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## INVESTING IN FORCE DEVELOPMENT WARRIORS TO DELIVER THE FLEET OF TOMORROW

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**JCSP 46**

**Service Paper**

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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE – COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES

JCSP 46 – PCEMI 46  
2019 – 2020

SERVICE PAPER - ÉTUDE MILITAIRE

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Word Count: 2,528

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Nombre de mots : 2,528

# INVESTING IN FORCE DEVELOPMENT WARRIORS TO DELIVER THE FLEET OF TOMORROW

## AIM

1. The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) is undergoing its largest peacetime renewal in the history of its service. With over 80 billion dollars of Defence spending over the next few decades, the need to develop skilled and knowledgeable naval personnel at senior rank levels capable of delivering this much needed capability is imperative.<sup>1</sup> In the RCN's Strategic Plan 2017-2022, investing in Force Development (FD) Warriors is identified as one of the five initiatives enabling the RCN's strategic objective of delivering Canada's future fleet.<sup>2</sup> This service paper describes how the RCN can operationalize the FD Warrior concept.

## INTRODUCTION

2. Traditionally, personnel are posted to FD positions never having worked in project delivery nor at the National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ). While naval officers have extensive operational experience, they are consistently ill-prepared for the complexities of working in the highly bureaucratic and process-driven world of Project Approval. The typical acclimation time is approximately six months for new and motivated personnel, and longer for others. During this period, the progress made on moving files through a complex system can be significantly impacted as the newly posted Project Director (PD) learns a different process and identifies the key stakeholders engaged in the delivery of projects. Hence, the adage that sailors become experts by virtue of their posting message is not a satisfactory approach as the RCN endeavours to deliver the future fleet. On larger files such as those related to the National Ship Strategy (NSS), in addition to understanding the development of capabilities, the FD Warrior must also appreciate the nuances of how the RCN's future fleet can be brought online.<sup>3</sup> Careful selection of incumbents capable of "coordinating complex activity and laying the intellectual groundwork that will support what we (the RCN) are doing and where we are heading" is critical to success.<sup>4</sup> The current number of naval personnel capable of executing these duties is limited, as are their career progression opportunities.

3. Recognizing that the status quo is no longer effective, in 2014 the Director General Naval Force Development (DGNFD) tasked the Director Naval Requirements (DNR) to conduct a preliminary training needs analysis for PDs and Section Heads.<sup>5</sup> While some of the results of this report inform the options presented in this service paper,

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

<sup>2</sup> National Defence, *Royal Canadian Navy Strategic Plan 2017-2022* (Ottawa, ON: National Defence. 2018).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>5</sup> Director Naval Requirements, "Preliminary Training Needs Analysis (TNA) Report: Project Directors – Director Naval Requirements (DNR)", RDIMS #346848, dated 26 November 2015. The status quo currently includes a half-day orientation session, a three-day Project Approval Course, and informal on-the-job mentoring from senior personnel.

a broader view is taken to account for the particularities of delivering on complex projects. Accordingly, the operationalization of FD Warriors requires two lines of effort: developing the required FD skills and expertise; and evolving the career management process. This approach ensures the right individuals are carefully managed as FD Warriors throughout the latter part of their career.

## DISCUSSION

4. To operationalize the FD Warrior concept, the first line of effort consists in identifying: the required skills, including both the technical and soft skills required; core training requirements; and specialized education requirements to perform the duties required of a FD Warrior. The second line of effort, evolving the career management process consists in identifying personnel who demonstrate the aptitude to be a FD Warrior; shifting personnel to an appropriate occupational stream; and designating specific FD Warrior employment opportunities.

### Line of Effort #1 – FD Warrior Skills and Expertise

5. Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Leadership Doctrine states that effective leaders must strive “to achieve reliable and resilient performance” by developing individual and team/unit capabilities, shaping or influencing unit and situational conditions, and effectively employing individual and collective capabilities to accomplish the mission.<sup>6</sup> McConville asserts that while an individual may be a good leader in the operational domain, this does not guarantee that they will be a good manager in a FD environment.<sup>7</sup>

6. In 2018, the Deputy Minister of National Defence hired David Perry, the Vice President, Senior Analyst and Fellow with the Canadian Global Affairs Institute to conduct a review of DND’s procurement process. The Perry Report highlighted that one of the significant challenges to the timely delivery of equipment was the lack of core competencies and specialized training in FD personnel.<sup>8</sup> Thus, a key leadership challenge resides in ensuring naval personnel possess the required skills, aptitudes, and competencies to empower them as FD Warriors to deliver the future fleet.

