



THE HIDDEN RISKS OF LOGISTICS RESTRUCTURATION: IMPACT OF THE LOGISTICS OFFICER OCCUPATION ANALYSIS

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THE HIDDEN RISKS OF LOGISTICS RESTRUCTURATION: IMPACT OF THE LOGISTICS OFFICER OCCUPATION ANALYSIS

“Military Human resources management involves the total care of serving members and their families over a working lifetime. It is one of the most complex of all personnel systems – one that must be carefully designed and managed as a total, integrated system.”

-Auditor General of Canada, 1990 Year-End Report to the House of Commons¹

AIM

1. This paper aims to demonstrate the importance of maintaining a Human Resources Management (HRM) specialty in the offices of the Assistant Chief of Military Personnel (Asst CMP) and the Royal Canadian Logistics Service Integrator (RCLSI).

INTRODUCTION

2. The RCLS is an essential component of the Canadian Armed Forces(CAF), designed to meet its diverse logistical needs and ensure its readiness and effectiveness. As the CAF's largest branch, logisticians are the backbone of the CAF's successful national and international operations, ensuring that each mission is carried out effectively and efficiently by guaranteeing troop readiness and support.² Logistics Officers (Log Os) are divided into three sub-occupations: Logistics-Sea, Land, and Air, not including the Special Forces. In the land and air sub-occupations, they typically specialize in one of four Primary Logistics Functions (PLFs): Supply (Sup), Transportation (Tpt), Finance (Fin) and Human Resources (HR).³

3. The Human Resources specialty has not always been part of the Logistics Branch. In 1998, the merger of the Personnel Administration (P Adm) Branch and the Logistics Branch transformed Personnel Administration (Pers Admin) Officers into Log Os. As a result, they were renamed as Logistics Speciality Human Resources (Log HR). From a CAF perspective, the function of “...the new Logistics HR [functions] never changed; it continued to be the interpretation of National level policies, directives and regulations and the leading of administrative activities”.⁴ This work involved effectively implementing policies at the strategic and “tactical” levels for the benefit of our personnel. While HRM has various meanings, authors DeNisi and Griffin define it as “the comprehensive set of managerial activities and tasks concerned with developing and maintaining a qualified workforce—human resources—in ways that contribute to organizational effectiveness.”⁵

¹ Canada Dept of National Defence and Canada Ministère de la défense nationale, “*Military Personnel Management Doctrine*.”, CFJP 1.0 (Issued on authority of the Chief of the Defence Staff, 2008), 5–1.

² Royal Canadian Logistics Service. “*Logistics Branch - Problem Definition Paper (PDP)*.”, December 2019, 1.

³ Ibid, 2.

⁴ Ibid, 7.

⁵ Boris Kaehler and Jens Grundei, “*HR Governance*”, Springer Briefs in Business (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 35.

4. This paper argues that Log HR is not utilized to its full potential in addressing the Strategic HR gap identified in Canada Defence's Policy - *Strong, Secured, Engaged (SSE)*. An examination of our current Defence Policy and strategies, which places a premium on professionalizing HR functions within the CAF, will be conducted in this paper. This entails ensuring our personnel's well-being, morale, and operational efficiency. HR officers drive organizational success in today's rapidly evolving workplace environment. Their invaluable contributions to talent recruitment, employee engagement, and workplace culture management make them indispensable assets for any organization.

DISCUSSION

5. HRM emerged in the 1980s as a strategic response to evolving organizational needs and changing socio-economic landscapes.⁶ From traditional personnel management focused on [workforce], hiring and managing workers, the evolution of HRM led to a more dynamic, strategic approach.⁷ This shift in focus from personnel management to HR underscores the latter's crucial role in achieving business objectives and ensuring sustainable growth in today's competitive environment. HRM considers employees valuable assets and emphasizes the concept of "human capital" to minimize financial risks and maximize returns on investment.⁸ The renaming of personnel management to HR has shifted the corporate focus to the strategic role of HRM in achieving business objectives. Personnel management motivates employees through compensation, bonuses, and rewards, while HRM takes a broader approach to employee motivation by emphasizing improved performance, leading to employee satisfaction.⁹ Even though personnel and HR management have some differences, they are not radically different, and terms are often used interchangeably.

6. The role of HR managers in fostering a supportive work environment cannot be overstated. HRM is a critical component of contemporary organizations and must keep up with the ever-changing workforce demographics in today's dynamic business environment. As new generations enter the job market, organizations must ensure that their HRM practices are up-to-date and effectively managed. Therefore, HRM must constantly evolve and adapt to the needs of the emerging workforce to attract, retain, and develop top talent. The CAF is no exception; therefore, preserving HR as a specialty is crucial for the success of the CAF. Failing to do so could lead to severe consequences that will hinder the growth and development of the organization. It is crucial that HR's specialty remains a top priority and is handled with great care and attention. Therefore, Asst CMP and RCSLI must recognize and adequately support HR management.

