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Primary Reserve Career Management for the Institution, a Much-Needed Added Value

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Exercise Solo Flight

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PRIMARY RESERVE CAREER MANAGEMENT FOR THE INSTITUTION, A MUCH-NEEDED ADDED VALUE

AIM AND CONTEXT

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) institution is at a turning point, with significant voids in Regular Force (Reg F) and programs that struggle to deliver due to vacant positions, time is ripe to have a new look at how we staff those programs to ensure successful and timely delivery. Much of the past and current literature on the Primary Reserve (P Res) is about the pointy edge of the sword and linked to CAF fundamental raison d'être, which is to deliver a flexible fighting force to fulfill the many tasks requested by the Government of Canada. For instance, Marois¹ in his 2018 paper reviews SSE² to reduce the training and experience gap between the P Res and Reg F by investing in education, training, and equipment for the reserves, but the focus is operational, not institutional. Very little has been said about the 4,500³ full-time positions allocated to the Reserve Force since the Primary Reserve Employment Capacity Study (PRECS) in 2011, and much less about how we manage those positions to support the whole institution. While many reservists look to retire as the opportunities as they know them become scarce, we need to leverage them before they settle on retirement. As the institution is seeking to fill its voids, it could tap into a large skilled workforce through proper management, guidance and training, much like Reg F members are set for success by progressive exposure to various work environments.

¹ Marois, Paul Major, Primary Reserve and regular force integration, Canadian Forces College Service Paper, 2018

² Government of Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged Canada's Defense Policy*, 2017

³ MGen R.R. Mackenzie's town hall with permanent staff at CRES on 19 May 22.

The aim of this paper is to argue that CAF needs to improve Primary Reserve career management to successfully support the institution beyond the Reserve requirements. This thesis will be supported through four main arguments, the historical perspective, the current P Res career management, options for institutional specialities that reservists could undertake, and challenges and benefits for key stakeholders.

THE RECENT HISTORY OF CAF PERMANENT RESERVE POSITIONS

At peak in February 2010, CAF employed 15,000 of their 27,000 reservists⁴ on a full-time basis when it had to support at the same time the largest domestic operation with the Olympics in Vancouver⁵ along with major deployments in Haiti and Afghanistan.⁶ In Report on Transformation 2011, reserve full timers were reduced to 9,000, mostly to backfill Headquarters and Institution Reg F members required to deploy on operational tours of duty.⁷ Having attended the Reserve ABCANZ⁸ Armies annual meetings on multiple occasions, it quickly became obvious that the sustained engagement in Irak and Afghanistan between 2006 and 2011 broke both their Reg F and Reserves due to high operational tempo, accelerated wear, damaged or destroyed equipment, depleted operational stocks and personnel injuries. For such extended missions, it would be advisable to think of the full-time reservists to also surge in institutional functions to reduce the loss of capabilities, accelerate or anticipate delivery of programs, and

⁴ Canadian Senate, *Answering the Call – The future Role of Canada's Primary Reserve*, December 2011, p.16

⁵ OP PODIUM

⁶ Respectively OP HESTIA and OP ATHENA

⁷ Ibid. p. 29

⁸ American, British, Canada Australia and New-Zealand

generate replacements. This would reduce the requirements for a lengthy reconstitution, where CAF might not be able to fulfill all its required tasks.

In its intrinsic nature to surge when required, full-time reserve positions were reduced to 4,500 when the Afghanistan mission came to an end through PRECS and the Deficit Reduction Action Plan (DRAP).⁹ The Chief of Defense Staff P Res vision detailed in CANFORGEN 172/11 articulated that: “full-time position are to be aligned to P Res force generation, support to CAF Operations, P Res professional development and support to the CAF institution.”¹⁰ In 2016, the auditor general performed an audit on the Army Reserve where it was mentioned the Canadian Army was funded for 1500 full-time P Res positions,¹¹ leaving about 3 ,000 for the other L1s. To this day, CAF still has 4,500 of its 30,000¹² reserve positions earmarked as full time. About 900 of them remain unfilled¹³ and could be leveraged to support the institution in time of need. Although a lot of these positions were clearly defined in PRECS, there was never a clear process to force generate or review them. CAF currently resort to Reserve Employment Opportunities (REO)¹⁴ to fill these positions. There are a few exceptions¹⁵ such as those deemed “Succession Planning” and receive more attention from leadership to ensure higher ranking positions are selected from better performing candidates.

