pierre Daigle, 2013] says DND must rethink relocation policies for thousands of military personnel.”<sup>40</sup>

“Both the military and the family, like other social institutions, depend for their survival on the commitment of their members.”<sup>41</sup> While only 9% of married people in the CAF are part of a married service couple, which is a relatively small percentage of the total force, they account for 65% of all married women and the CAF must take this into consideration when implementing policies. If the military wants to be an employer of choice<sup>42</sup> they must be able to attract quality people, it is a concern that frequent moves and loss of some allowances are a factor for some people not signing on the dotted line. Also the CAF wants to attract more women and has set a goal of 25% representation, however the CAF has not meet this goal and currently stand at only 14% representation.<sup>43</sup> Of all women in the CAF, 37%<sup>44</sup> are part of a married service couple; this is a large facet of military personnel. If the CAF wants to attract more women, it needs to start

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.,42.

<sup>40</sup> Kathryn May, “Grievances Rise Over Real Estate Losses and Other Costs of Moving Soldiers,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 29 January 2013.

<sup>41</sup> Mady Wechsler Segal, “The Military and the Family as Greedy Institutions,” *Armed Forces...*, 10.

<sup>42</sup> General Jonathan Vance, Chief of Defence Staff, interview by LGen Michel Maisonneuve (retd), 19 August 2016, Vanguard.

<sup>43</sup> Office of the Auditor General of Canada, Report 5—Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention—National Defence (Ottawa: Communications Group, 2016), 1.

<sup>44</sup> Department of National Defence, “Count of RegF\_ResF by Mar Status\_3+ Dep Count since 2001-...

considering how to improve policies for groups that contain a large number of women in order to appeal to this demographic and increase its number.

The CAF stands to gain a force multiplier from married service couples, studies have shown that "...[married service couples] are likely to be more committed to the military way of life and to understand each other's job requirements."<sup>45</sup> So as long as the CAF can fairly compensate these married service couples the military gains two members who are assimilated into the institution.<sup>46</sup> "Couples in which both the husband and wife are Air Force members are more likely to be happily married than couples with [one civilian partner]."<sup>47</sup> To retain married service couples the principal effort required by the CAF is to try to coordinate same location postings. Although this is difficult in all cases the gains in organization commitment may be merit the needed accommodations.<sup>48</sup> "In general, the more the [CAF] adapts to family needs, the more committed will be both service members and their families to the institution."<sup>49</sup>

## COST

Married service couples should not incur extra when they are separated from their partner due to service reasons. Current SE allowances are not effective for married service couples. It is not a choice to be separated and the costs of establishing two households are not completely covered by current SE benefits. The military is benefiting quite literally at the expense of married service couples that are geographically split while the actual cost the military could experience is the cost of losing a member. Stress due to family issues can be a source of serious

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<sup>45</sup> Mady Wechsler Segal, "The Military and the Family as Greedy Institutions," *Armed Forces ...*, 28.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Denis K. Orthner, *Families in Blue: A Study of Married and Single Parent Families in the U.S. Air Force* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, U.S. Air Forces, 1980), 12.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 34.

stress to the member and impair his or her ability to focus and be productive at work. “Health and well-being of military personnel is key to efficiency in military operations, with the well being of their families representing an integral component.”<sup>50</sup>

Married service couples who are separated must pay costs such as internet, cable, phone charges in two locations. These items are arguably not luxury expenses, but a means of being part of the modern world, and they are also a crucial enabler to allow separated families to stay connected. Another expense encountered when members are separated from their spouse (if there are children in the family) is childcare for simple outings; these would be times when normally the other parent would be home to care for the child, but due to separation cost are incurred. There may also be a need for the purchase of another vehicle due to the geographically separation; cases were married service couples would normally commute together to work are no longer possible. All these expenses add up to equal thousands of dollars a month out of the member’s pockets to be separated from their spouse at no choice of their own. Married service couples are, under current policies, paying to be separated from their dependants therefore the CAF is failing to provide adequate support for these members.