⁶ Department of National Defence. "CFJP 1.0 - Military Personnel Management Doctrine," Issued on authority of the Chief of the Defence Staff, 2008, 1-3.

⁷ Ibid, 1-2.

⁸ Ibid, 1-3.

⁹ Ibid, 1-3.

7. In the CAF's organizational framework, CMP oversees HRM and offers direction and guidance on military personnel management. In the capacity of Commander MILPERSCOM, the Commander leads the Canadian Defence Academy (CDA), CF Health Services Group, and CF Recruiting Group and their associated units.¹⁰ As a Level 1 Advisor, also known as the J1, CMP exercises control over CMP National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) staff. As mandated by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), CMP's crucial duties involve multifaceted military personnel management.¹¹ This entails recruiting, training, educating, preparing, and supporting military personnel and their families while undertaking initiatives to acknowledge and appreciate their contribution to Canada. Furthermore, CMP is responsible for formulating and implementing strategies, policies, and programs to uphold the profession of arms as a respected and desirable career path while ensuring compliance with CAF personnel management policies and overseeing accountability within the CAF personnel system.¹²

8. The current HR framework of the CAF is entrenched in more transactional duties, such as tactical Pers Admin and services to personnel management at the institutional level.¹³ Similarly, within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which was previously focused on basic administrative tasks like managing payroll, recruitment and administration benefits, HR now plays a critical strategic role in employee development, training, promotion and even guidance on labour relations and compliance. This transformation was recognized at a May 2003 System Analysis and Studies (SAS) Panel business meeting in Madrid, where Turkey invited NATO nations and agencies to collaborate on a study addressing the challenges hindering efficient HR management within countries and NATO bodies.¹⁴

9. The CAF's recruitment and retention strategies have been analyzed by various organizations, including the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) (2002, 2006, 2016), Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) and the CAF itself. These analyses have utilized various research methodologies and databases to produce reports that presented findings and recommended concrete solutions to systemic challenges. In both their 2002 and 2006 reports, the OAG noted a systemic problem in the CAF's HRM.¹⁵ While these analyses were conducted intermittently, they revealed a deficiency in the CAF's strategic HRM framework. There were several problems, but the two most significant involved recruitment and retention challenges.

¹⁰ Department of National Defence. "CFJP 1.0 - Military Personnel Management Doctrine," Issued on authority of the Chief of the Defence Staff, 2008, 3-3.

¹¹ Ibid, 3-3.

¹² Ibid, 3-3.

¹³ Royal Canadian Logistics Service "Logistics Branch - Problem Definition Paper (PDP).", December 2019, 12.

¹⁴ NATO Human Resources (Manpower) Management = Gestion Des Ressources Humaines (Effectifs) de l'OTAN (Neuilly-sur-Seine: NATO, Research and Technology Organisation, 2012), ES-1.

¹⁵ Office of the Auditor General. "Report 5, - Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention - National Defence." Accessed February 3, 2024.

10. Implementing various strategic measures in HRM that could address those problems has been a key element of the CAF's journey towards improving its overall organizational effectiveness. The *Military HR Strategy 2020* introduction in 2002 was significant, representing a pivotal milestone in integrating HR into departmental strategic planning processes.¹⁶ This forward-thinking strategy anticipated various potential HR scenarios in the coming decades, focusing on HR systems and personnel training. Moreover, in 2008, initiatives in the *Canada First Defence Strategy* and the *Military Personnel Management Doctrine* demonstrated a firm commitment to supporting military personnel throughout their journey, from initial recruitment to retirement.¹⁷ The strategy had a comprehensive 20-year plan to revitalize the CAF through strategic investments in its personnel. It underscored the pivotal role of individuals as the most valuable assets in defence operations, stressing the need to recruit and retain top talent from diverse backgrounds to ensure the military's readiness and effectiveness. At that time, the Strategy acknowledged the significant financial implications of such endeavours, with over 50 percent of the National Defence budget allocated to personnel expenses alone.¹⁸

11. Despite recognizing the importance of HRM, as identified in a recent study, the CAF HRM policy framework remains under scrutiny and has a perceived shortcoming: "...due to being outdated, bureaucratic, and inflexible".¹⁹ The RCSI staff released a Problem Definition Paper (PDP) in 2019 highlighting significant concerns pertaining to the Logistics profession. The PDP identified inconsistencies across different environments, including the Air Force, Navy, Army, and Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM). Upon review, these issues prompted a complete restructuring of the occupation and the launch of a new Military Employment Structure Implementation Plan (MESIP).²⁰ According to a Feasibility Report, personnel administration would be built into the common logistics occupation, and HR would be dissolved.²¹ The analysis failed to acknowledge the critical role of Pers Admin/HR Officers in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). This distinction is crucial as it clarifies the separate responsibilities of Personnel Administration and Human Resources. Additionally, it emphasizes the vital functions and essential roles of HR Officers, as outlined in Table 8-1 of the RCAF doctrine.²² This highlights the significance of HR Officers in the RCAF as they often hold strategic HR positions.