7. Required Skills. McConville states “The defence sector presents an equally enormous challenge as it brings together diverse organizations: the military, the civil service in various departments of government, defence agencies and private sector industries.”<sup>9</sup> FD Warriors are inherently part of a larger team or network. Being able to contribute to that team necessitates that FD Warriors possess the following skills:

- a. FD Warriors focus on the identification of future capability requirements and the creation of capability roadmaps to enable the RCN to deliver the right

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<sup>6</sup> National Defence, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations* (Kingston, ON: Canadian Defence Academy, 2005), 78.

<sup>7</sup> Teri McConville, “The principles of management applied to the defence sector”, in *Managing Defence in a Democracy* (n.p.: Taylor & Francis, 2006), 122.

<sup>8</sup> David Perry, “Streamlining Defence Procurement”. Internal DND document under contract W6369-19-X019.

<sup>9</sup> McConville, *The principles of management...*, 110.

equipment at the right time. To achieve this work, FD Warriors must possess relevant operational and technical skills;

b. Foundational project management knowledge, including the ability to conduct a comprehensive Business Case Analysis, identify requirements, and write many documents in support of project delivery while navigating a complicated project approval process is essential;

c. In addition to being excellent leaders, FD Warriors must possess management skills that enable them to effectively plan<sup>10</sup>, organize<sup>11</sup>, lead<sup>12</sup>, and control<sup>13</sup> project delivery activities within the Department; and

d. The skills required of FD Warriors extend beyond traditional project management knowledge and managerial skills. FD Warriors need strong conceptual, interpersonal, political, and complex project leadership skills, in addition to an aptitude for creative thinking, to effectively and efficiently deal with complexity within the defence sector<sup>14</sup>.

8. Core Training Criteria. Unlike the operational environment where individuals have acquired individualized skills over multiple career courses, in the ambiguous world of FD there is currently no standard of coursing provided to naval officers prior to being parachuted into a FD position. The Canadian Army (CA) runs the year-long Army Technical Staff Officer Programme (ATSOP) at the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC). Within the Director of Land Requirements (DLR), nearly 100% of Project Directors are graduates of ATSOP. Similarly, the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) conducts an 11 month course at the CF School of Aerospace Studies in Winnipeg, which offers similar training as the ATSOP.<sup>15</sup> The RCN has no equivalent course and previous assessments state that the CA and RCAF courses do not meet the needs of a naval FD Warrior as they are too tailored to their respective environments.<sup>16</sup> While not exhaustive, the following core training is required:

a. Prior to arrival at NDHQ, potential FD Warriors must complete the online Project Approval Process Introductory course;<sup>17</sup>

b. DGNFD must conduct a series of comprehensive orientation sessions that provide newly posted personnel with a basic understanding of NDHQ and FD

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<sup>10</sup> “Defining goals, establishing strategy, and developing plans to coordinate activities”, Stephen Robbins, “Managers and Management” in *Management*, retrieved from Docutek on 21 October 2019, 9.

<sup>11</sup> “Determining what needs to be done, how it will be done, and who is to do it”, *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> “Directing and coordinating the work activities of an organization’s people”, *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> “Monitoring activities to ensure that they are accomplished as planned”, *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 11; Director Naval Requirements, *Preliminary...*

<sup>15</sup> Director Naval Requirements, *Preliminary...*, 2. The ATSOP covers 20 modules, including subjects such as defence management, systems engineering, and Modelling & Simulation.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> This online course was developed by the Chief of Programme in response to the David Perry Report. More advanced courses are also currently being developed to help address the lack of core training in DND.

activities, as well as introduce stakeholders who play a critical role in the delivery of capability; and

c. The Project Approval Course and Best Practices in Project Management are two courses delivered by the Assistant Deputy Minister – Materiel Group that should be taken within three months of assuming FD Warrior duties.

9. Specialized Education Criteria. To ensure FD Warriors are equipped to deal with the complexities of delivering on Canada's Defence Policy, pursuing advanced educational opportunities is indispensable.

