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## THE CHALLENGE IN APPLYING LAND POWER

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**JCSP 44**

**SERVICE PAPER**

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**THE CHALLENGE IN APPLYING LAND POWER**

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## THE CHALLENGE IN APPLYING LAND POWER

### AIM

1. This paper will discuss the single greatest challenge that the Canadian Army (CA) will have in applying Land Power over the next ten years. That challenge is to maintain enough soldiers to meet future demands. The intent of this paper is to identify areas of focus which the CA could leverage to mitigate this challenge and sufficiently prepare for the future. It suggests a study be conducted to determine the ideal posting length in a geographical location, as it would be of greatly aid the management of its personnel.

### INTRODUCTION

2. It is widely recognized that the CA is dependent on the soldiers within it. Soldiers form the core of what Land Power is able to accomplish. Strong, Secure, Engaged (SSE) Canada's Defence Policy highlights the requirement to grow the regular force.<sup>1</sup> The problem the CA has is to enroll and retain the appropriate people, ensuring it has sufficiently high quality soldiers to permit it to meet future requirements. At first glance, this problem is beyond the scope of the CA to affect. However, a deeper look identifies there are activities which the CA could perform to improve the results from the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) recruiting and CA training systems.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged. Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa: Minister of National Defence, 2017), 13.

Equally, there are activities which could greatly improve retention. This paper will suggest some improvements that the CA could make to ensure it maintains quality soldiers.

3. The Canadian political climate will likely be a challenge to improving the quality of soldier that the CA is able to recruit and retain. The struggle is between effectiveness and efficiency, as the CAF is unlikely able to do both. The CA must be effective, as soldiers will need to complete their tasks regardless of the danger involved. This inevitably costs money. The government is concerned with efficiency of the CAF, as to cost as little as possible to taxpayers. This political reality will limit the possibilities identified in this paper, but the examined activities and recommendations which the CA could perform and their resulting effects should be of net benefit to increasing the quality of soldier in the CA. For recruitment it suggests: more direct involvement in recruiting, improving recruiters' knowledge of CA trades, leveraging relationships at the headquarters level, raising morale and synchronizing training. For retention it suggests: changing the garrison force structures, obtaining more ammunition, increasing posting length and lengthening command tours.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Recruitment**

4. The Canadian population is aging and there are fewer young people. "On July 1, 2017, 6,195,544 Canadians, or one out of six people (16.9%), was at least 65 years of age. The gap is widening compared with the size of the population aged 0 to 14 years, which was 5,877,081

(16.0%).”<sup>2</sup> Consequently all employers will be competing for the best candidates for their jobs. The CAF cannot expect to attract the best candidates without actively improving both the messaging and employment of its members. SSE identifies that the CAF will have to change to be more competitive in the job market.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, the CAF will have no choice but to focus on “equitable gender relations and family norms.”<sup>4</sup> Within the CA, that messaging is of even more importance because when a citizen enters a recruiting centre, the CA is in direct competition with the other elements to attract that person. This leads to several specific recommendations for how to improve the CA’s results at the recruiting centres:

- a. More direct involvement. Additional land personnel within the recruiting system and centres will ensure sufficient CA involvement in recruiting activities. Although these soldiers will be mandated to focus on CAF recruiting goals and not those of the CA in particular, the CA Corps and Branch structure encourages loyalty, and the expertise they will bring towards their own trades will be significant. Additional army uniforms in recruiting centres can only improve both visibility and knowledge within the recruiting system;

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<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, “Annual Demographic Estimates: Canada, Provinces and Territories, 2017,” last accessed 28 January 2018, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-215-x/91-215-x2017000-eng.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged. Canada’s Defence Policy* (Ottawa: Minister of National Defence, 2017), 22.

<sup>4</sup> Leigh Spanner, “Governing “dependents”: The Canadian Military Family and Gender, a Policy Analysis,” *International Journal* 72, no. 4 (2017): 487.

- b. Improve knowledge. The recruiting system suffers from several challenges, including recruiters not knowing enough about some CA trades to speak intelligently about them.<sup>5</sup> As this gap exists for some recruiters and it appears that the recruiting system is unable to address these shortfalls, a proactive approach would be to take steps to ensure that more recruiters understand these trades. The poorly recruited CA trades from the last several years should be the focus. However, without access to several years of previous Strategic Intake Plan (SIP) Scorecards from March, a possible starting list from using the SIP Scorecard from November 2017 (Annex A) is below. The Officer trades in the greatest need at this time are Armoured and Artillery. The Non-Commissioned Member (NCM) trades in the greatest need are (in order): Army Communication and Information Systems Specialist, Vehicle Technician, Electronic-Optronics Technician-Land, Geomatics Technician, and Armoured Soldier. In order to improve knowledge of these trades, the CA should reach out to recruiters and bring them to their closest geographical area where these trades are employed and explain their work conditions and duties. The CA should also consider exploiting one of the first days of Exercise COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT as an opportunity to educate recruiters;

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<sup>5</sup> Office of the Auditor General of Canada, “Report 5 – Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention – National Defence,” last accessed 28 January 2018, [http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_oag\\_201611\\_05\\_e\\_41834.html](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_201611_05_e_41834.html), para 5.53.