¹⁶ Government of Canada. "Mil HR Strategy 2020: Facing the People Challenges of He Future," April 3, 2013.

¹⁷ Department of National Defence. "Canada First Defence Strategy.", Canada: National Defence, 2008. <https://canadacommons.ca/artifacts/1206093/canada-first/1759204/>. See also, Canada. Department of National Defence, and Canada Ministère de la défense nationale. *Military Personnel Management Doctrine*. CFJP 1.0. Issued on authority of the Chief of the Defence Staff, 2008.

¹⁸ Department of National Defence. "Canada First Defence Strategy.", Canada: National Defence, 2008. <https://canadacommons.ca/artifacts/1206093/canada-first/1759204/>, 13.

¹⁹ Brown, Karyne. "The CAF's Human Resources Management Framework: A Strategic Capability Missing in Action." Canadian Forces College, 2022, 5.

²⁰ Department of National Defence. Chief of Military Personnel, Military Personnel Generation - Director Personnel Generation Requirements. "Military Employment Structure Implementation Plan (Logistics Officer)." Canada National Defence, September 29, 2023.

²¹ Ibid, 12.

²² Department of National Defence. "B-GA-407-001-FP-001, Royal Canadian Air Force Doctrine: Personnel." National Defence, August 18, 2021, 8-10.

RCAF Effectual Framework	Functions	Sub-Functions
Human Capital Management	Data Analytics	Collection and analysis Predicted outcome evaluation Benchmarking
	Workforce Management	Occupational health Structure control Organizational longevity Requirements recognition
	Investment Valuation	Future capabilities assessment Conceive, design, build
Human Resources Management	Management	Planning Organizing Direction Controlling
	Operations	Recruitment and selection Training and development Compensation Working conditions Welfare Motivation and advancement Records Labour-management relations Transition/separation
	Advisement	Advisement to key leadership Advisement to CoC
Personnel Administration	Execution	Tailored solutions for individuals Tailored solutions for unit/squadron
	Awareness	Site-specific programs and resources Gap analysis
	Communication	Appropriate messaging Feedback
	Compliance	Due diligence

Table 8-1. The three aspects of the RCAF Effectual Framework

Source: B-GA-407-001-FP-001, Royal Canadian Air Force Doctrine: Personnel, 8-10.

12. As a result of a proposal that has emerged from the OA and Strategic Advisory, several concerns have been brought to light with the disappearance of HRM. One of the significant challenges is institutional misalignment, where a concerted effort is required to bridge the gap between educational curricula and the evolving demands of the HRM professional landscape. Another challenge is ensuring proficient officers' development across all functional areas and verifying existing PLFs and sub-specialties. The RCSLI staff has highlighted that the current personnel development model primarily focuses on environment-based employment, which leads to a lack of readiness for joint and corporate domains. Based on their findings, there has been a lack of cross-specialty knowledge, early specialization, and limited member input in selecting their specialty. Some serious concerns have been raised during the recent town halls regarding creating a sole sub-occupation as Logistics Finance Officer (LFO), the dissolution of the HR specialty, and the establishment of the new primary occupation, Logistics Sustainment Officer (LSO). Therefore, providing clarity and confidence to everyone involved and affected by those changes is imperative. It is critical that these issues be addressed promptly and effectively with transparent communication to alleviate any apprehensions and quell anxieties.

13. Of significance, retention has been a longstanding issue within the CAF. Despite various initiatives to improve retention rates, the problem remains a concern for the military. First brought to light as early as 2002 in the OAG report, it has been and remains crucial to address this issue. In the 2016 report, the need for an HR specialty was not explicitly mentioned but was an acknowledged critical issue. Failure to do so would significantly challenge the CAF's operational effectiveness by limiting the ability to retain talented personnel and maintain a strong and effective military force. The OAG's 2016 Fall report, specifically Report Five on National Defence, highlighted four main recommendations regarding CAF recruitment and retention.²³ These include assessing effectiveness, evaluating incentives, addressing challenges, and establishing monitoring mechanisms.