10. In 2016, the Telfer School of Management launched the Master of Business in Complex Project Leadership (MBCPL). The MBCPL provides candidates with the skills and knowledge required to deliver complex projects and programmes in a variety of domains. The 22-course curriculum introduces candidates to Systems Thinking, Law, Relational Contracting, Negotiation, Crisis Management, Business Case Development, and other relevant topics to FD activities. Recognizing the need for this type of advanced and specialized training, DND is a strong supporter of the MBCPL and commits to providing a minimum of 10 civilian candidates per year. The RCN has also been a strong supporter<sup>18</sup>. Now in its fourth year, the program has paid dividends as 95% of the first cohort have applied their learnings to complex situations and achieved outstanding results.<sup>19</sup>

11. While the MBCPL is the preferred education stream, the Certificate in Complex Project and Procurement Leadership (CPPL), a Master of Business Administration (MBA), or an equivalent Project Management Certification from an accredited university could also be considered as acceptable specialized education.

## **Line of Effort #2 – Evolving Career Management Processes**

12. McConville states:

Any organization is only as good, effective, or efficient as the people within it. People are the most flexible, talented, intelligent, and often, expensive resource that an organization can have. For proper functioning, and to put plans into operation, the right people need to be recruited, in the right numbers. They need to be trained in how to do their work and allowed to keep their skills and knowledge up to date. Importantly, considering the investment they represent, the right people also need the incentives and rewards that will encourage them to stay.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Capt(N) Christopher Robinson and LCdr Melanie Blanchard were the first two RCN graduates of the first MBCPL Cohort.

<sup>19</sup> University of Ottawa, MBCPL Student Profiles, last accessed 27 October 2019, <https://telfer.uottawa.ca/en/cpl/student-profiles>

<sup>20</sup> McConville, *The principles of management...*, 112-113.

13. The operationalization of FD Warriors is about developing a cadre of professional warriors that can deliver effects in a highly bureaucratic and process-driven environment to ultimately ensure our sailors have the required equipment to carry out their missions. To achieve this, there is a requirement to: identify potential FD Warriors; manage the Naval Warfare Officer (NWO) occupational stream; and set aside specific employment positions for FD Warriors. Of note, while this service paper addresses the need for FD Warriors, the recommendations provided can be leveraged to other NWO staff employment streams such as Information Warfare, Plans and Operations, or Human Resources Management.

14. Identifying FD Warriors. Robbins and Coulter emphasize the importance of selecting the right team members in ensuring team success. Moreover, the authors assert effective teams possess the following characteristics: clear goals, relevant skills, mutual trust, unified commitment, good communication, negotiating skills, appropriate leadership, internal and external support.<sup>21</sup> In the RCN, careful consideration is given to the selection of the Command Triad onboard ship. Unfortunately, a posting to a FD position is often the result of a requirement to obtain the ‘working in Ottawa’ check in the box. This approach to career management results in a series of short-term postings of individuals that either have no aptitude for FD activities or have limited interest in performing this type of staff employment. As noted above, working in FD requires individuals to possess certain soft skills to navigate the complexities of competing priorities and stakeholder agendas.

15. Individuals who have excelled in operational roles (i.e. Operations Room Officer) and have a demonstrated interest and aptitude for FD activities should be considered for employment as PDs for lower complexity projects. This would provide RCN leadership an opportunity to assess a naval officer’s potential for further career training and advancement in subsequent FD roles.

16. Occupational Stream Management. In recent years, the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) learned first-hand how a series of short-posting cycles had contributed to the systematic erosion of engineering expertise. This loss of expertise over time resulted in the Navy’s inability to respond to the Australian Government’s request for assistance in the face of Cyclone Yasi. In 2011, Mr. Rizzo, the chairman of the Defence Audit and Risk Committee conducted a third-party independent review of the decommissioning of HMAS Manoora, one of three RAN support vessels. The Rizzo Report recommended that the “DMO and Navy should develop an innovative and comprehensive through-life career plan for the recruitment, retention and development of their engineering talent.”<sup>22</sup> The Perry Report also noted that frequent rotation of uniform personnel prevents them from acquiring much needed knowledge and expertise in procurement. As a result,

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<sup>21</sup> Stephen Robbins and Mary Coulter, *Management*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2012), 360.