SE costs the CAF very little. The average amount paid by the CAF for accommodations is \$1100<sup>51</sup>, plus \$100 for parking which totals \$14,400 per person per year. Approximately \$500,000 a year for the current 37 married service couples who are separated.<sup>52</sup> The cost of training an individual and having him or her qualified to fulfill roles in the CAF far exceeds the annual SE cost of \$14,400 per person per year. Therefore the CAF stands to lose a lot more if

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<sup>50</sup> Janja Vuga and Jelena Juvan, “Work–Family Conflict Between Two Greedy Institutions – The Family and the Military,” *Current Sociology* vol. 61, no. 7 (2013): 1061.

<sup>51</sup> This amount is varied depending on where the member is posted.

<sup>52</sup> Department of National Defence. Compensation and Benefits Instructions, (Ottawa: Director General ...

one or both members of the married service couple releases for the forces, than it does if it adjusts the benefits for married service couples.

The CAF does offer another minor benefit to any member who is separated from his or her dependant(s); this is Leave Travel Assistance (LTA). “The purpose of LTA is to reimburse Canadian Forces members for some expenses paid because of travel on leave to meet a family member.”<sup>53</sup> The CAF will pay the lesser of: the actual cost of return travel by commercial carrier or a mileage rate equal to (kilometric road distance x 2) - 800<sup>54</sup> x Ontario lower kilometric rate<sup>55</sup>. The travel assistance benefit is an entitlement of any CAF member who is separated from his or her dependant(s) for more than 60 days. LTA is authorized once every fiscal year and is not authorized if a member is less than 400 km road distance from his or her dependant(s).<sup>56</sup> One trip a year to see a spouse is not enough to maintain a healthy marriage. Married service couples have a choice, either personally pay the expenses to see each other in order to keep the marriage functioning, or recognize that their marriage will begin to suffer due to the separation. Studies have shown that relationships tend to suffer when couples are away from each other for longer than one month and that separate lives start to develop, communication starts to dwindle and the sense of security felt from being in a relationship starts to decrease.<sup>57</sup> In this sense the military can be seen as a factor in the dissolving of some married service couples marriages due to forced separation and not providing adequate opportunities and reimbursement for reunification.

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<sup>53</sup> Department of National Defence, Compensation and Benefits Instructions, (Ottawa: Director General Compensation and Benefits, 2016) Chapter 209 – Transportation and Traveling Expenses.

<sup>54</sup> A member is not entitled to LTA if he or she is less than 800 km from his or her dependant(s).

<sup>55</sup> Ontario lower kilometric rate in Appendix A of the National Joint Council Commuting Assistance Directive, as amended from time to time.

<sup>56</sup> Department of National Defence. Compensation and Benefits Instructions. Ottawa: Director General...

<sup>57</sup> Elena M. Sherwood, and University of Calgary, “Marital strength in Canadian military couples: ...”, 44.

When the Australian Defence Force (ADF) separates one of its members from his or her dependant(s) the ADF reimburses for rent, meals, and utilities as well as provides members with a separation allowance<sup>58</sup>. The ADF defines separation allowances as a compensation provided to members “for the time they spend away from their dependants for Service reasons”.<sup>59</sup> It is used to compensate for the effects of separation on the member and to cover additional costs incurred due to that separation above the costs specifically reimbursed. Another benefit the ADF offers their members who are posted away from their dependants for service reasons is reunion travel. “For each reunion visit, the Commonwealth will pay no more than the cost of a return economy class air fare from the member's place of duty to their dependants' home location in Australia.”<sup>60</sup> This entitlement is capped at six trips per year. As well the ADF offers members two other types of paid travel entitlements to allow members to reunite with their family; however paid travel cannot exceed a combined total of seven trips a year.<sup>61</sup> The ADF does not differentiate between married service couples and members who choose to be posted away from their dependants for family reason, however they compensate all separated members better than the CAF does. The average amount paid to a member of the ADF who is separated from his or her dependants is approximately \$6000<sup>62</sup> per month. Compared to the \$1200 per month offered to members of the CAF. Also the ADF offers seven paid trips to reunite with dependants whereas the CAF offers only one.