⁹ Canadian Senate, *Answering the Call – The future Role of Canada’s Primary Reserve*, December 2011, p.16 p. 29

¹⁰ Government of Canada, CANFORGEN 172/11, 21 Sept 2011.

¹¹ Government of Canada, *2016 Spring Reports of the Auditor General of Canada – Report 5 Canadian Army Reserve*, 2016 Paragraph 5.37 and 5.47

¹² Government of Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged Canada’s Defense Policy*, 2017 p.16

¹³ MGen R.R. Mackenzie’s town hall with permanent staff at CRES on 19 May 22.

¹⁴ <http://armyapp.forces.gc.ca/reo-oer/en/index.aspx>

¹⁵ Government of Canada, CF Mil Pers Instruction 20/04 Amendment 6, 22 Jul 2009, Para 4.5

More recently, Strong Secure, Engaged (SSE)¹⁶ and Strengthening the Army Reserve (StAR)¹⁷ brought many changes to the reserves, and although there is a lot of talk about the Total Force, most full-time reservists in institutional positions still do not get the same specialised training as their Reg F peers. In the last few years, some L1s started to actively seek reservists for positions traditionally filled by Reg F, some of which requiring formal training (language or specialist) like in Defense Diplomacy¹⁸ positions in Canadian Embassies and Multinational Organizations abroad.

CURRENT P RES CAREER MANAGEMENT

As mentioned above, career management responsibility for full time reservists resides in the environmental L1s.¹⁹ The Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) is the smallest of the full-time reserve footprint, and their reservist's employment is consistent with their Total Force principle, often using Reg F and P Res interchangeably. Their model is unique though, enabled by many full-time reservists with prior Reg F service and extensive experience. The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) headquarters centrally manage their reservists based on their Military Occupational Code (MOC) with dedicated full time career managers. Career management is centered around RCN operational requirements and career progression within the RCN. The Canadian Army (CA) has the largest P Res footprint and due to these numbers, it only makes sense that career management

¹⁶ Government of Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged Canada's Defense Policy*, 2017

¹⁷ Government of Canada, *Strengthening the Army Reserve*, 2019
<https://www.canada.ca/en/army/corporate/reserve/star.html>

¹⁸ Government of Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged Canada's Defense Policy*, 2017 p.93

¹⁹ Para 5.1 to DOAD 5050-1 <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/defence-administrative-orders-directives/5000-series/5050/5050-1-canadian-forces-records-director-general-military-careers-and-director-human-resources-information-management-and-judge-advocate-general.html>

is done at the Division level (L2) or lower. The full-time position management is limited to PRECS establishment and is focussed on CA institutional requirements. Having been involved with Directorate of Land Force Development's (DLFD) Division Support Base Restructure back in 2013, the intent was to have a symmetrical PRECS position allocation across the divisions. Aside from the environmental career management, Directorate Reserve Support Management (DRSM) manages reserve personnel in the National Capital Region (NCR). Their career management services are limited to merit boards, career progression and succession planning, and they do not provide formal career management advice to the reservists they serve.

As we saw above, there is no formal institutional career management for full-time reservists. Some of them thrive in that environment, as they can pick and choose to work in the field and location that they please, provided there is a position available and that they win the competition. This contributes to a perception that full-time reservists are mercenaries, alternating between institutional positions of their choosing and operational tours when the opportunity arise, but that is what is being asked of them, to answer the call when it comes. This is a risky career path though as there is no job security beyond their current contract, which many refer to as "members (...) enrolled for other than continuing full-time service."²⁰ Those seeking job security should opt for Reg F service. If these positions are voluntary, beyond creating REOs, how do we steer part-time and full-time reservists towards those positions that the institution needs filling? The answer is not that different than what is being done in the private sector:

²⁰ Government of Canada, *2016 Spring Reports of the Auditor General of Canada – Report 5 Canadian Army Reserve*, 2016 Paragraph 5.37

marketing, incentives and benefits. After all this is what CAF is competing against and something that members never exposed to the Reserve environment struggle with. Marketing could be done by leveraging the career management of the reservists as, through the reserves, CAF has access to a large pool of skilled²¹ labor that they are not employing to their full potential. Incentives and benefits are not the aim of this paper but would nevertheless enable reservists to better support the institution. For instance, reserve units are not incentivised to advertise full-time positions, as they run the risk of losing members. The most vocal lobby in this is Group Réserve 2000, which argues that reinforcing the Reg F with full-time reservists makes the P Res sick and in danger of disappearing due to a shortage of leadership.²² This might have been true during the Afghanistan mission, but it is less so now with about half as many reservists employed full-time, although more recent missions involve mentoring which is leadership heavy. It could be incentivised by allowing full-time reservists (or even Reg F) to receive compensation for part-time service with a reserve unit instead of the current volunteer service agreement, working more than their Reg F peers for 93% of their wage.