<sup>22</sup> Paul Rizzo, *Plan to Reform Support Ship Repair and Management Practices* (Canberra, AU: Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication Division, 2011), 65.



projects often encounter numerous hurdles that could be prevented with better personnel management processes.<sup>23</sup>

17. Typically, NWOs or Maritime Engineers are selected to fill FD vacancies in DGNFD and/or Director General Future Ship Capability (DGFSC). The release of Naval Personnel Instruction (NPI) #24 in 2017 provides a catalyst for changing how we manage FD Warriors going forward.<sup>24</sup> While the staff sub-occupation stream presents a great opportunity to create a cadre of FD professionals, the shift to the NWO staff sub-occupation stream must be predicated on criteria other than a desire to no longer proceed to sea, but rather, it is a combination of demonstrated aptitude, education and experience. For example, a short posting as a Career Manager within the Chief of Military Personnel, would not automatically make one apt or qualified to work in the HR staff stream. While much work will be required to achieve effective occupational stream management, the following points are offered for consideration:

- a. Occupational training: Operations Room Officer tour (minimum 18 months);
- b. Demonstrated aptitude in entry-level FD role (i.e. PD for low complexity projects);
- c. Completion of core training; and
- d. Completion of specialized training.

18. Employment Opportunities. In a highly bureaucratic environment, Robbins advocates that alternative organizational structures, such as work specialization, should be considered to enhance effectiveness. While getting the ‘working in Ottawa’ check is imperative for NWOs striving for Command appointments, not all positions lend themselves well to command stream NWOs. Some positions within FD lines are critical to the effective and efficient delivery of the RCN’s largest peacetime recapitalization efforts and require specialized training and skills. While this paper does not recommend a re-structure of the existing organization, it does recognize that certain key positions within the RCN are imperative in developing the right skill set and corporate knowledge and could benefit from the work specialization concept. In the RAN, new positions were created to enhance the cooperation and oversight of critical roles in project acquisition and life cycle management.<sup>25</sup> In the RCN, these types of positions already exist and should be exploited. The following RCN positions are recommended as potential FD Warrior specific employment:

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<sup>23</sup> Perry, *Streamlining Defence Procurement*.

<sup>24</sup> Director General Naval Strategic Readiness. “Naval Personnel Instruction #24 – NWO Employment Administration”, issued 01 August 2017. Specifically, the NPI states: “In appreciation of the dynamic demands of the RCN, specialized qualifications, particular experience and future employability may be advantaged during the annual selection process for individuals within the STAFF sub-occupation so they can be promoted as required to meet the evolving demands of the RCN ashore”.

<sup>25</sup> Rizzo, *Plan to Reform...*

- a. PDs and Section Heads within DGNFD and DGFSC (a review of Project Director portfolios is outside of the scope of this paper but is recommended for future evaluation)
- b. Capital Programme Coordinator (CPC) and Deputy CPC; and
- c. Senior Staff Officer to DGNFD.

19. FD requires pan-departmental cooperation and collaboration. Consequently, the operationalization of the FD Warrior will benefit not only the RCN, but the CAF as a whole. Potential employment opportunities outside RCN lines are abundant. For example, a FD Warrior could be employed in Chief of Force Development or Chief of Programme as Senior Analysts (LCdr), Section Heads (Cdr), and Directors (Capt(N)). This cross pollination exposes FD Warriors to strategic level thinking while addressing comments in the Perry Report that expertise in FD is lacking at the senior ranks. Post-Capt(N) employment opportunities also exist (i.e. DGCSI, DGDFF, DGNFD, DGFSC). Ultimately, a FD Warrior with specialized training and experience is highly employable across the Department.

## CONCLUSION

20. This service paper demonstrates how the RCN could operationalize the FD Warrior concept through two lines of effort: developing the required FD skills and expertise; and evolving the career management process. By implementing these two lines of effort, the RCN will ensure the right people, with the right skills are selected and effectively career managed to ensure the RCN is capable of delivering the future fleet. This innovative approach can significantly increase FD expertise within DND, while providing a cadre of selected individuals to contribute to Defence in a manner that is critical to those in operational roles.

## RECOMMENDATION

21. While this service paper was limited in scope, the development of a problem definition paper would better inform the operationalization of FD in the long-term. In the interim, the following is recommended:

- a. A FD Warrior champion should be identified (DGNFD is the recommended choice);
- b. Director of Naval Personnel and Training must continue to evolve NPI #24, specifically the Annex on the Requirements and Major Crown Project staff sub-occupation stream;
- c. DGNFD should liaison with Director Military Careers to ensure the selection and employment of FD Warriors is carefully managed; and
- d. Appropriate funding for core and specialized training must be captured in the Business Planning Process.

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