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<sup>58</sup> Department of Defence, Australian Defence Force Pay and Conditions Manual (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2009), Chapter 8 Part 3 Division 2.

<sup>59</sup> Department of Defence, Australian Defence Force Pay and Conditions Manual (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2009), Chapter 4 Part 2B Division 3.

<sup>60</sup> Department of Defence, Australian Defence Force Pay and Conditions Manual (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2009), Chapter 9 Part 3 Division 4.

<sup>61</sup> Department of Defence, Australian Defence Force Pay and Conditions Manual (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2009), Chapter 9 Part 4 Division 1.

<sup>62</sup> This amount is in Australian dollars which is the equivalent of \$1.03 Canadian Dollars therefore the exchange rate is negligible for comparison, Currency Encyclopedia, last accessed 2 May 2017, <http://www.xe.com/currency/aud-australian-dollar?c=CAD>. This amount is based on rent levels for Brisbane. This amount will vary depending on location of member, which is directly tied to the amount members are given for rent.



The current financial cost to the CAF of separating married service couples is minimal however the costs to the institution are large if this group demographic is not appropriately represented under fair policies. If this group is not sufficiently represented the CAF may not be able to retain large portions of this group. Training individuals and investing the time to allow them to gain experience is far more expensive to the CAF than merely increasing SE allowance for married service couples. “[C]ompanies are realizing that employee retention is an important as recruiting. Talent acquired is talent squandered if it is not retained.”<sup>63</sup> The CAF must start realizing this as well.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

A married service couple’s quality of life is decreased through separation which they did not choose. Periods of work related separation negatively impacts family members and are classified as some of the worst stressor a family can endure because “they tend to create ongoing challenges associated with separations and reunions that can create role confusion in both the separating family member and members of their household.”<sup>64</sup> The CAF must realize that family significantly impacts a military member’s decision whether to leave the CAF. When the family is content the member will remain with the forces longer,<sup>65</sup> and the intent to remain in the military is dependent on the member’s opinion of the quality of life in the CAF.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Lorraine Bello and Galen Tinder, “Dual Career Implications on Workforce Mobility,” *Benefits and Compensation Digest* vol.46, no. 9 (September 2009): 37.

<sup>64</sup> Dennis K. Orthner and Roderick Rose, “Work Separation Demands and Spouse Psychological Well-Being,” *Family Relations* vol.58, no. 4 (October 2009): 392.

<sup>65</sup> Gary L. Bowen, “Satisfaction with Family Life in the Military,” *Armed Forces and Society* vol.15, no 4 (Summer 1989): 586-589.

<sup>66</sup> Mady Wechsler Segal and David R. Segal, “Implications for Military Families of Changes in the Armed Forces of the United States”, in *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military*. (New York: Kluwer Academic/ Plenum Publishers, 2003), 227.

There has been much research done on the stages of deployment both within the military and civilian communities, but little, if any, research has compared the deployment cycle to the same cycle faced by military families going through separation due to restricted postings. However it is in the author's opinion that, having experience several deployments and being placed on a restricted posting a few times, the stages experienced in both cases are very similar. Analysts have varying views on exactly how many stages make up the deployment cycle, but there is consensus in the community on the subsets of issues that arise. According to Pincus the emotional cycle of deployment consist of "five phases which are: Pre-deployment, Deployment, Sustainment, Re-deployment and Post-deployment."<sup>67</sup> Being separated due to a restricted posting, members and family may not go through every stage of the deployment cycle in the same way as a deployment but they certainly do go through many of the same emotions and actions. The preparing to leave, gone, come home again cycle is a difficult and emotional sequence, however the intensity of this cycle would be lessened with more frequent reunion trips. A restricted posting is often felt to be more disrupting than deployments to family life as the comings and goings are more frequent and disruptive to family left behind, this is dependent on how long the member is gone and how often he or she returns home. Preparing for the member to leave, trying to get everything that needs to be accomplished while he or she is home. Life then moves on when the member is away, and then the family is preparing for the homecoming. This is often met with happiness to have the returning member home, but confusion of family roles and struggles to connect emotionally.<sup>68</sup> "Deployment is regarded as one of the most