- c. Leverage relationships. The Army G1 is tasked with balancing the needs of each Corps and Branch against what they believe that the Vice Chief of Defence Staff (VCDS) will support for the SIP. However, the VCDS has been unable to set recruiting targets to the indicated need.<sup>6</sup> As the CA is in direct competition with the other elements to fill its own requirements, it behooves the CA to improve that relationship both on a personal and staff level. More interaction and communication could improve the results obtained at the recruiting centres. Given that the SIP Scorecard November 2017 (Annex A) is 67% of the way through the recruiting year; an oversimplified analysis indicates that one should expect most trades to be 67% recruited. The CA results are 62% for Officers, which is likely acceptable, but the NCMs results are only 47%, well below where they should be at this point. Better relationships and more interest on the part of the CA may improve these numbers;
- d. Raise morale. It has long been recognized that one of the most important aspects of the CA is soldiers' morale.<sup>7</sup> One of the most important, likely underutilized, resources that the CA has is its own soldiers. Happy soldiers tell everyone they meet about how great their jobs are, whereas unhappy soldiers complain to everyone about everything. If Units have high morale, their soldiers are more

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<sup>6</sup> Office of the Auditor General of Canada, "Report 5 – Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention – National Defence," last accessed 28 January 2018, [http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_oag\\_201611\\_05\\_e\\_41834.html](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_201611_05_e_41834.html), para 5.42.

<sup>7</sup> J.G. Shillington, "morale," *The RUSI Journal* 156, no. 2 (2011): 96.

likely to pass positive messages when interacting with members of the Canadian public. Nothing is worse than units with low morale participating in community outreach events and passing along the opposite message to Canadians. Unit Commanding Officers (COs) have several means to raise morale at their disposal, and should be empowered to raise morale. They should be very concerned with their unit's morale, and should have support from their superiors in making efforts to improve it; and

- e. Synchronize training. The recruiting system's mandate is to select the best candidates for the trades available, deliver them to St-Jean-sur-Richelieu and ends when the candidates have completed basic training. It then becomes the CA's responsibility to deliver their occupational training.<sup>8</sup> The CA training system has poor linkages to the recruiting system, as training units have a tendency to not receive notice that new soldiers are coming until after they have physically arrived. Advance notice may permit planning. Additionally, the CA should work more closely with Recruiting to ensure that certain trades are recruited at the correct time of year so as to minimize wait times at the training units. As far as the new recruits are concerned, waiting for training can be a major source of dissatisfaction. There are several CA trades with longer than average waiting

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<sup>8</sup> Office of the Auditor General of Canada, "Report 5 – Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention – National Defence," last accessed 28 January 2018, [http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_oag\\_201611\\_05\\_e\\_41834.html](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_201611_05_e_41834.html), para 5.59.



times.<sup>9</sup> It is up to the CA to address these issues and synchronize trade training with basic training. However, as each trade and training unit is different making substantial recommendations for each is beyond the scope of this paper.

## **Retention**

5. The other aspect required to maintain the appropriate number of quality soldiers is retention. They are two sides of the same coin, as the overall goal is to ensure sufficient quantity of quality soldiers. If steps are not taken to improve retention it is unlikely that recruiting efforts alone will increase the number of soldiers within the CA. Job satisfaction is required to maintain employees in any industry. A component of this which has already been discussed is morale. High morale encourages soldiers to remain in the CA and reduce turnover. This would in turn reduce training costs and the burden placed on the recruiting system, and save the government money. To demonstrate to trained soldiers that they are important to the organization and improve their job satisfaction, the CA should examine:

- a. Force structures. As operations have primacy within the CA, everything ought to be done with that in mind. However, deployed operations force structures vary greatly compared to garrison structures. They should not. If these force structures were similar, it would permit a more equitable distribution of work, and could

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<sup>9</sup> Office of the Auditor General of Canada, “Report 5 – Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention – National Defence,” last accessed 28 January 2018, [http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_oag\\_201611\\_05\\_e\\_41834.html](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_201611_05_e_41834.html), exhibit 5.3.