Also, a lot of reservists are tied geographically and will not consider the Reg F for that reason. The pandemic has taught us that many institutional tasks can be performed remotely and hiring a remote reservist to perform some of those tasks would both increase the staffing pool and avoid costly cost moves. Modern day reservists respond well to opportunities, and institutional positions that offer growth and training opportunities (such as deployments or

²¹ Government of Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged Canada's Defense Policy*, 2017 p.69

²² Canadian Senate, *Answering the Call – The future Role of Canada's Primary Reserve*, December 2011, p.24

language and specialist training) would be more appealing to them. In his 2005 paper, Maj Eric Dion proposed multiple ways CAF could improve its personnel management and quite a few were realized over the years.²³ While not as ambitious as Dion proposed, reservists have a lesser barrier to entry and training gap than civilians and can be surged quickly increasing diversity in perspective and experience to institutions. The US Army Reserve has a pilot project to invest in their Staff College²⁴ graduates by offering a one-year full-time contract in an institutional capacity. This serves multiple purposes such as gaining meaningful experience, increase institutional throughput during a labor shortage, and maybe become part of an enduring solution by them joining the full-time force permanently. This is one way we could build that institutional reserve surge capability. The labor environment has changed, and CAF must evolve to remain competitive and retain the labor force in which much resources were invested.

OPTIONS FOR RESERVE INSTITUTIONAL CAREER STREAMS

There are various specialization streams that reservists could develop. All Regular Force MOCs career paths have some institutional support through the positions allocated to the Career Managers. The intent here is not to detail every MOCs specific institutional responsibilities, but rather to try to establish joint streams that would apply to reservists of all environments. To have an idea of what CAF sees as potential streams, Canadian Forces College has broken down the JCSP into 3 different streams:

- Advanced Joint Warfighting Studies (AJWS)

²³ Dion, Eric Major CD MBA, *e-Soldiers; Facing the 21st Century Challenge*, 1 October 2005

²⁴ Their equivalent of the Canadian Joint Command and Staff Program (JCSP)

-Defence & Security Studies (DSS)

-Institutional Policy Studies (IPS)

I would propose the following streams inspired by JCSP curriculum that could replicate the current language and employment concepts, we will get to the stakeholders later.

Potential Streams and involved L1s



Figure 1 –Potential Streams and involved L1s

My involvement with the US Army Reserve brought to light their own career management system, which includes two types of full-time service, the Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) which are permanent full-time reservists and managed much like our Reg F members, and the Active Duty Operational Support (ADOS) which can last up to three years and could be compared to a mix of our Class B and C Reserve service. The concept of Functional

Areas (FA) applies to all US Army Components²⁵ and aims at providing a specialization to better support the institution for officers that are beyond “Battalion Time.” or at about at 5-6 years in service. Once an officer is selected and trained²⁶ in a FA, career management is no longer done by MOC but rather by FA although they can still be employed in their MOCs depending on the requirements. There are 18 different FAs,²⁷ but once you remove those already covered by a Canadian MOC and those that either do not apply to the Canadian Military or would be too small to be sustainable, we are left with only a few key functions that could be performed by institutional reservists.