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<sup>67</sup> LTC Simon H. Pincus et al, "The Emotional Cycle of Deployment: A Military Family Perspective" last accessed 8 May 2017, <https://msrc.fsu.edu/system/files/The%20Emotional%20Cycle%20of%20Deployment%20-%20A%20Military%20Family%20Perspective.pdf>

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

stressful events that military couples endure.”<sup>69</sup> A Pentagon survey stated that 46% of military spouses said that separations source of high stress in their lives.<sup>70</sup> Therefore separation due to posting for married service couples is equally as stressful due to the correlation to the deployment cycle. Although members are separated from their dependant(s), in contrast to restricted postings deployed members receive superior financial benefits, as well as free rations and quarters where no actual benefits are received and costs are incurred when members are placed on a restricted posting.

“The satisfaction and well-being of service members’ families is key to the health and well being of military personnel and the health and well being of military personnel is vital for the effectiveness of military operations.”<sup>71</sup> The military makes unusual demands on its members and their families. While each specific claim on the member can be found in other occupations, the military is almost distinctive in [demanding] the collective group of requirements.”<sup>72</sup> These demands affect the quality of life of its members in ways that no other institutional demands do.

“Recruitment, morale, and retention of military personnel are affected by family members’ attitudes toward the military lifestyle.”<sup>73</sup> This means that the CAF stands to lose one or both members of the married service couple due to quality of life issues if policies are not modernized to keep up with changing family demographics such as married service couples.

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<sup>69</sup> Elena M. Sherwood, and University of Calgary, “Marital strength in Canadian military couples: ...”, 44.

<sup>70</sup> Karen M. Pavlicin, *Surviving Deployment: A Guide for Military Families* (St.Paul: Elva Resa Publishing, 2003), 5.

<sup>71</sup> Janja Vuga and Jelena Juvan, “Work–Family Conflict Between Two Greedy Institutions – The Family and the Military,” *Current Sociology* vol. 61, no. 7 (2013): 1061.

<sup>72</sup> Mady Wechsler Segal, “The Military and the Family as Greedy Institutions,” *Armed Forces ...*, 15.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

“Due to various social changes in ... society and in military family patterns, there is greater conflict now than in the past between these two...institutions.”<sup>74</sup>

## COMMUTER MARRIAGES

It may be argued that commuter marriages, which are classified as when a married couple spends three to four days separation period each week in which they live in different residences,<sup>75</sup> are becoming increasingly “normal” in the private sector so why is separating a married service couple such a concern? Commuter marriages are a choice and are seen as an alternative to relocating the entire family but still maintain a desired career for both spouses. Currently there are approximately 3.5 million commuter marriages in the U.S.<sup>76</sup> Commuter marriages require a mass amount of compartmentalization of work and home life. The individual must focus on work during the week and then switch to family requirements on the weekend. Studies of commuter marriages often use military personnel as an example.<sup>77</sup>

The main reason why the CAF cannot follow the trend and say that commuter marriages are the way of the future and that members must get use to this phenomenon created by dual working partners is because the Canada First Defence Strategy says the CAF will put people first. This means that the CAF needs to start effecting policies that better reflect the changing family dynamics; especially when two people of a married service couple have signed on the dotted line. Another main factor the CAF has to start considering is the changing dynamics of the military family as stated by the CDS “...people need an element of individualization and

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>75</sup> Linda K. Stroh, “Does Relocation Still Benefit Corporations and Employees?” *Human Resource Management Review* vol.9, no.3 (1999): 301.