help to ensure that operational tempos across the CA are similar. To fix this, the first step would be to determine what the preferred force structure would be for a major deployment and then rebalance CA positions to match it. If the CA views garrison employment as training for deployed operations, this recommendation would meet the train as you fight axiom. Additionally, this should include the appropriate level headquarters for the force as well, with the expectation that it would grow in a joint deployment. Looking at the problem from the Combat Service Support (CSS) perspective, in garrison CSS soldiers are organized into Service Battalions with four companies of similar size: Transportation, Supply, Maintenance and Administration. However, on deployed operations these soldiers are normally employed in National Support Element organizations, which tend to have Supply and Transportation companies merged, a similarly sized Maintenance company and a smaller Administration company. If the preferred deployed total force solution was identified it could be enlarged and replicated for garrison employment. This would permit a redistribution of some trades' positions into others to ensure each had the same likelihood of being deployed, thus rebalancing workloads. Currently, CSS soldiers are a weakness in supporting sustained deployments, and this proposed solution should stop that from being the case. It should be noted that this proposed solution does not address garrison support duties which would have to be added in following the restructure, but this method would ensure a balance between CA trades. Garrison support units may

be an ideal place to employ non-deployable CSS soldiers<sup>10</sup> who are still capable of performing their primary functions, much like range control could be a good place to employ non-deployable combat arms soldiers.

- b. Ammunition. Small arms ammunition is purchased by ADM (Mat) and allocated to the CA through the VCDS. Budget cuts have reduced the amount of ammunition that each soldier receives on a yearly basis, without providing a mechanism for units to purchase their own. While the logic of ensuring that appropriate tests have been completed on ammunition prior to firing it is sound, the CA must push back and obtain more rounds for their soldiers. Although some range training can be done using electronic ranges, all soldiers must go to the range more frequently than once a year, and should fire more than 49 bullets when at the range. Infantry soldiers in particular ought to be frequently at the ranges, as marksmanship is the core of what they do.
- c. Postings. Geographic instability was an aspect highlighted in the Auditor's report on retention which the CAF poorly addressed.<sup>11</sup> Canada's demographic has changed, and there are currently far more two income families in Canada than in the past. In fact, "the labour force participation rate of women reached 82% in

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<sup>10</sup> Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged. Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa: Minister of National Defence, 2017), 22.

<sup>11</sup> Office of the Auditor General of Canada, "Report 5 – Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention – National Defence," last accessed 28 January 2018, [http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_oag\\_201611\\_05\\_e\\_41834.html](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_201611_05_e_41834.html), para 5.113.

2014.”<sup>12</sup> In the past the system was designed on posting the male soldier, and having his wife happily quit her employment, if any, and move to the new location.<sup>13</sup> Career Managers (CMs) should now expect that over 80% of their soldiers have a spouse that is also employed. While the need to be mobile in the CA is obvious, there must be additional allowances made for what families’ desire, as the demographics have changed significantly. The old approach simply no longer applies. When families change provinces every two or three years it not only becomes difficult for spouses to find employment, but it also has a negative net effect on quality of life for some. Prior to posting a soldier, the CMs should first be asking themselves if the posting is necessary. However, there is a danger of soldiers staying in place for too long and then not wanting to move again. Further study should be undertaken to determine the ideal length for postings, but it is suggested that four to eight years may be the needs of both the CA and the families.

- d. Command tour length. Some units have so many responsibilities that their soldiers work at maximum capacity throughout most of the year. This constant high workload can prevent opportunities to reach out to Canadian communities and prevents participation in morale raising opportunities. In an operational unit, this

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<sup>12</sup> Statistics Canada, “The surge of women in the workforce,” last accessed 28 January 2018, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2015009-eng.htm>.

<sup>13</sup> Leigh Spanner, “Governing “dependents”: The Canadian Military Family and Gender, a Policy Analysis,” *International Journal* 72, no. 4 (2017): 488.

may be due to the difference in command appointments and the CA Managed Readiness Plan (MRP). Each Unit CO likely wants to make an impact on the organization, and if a particular CO is assigned Reconstitution and Road To High Readiness, they are unlikely to have an opportunity to do so. The entire unit would benefit from having a command team stay for the entire duration of the cycle, and it would lengthen the posting for the command team.

## **CONCLUSION**

6. This paper identified that soldiers are the single biggest threat in applying land power in the future. Although the CA does not control the recruiting system, there are several different activities it could undertake to improve the problem. By filling the recruiting system with excellent soldiers we should expect improved likelihood of meeting recruiting goals. If the CA were to seize the initiative and take steps to ensure that naval and air force recruiters could speak to the CA's trades it would be more likely to ensure that the correct candidates are selected for CA trades. By fostering relationships with the VCDS the CA may expect to be assigned a larger portion of the SIP. Raising morale the CA will help spread a better message about itself as an employer. Synchronizing training will reduce wait times and have qualified soldiers at the units more quickly. To address retention the CA must treat trained soldiers as an asset. By restructuring force structures workloads will be balanced. Obtaining additional ammunition will permit soldiers to train as though they are soldiers. By slowing down geographical postings the CA will address the new Canadian family demographics. Finally, by synchronizing command

tours to the MRP, the CA will end up with command teams in better touch with the soldiers of their units. Steps must be taken to ensure that the CA remains a competitive employer to the average Canadian; otherwise there will not be enough soldiers to complete all of the tasks the government expects.

## **Annex**

### **A. SIP Scorecard November 2017**

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