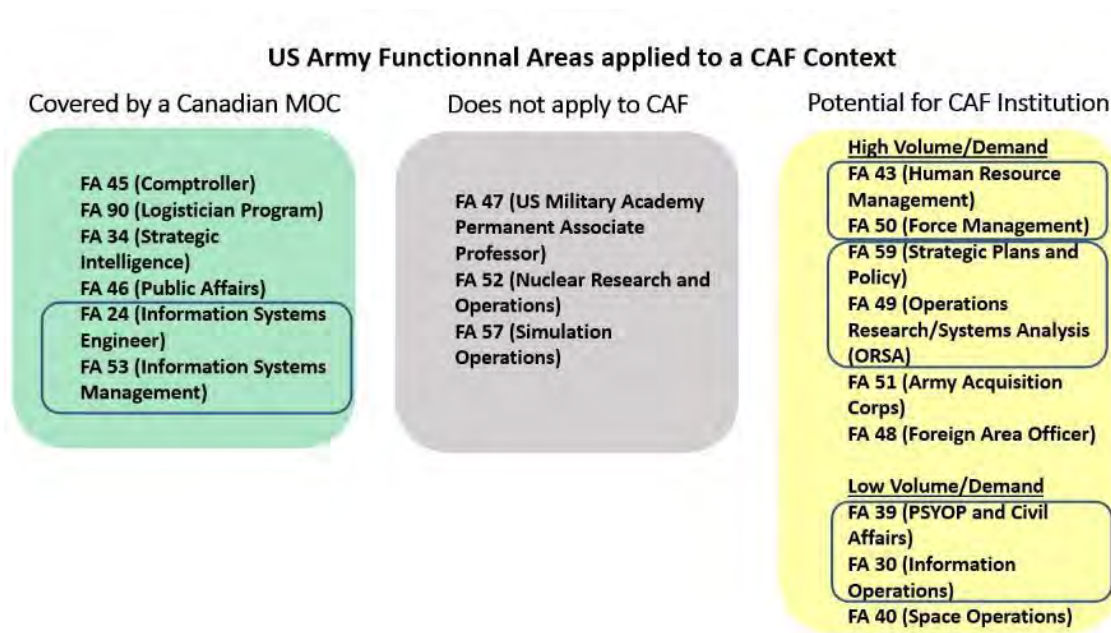


Figure 2 – US Army Functional Areas applied to a CAF Context

²⁵ Active Duty, National Guard and Army Reserve

²⁶ Up to a year

²⁷ Global Security, *Functional Areas (FA) / Career Fields*, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/fa-cf.htm>

Although the US Army does not have FAs for enlisted members and their warrant officers career path are different, following the current concept of technical warrant/petty officers and the CAF intent to provide them with additional training and education, they could be included and provide added value at the institutional level. Here is a concept of when both NCMs and officers could start getting exposed or trained to the institutional support streams.

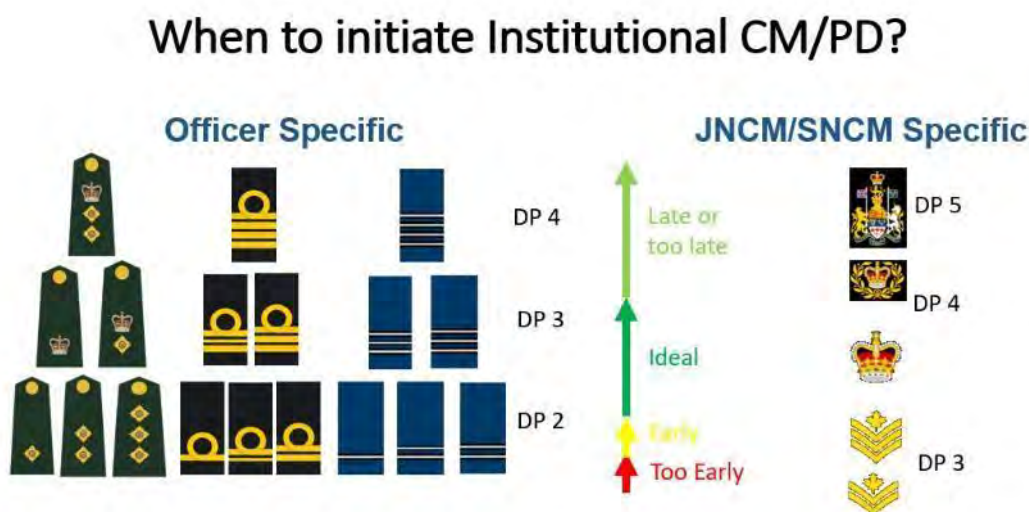


Figure 3 – When to initiate Institutional CM/PD?

CHALLENGE AND BENEFITS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

According to Walt and Gilson,²⁸ a successful policy starts with careful analysis of the stakeholders and their interacting points of interests. Without covering every possible stakeholder, we will discuss the principal ones. The chart below defines the organisations that constitutes DND,²⁹ to which we added the affected L1s.

²⁸ Walt, Gill, and Lucy Gilson. "Reforming the health sector in developing countries: the central role of policy analysis." *Health Policy and Planning* 9, no. 4 (1994): 353-370.