<sup>76</sup> Nicole C. Brambila, “Together Apart: Commuter Marriages on the Rise,” *USA Today*, 20 February 2012.

<sup>77</sup> Linda K. Stroh, “Does Relocation Still Benefit Corporations and Employees?” *Human Resource ...*, 300.

customization in their military career that allows them to continue to serve in a satisfying way.”<sup>78</sup>

The CDS has fundamentally said that not everyone in the CAF is the same, so the CAF needs to stop applying policies to everyone at the same value. This is something the current CDS has identified, now the follow through must be accomplished and policies must be changed.

## CONCLUSION

There’s no life like it!

– The iconic slogan of a long-running CF recruiting campaign in the 1980s

There truly is no life like it. This statement can have both positive and negative connotations and unfortunately unless the CAF starts to better develop policies that are reflective of the changing family structure there is going to be more negative than positive associations. Increases in the number of women and the number of married service couples are important changes in the CAF family demographics. SE policies should be altered for married service couples to better represent these changes to the membership of the CAF. The CAF should not expect married service couples that are separated through no choice of their own to incur the extra costs caused by the separation and the married service couple should be provided with additional benefits to enable more visits. In this regard married service couples should be entitled to more benefits than military members married to a civilian spouse who have the ability to choose whether they are separated or not. Separation is expensive, as pointed out in the 2008 Your-Say Regular Forces Survey and the 2008 Quality of Life Among Families: A Survey of Spouses/Partners of Canadian Forces Members only senior members who have a comfortable income can afford to be separated from their partner. Married service couples who are separated cannot be expected to incur a financial burden for being separated.

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<sup>78</sup> General Jonathan Vance, Chief of Defence Staff, interview by LGen Michel Maisonneuve (ret), ...

Being separated from your partner is stressful. Prolonged separation, frequent, short reunions and financial strain are hard on a marriage, as noted earlier in this paper studies have found that marriages start to suffer after a month separation. These issues put additional burden on members, which in turn makes them less productive at work and thus hurts the institution. It is a vicious circle with only two ways to break the cycle; either the CAF implements new policies reflective of the changing family demographic or members will grow increasingly unhappy and release.

There is an increase in change of family structures and demands. “Whereas the traditional family of a bread-winner husband and a homemaker wife was once the dominant model, there has been an increase [variations of family structure].”<sup>79</sup> These new family structure are challenging the military culture and institutional policies, and the CAF will either need to change its policies to reflect these new needs or it stands to lose valuable asset, something which it cannot afford.<sup>80</sup> “The more the [CAF’s] action makes [married] service couples and their families truly hear and believe the message that “the military takes care of its own,” the less will be the conflict between the two ... [institutions].”<sup>81</sup> The CAF has to take this seriously and realize if they want good people to serve at top performance than they have to support those people accordingly.

The current CAF policies regarding separation from a members’ dependant(s) needs to be changed for married service couples. The end state is married service couples cannot be expected to pay out of pocket costs to be separated from their spouse when it is not a choice that they get to make. The ADF has a robust system in place that as ample of reimbursements and

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<sup>79</sup> René Moelker et al, *Military families and war in the 21st century: Comparative perspectives...*,37-38.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid ., 69.

<sup>81</sup> Mady Wechsler Segal, “The Military and the Family as Greedy Institutions,” *Armed Forces ...*, 34.

allowance to ensure out of pocket costs are not incurred by its members when separated from their dependant(s). The AR policy which must be done to separate a married service couple is a good start at delineating the policy to take into account different situations; however it must be completed at the same standard for all married service couples.

CAF's members are its most important tool in completing its mission set forth in the Canada First Defence Strategy. Its personnel have shifted from predominately young single men to members, both men and women, who have dependants. The CAF has come alone way to change policies to reflect this change in personnel however the CAF must remain aware that social demographics are not stagnant and as such CAF's policies must be ever changing to reflect the new environment.

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