²⁹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/transition-materials/defence-101/2020/03/defence-101/dnd-caf-org-chart.html>

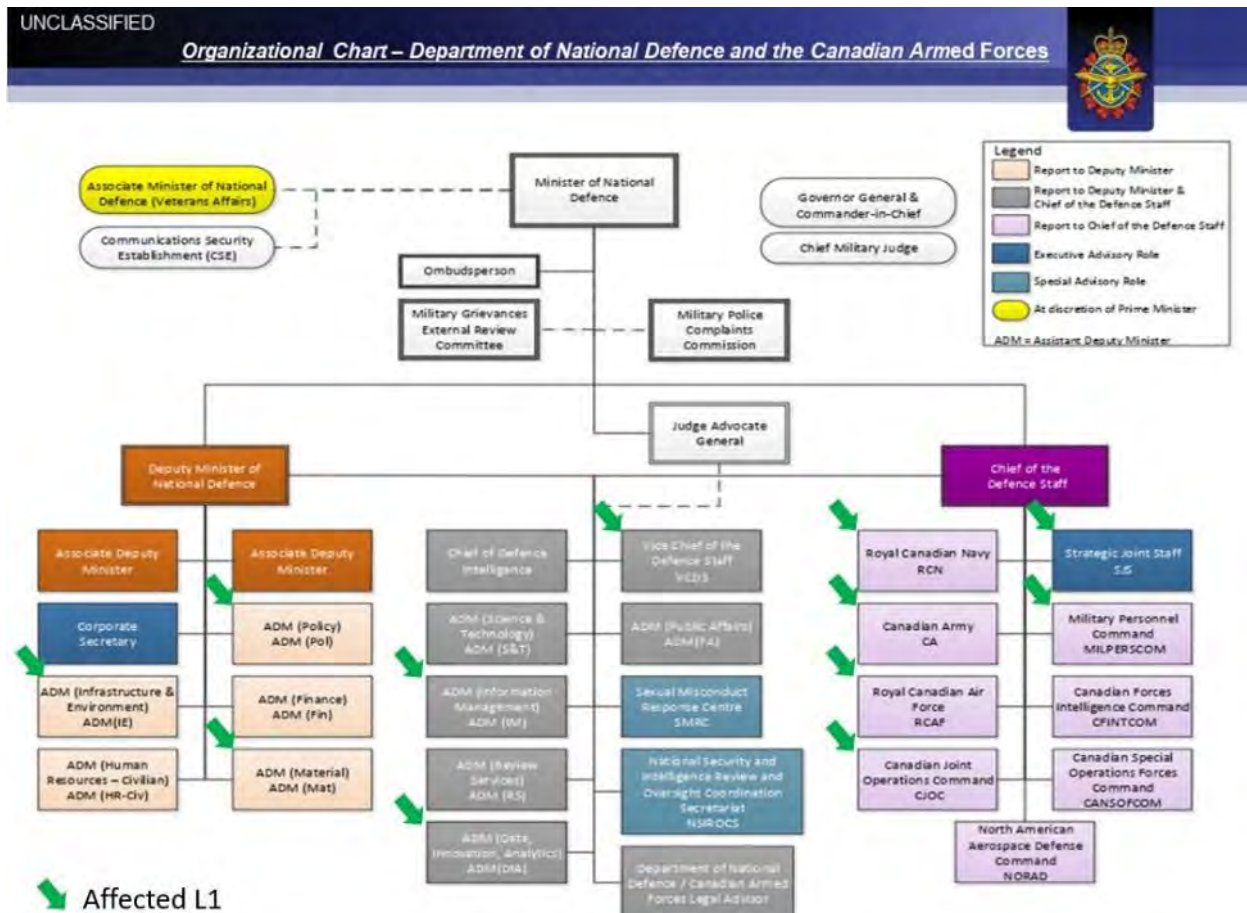


Figure 4 – DND and CAF Organizational Chart – Annotated with affected L1s

Source: Government of Canada Website

Chief Reserves and Employer Support (**CRES**) is a Level 2 advisor to VCDS. Within its mandate, it provides Reserve Force input to Defense Policy Updates (DPU), drafts VCDS New Reserve Vision Strategy, and is involved in Reserve Force modernization.³⁰ Without being the decision maker or the policy authority, its in depth knowledge of the Reserve Force would certainly be leveraged to support **MILPERSCOM** draft a reserve specific policy as we have seen in the past. **MILPERSCOM** is both the policy maker and a force employer of the

³⁰ CRES Commander Update Brief (CUB) As of 19 May 2022

specialists that would come from it. Like in many things, an investment is required to reap the benefits. The **environmental L1s** would certainly have something to say about their Reserve Force, which is employed predominantly to Force Generate their operational tasks and to provide support to their institution. L2s and L3s might require more convincing for them to take additional institutional career management tasks, at the risk of losing some of their leadership to the institution. All the **L1s affected by this policy** (see Figure-4) also have a stake as a force employer for these streams specialists, for which they would need to establish their own demand and positions requirements, along with the specific training they need included in the stream. They have a vested interest in filling some manning shortfalls. **Reg F members** might have some adaptation to do. Although there are currently 3,600 reservists supporting the institution, it is not really apparent to them as they wear the same uniform. They must be ready to accept reservists in some key institutional support functions, and in some cases in command positions. They also must be willing to invest in them. **P Res members** will have some tough choices to make. Whether to put a civilian career on hold to perform institutional support, or to temporarily leave a reserve unit or naval reserve division to which they are really attached to, and that they see as family. As per DAOD 5050-1,³¹ Director General Military Careers (**DGMC**) has no mandate to manage reservists' careers which belongs to "national/command/area [*sic*] headquarters". They could provide some advice from their career management background, and maybe in the longer run exchange positions that cannot be filled with the Reserve Force Career Managers.

³¹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/defence-administrative-orders-directives/5000-series/5050/5050-1-canadian-forces-records-director-general-military-careers-and-director-human-resources-information-management-and-judge-advocate-general.html>

Directorate Reserve Support Management (**DRSM**) is the promotion authority³² for reservists in the NCR through their Combined Selection List. DRSM is also the reserve class B employment authority in the NCR. Finally, **schools and training systems** will need to be involved to dispense and keep up to date the training and education related to the institutional career streams. Once mature, this program could be supported by reservists.

A LOOK AHEAD

The aim of this paper was to prove that CAF needs to improve Primary Reserve career management to successfully support the institution beyond the Reserve requirements. We have discussed the history of the full-time reserve position, and the availability of about 900 unfilled positions that could be employed to improve institution support. We also covered the lack of institutional support career management reservists receive which is currently not marketed, decentralized and uneven, leaving all efforts for trade specific progression, environmental succession planning and some environmental institutional support. Following that, institutional streams for highly sought skillsets were identified along with the right time to expose the reservists to institutional support, with most involved late enough in their career to avoid depriving reserve units from their prime leadership. Finally, we covered the various stakeholders' interests, which will require some evolution on full-time reserve service perceptions and policy modernization to formalize institutional support career management for reservists. The problem is not that reservists do not perform institutional support, we already

³² <https://www.canada.ca/en/military-grievances-external-review/services/recommendations-systemic-issues/recommendations-systemic-issues-promotion-members-national-defence-headquarters-ndhq-military.html>

know that 3,600 of them currently do it, it is rather that while DND struggle to meet program objectives, we have not optimized the 4,500 full-time reserve positions we currently have. This could be done by providing institutional specialist training in the streams identified, adequate career management to attract reservists to these positions, and some incentives and benefits to retain them. Without a doubt, those that would benefit the most would be the employing L1s, that could get a surge of experienced, skilled, and trained labor within about 2 years. Some of these L1s are already ahead of the others and have started recruiting reservists which they train to their specific requirements. All these arguments are proving that Primary Reservists do need career management that goes beyond their environment if they are to better support the institution. This does not take anything away from their force generation tasks which will remain what the vast majority of them do, building a full-time capability through part-time service.³³ Maybe in the renewed vision for the reserves, we should mention those reservists providing institutional support along with the stewardship of our resources. American Reserve Foreign Area Officers have great success promoting their defense exporting opportunities in embassies abroad, but is this too ambitious for Canada?

³³ Government of Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged Canada's Defense Policy*, 2017 p.68

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maj Germain served for 25 years with the Canadian Forces, 8 of which as a regular force officer. Many of those years were served while maintaining a professional engineer career in the private sector and undergoing full-time education where he obtained a bachelor's in mechanical engineering and a master's in business administration. He served in the United Arab Emirates and in Afghanistan during OP *Athena*, as a United Nations Staff Officer and Senior Professional Civil Servant in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and for 3 years under the military personnel exchange program (MPEP) with the US Army Reserves, where he was trained as a Security Cooperation Officer at the US Army War College and awarded the Meritorious Service Medal. All those experiences abroad were achieved through reserve service, while most of his Reg F service was performed in institutional support functions. At the current time, he is one of the 3,600 reservists providing full -time service to the institution.

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