14. The intricacies of joint employment, encompassing entities reporting to the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), such as Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC) and CANSOFCOM, necessitate specialized expertise in HRM, like J1 advisors. The career trajectory of Log Os underscores the importance of HR specialists. While tactical-level positions are crucial early in their careers for establishing environmental credibility, progression to operational and strategic levels demands a comprehensive understanding of joint and corporate domains. Establishing a dedicated HR career field and a Pers Admin branch, as mentioned in the *SSE* strategy for the Transition Group, highlights the importance of having specialized HR support. This can lead to efficient handling of personnel-related matters and better management of HR within the organization.²⁴ Centralizing responsibilities under Military Personnel Command (MPC) underscores the recognition of the importance of HR in addressing these challenges and ensuring the fulfillment of CAF requirements. MPC must ensure sufficient trained personnel are available to meet the CAF's requirements, emphasizing the critical role of HR specialists in managing personnel-related matters effectively. It is imperative to conduct a thorough evaluation of the Log Branch and determine if adjustments are necessary to address the evolving needs of the profession effectively. Given its benefits to the organization, it is worth exploring the possibility of completely dissociating HR officers from the Branch.

15. Other possible solutions to these challenges can be found in Fortune 500 companies like Walmart and Amazon.²⁵ HR is integral to these organizations' successes, attracting and recruiting top talent that aligns with the companies' goals. They also focus on employee development and training, implementing programs to enhance skills and drive productivity. Performance management, employee relations, and engagement initiatives are crucial for maintaining a positive work environment and aligning individual efforts with organizational objectives. HR oversees compensation and benefits, ensuring they remain competitive and support employee satisfaction and retention. Additionally, they manage compliance with labour laws and promote diversity and inclusion initiatives, fostering innovation and better decision-making. Overall, HR plays a multifaceted role in optimizing the workforce and contributing to the long-term success of these companies.

²³ Office of the Auditor General. "Report 5, - Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention - National Defence." Accessed February 3, 2024

²⁴ Department of National Defence. "Strong Secure Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy". (Ottawa, ON, CA: National Defence, 2017), 30.

²⁵ Andrew Thompson, "Walmart's HRM: Training, Performance Management," Panmore Institute (blog), September 1, 2015, See also, "IBM Training," accessed February 18, 2024. *Fortune 500*- top 500 companies in U.S.

16. Recognizing corporate entities' varying objectives and prioritizing profitability, research studies have provided compelling evidence supporting prioritizing human capital development within HR systems as a critical driver of organizational performance.²⁶ As such, investing in HR practices that improve human capital can unlock significant performance gains and maintain a competitive edge. The implementation of *SSE 25*, which calls for establishing a Pers Admin Branch, necessitates investment in obtaining qualifications that match those of the civilian sector.²⁷ Effective personnel management is crucial to achieving operational success, as mentioned in the RCAF Doctrine.²⁸

17. The HR manager's role is crucial to the smooth functioning of any system. Developing HR skills at operational and strategic levels is a lengthy and intricate process that relies on individual experiences, skills, and the environment. Upon conducting a comprehensive analysis of the Log Branch, it is highly recommended that the CAF seize this opportunity to identify potential areas for professional development that can be integrated into an HR employee program, whether permanent or temporary. This will guarantee the availability of experienced HR professionals with a profound comprehension of the field, capable of aligning an organization's strategic objectives with global aims.²⁹ Having a career field that offers growth and development opportunities while meeting institutional needs is fundamental.

18. It is imperative to have HR professionals with the necessary knowledge and expertise to guide the organization. The 2002 OAG report highlighted the need for dedicated HR professionals knowledgeable about military and HR policies. Maintaining the status quo will not resolve the issue of having dedicated HR professionals knowledgeable about military and HR policies and procedures.³⁰ Several options need consideration to implement the OAG's recommendations of creating an HR management capacity. For instance, previous studies suggest consolidating positions or amalgamating related career specialties such as Personnel Selection Officers (PSO), Training Development Officers (TDO), and Log HR to create their own field.³¹

²⁶ John Storey et al., *Strategic Human Resource Management: A Research Overview*, Second, Book, Whole (New York, New York; Abingdon, Oxon, England; Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2023), 48, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003364276>.

²⁷ Department of National Defence. “*Strong Secure Engaged: Canada’s Defence Policy*”. (Ottawa, ON, CA: National Defence, 2017), 31, 108.

²⁸ Canada. Dept. of National Defence and Canada. Ministère de la défense nationale, “*Royal Canadian Air Force doctrine*,” 3rd ed. (Trenton, Ont.: Canadian Forces Aerospace Warfare Centre, 2016), 1–1.

²⁹ Glaude, G.L. “*Canadian Forces Requirement for Military Human Resources Professionals*.” Canadian Forces College, 2010, 42–44.

³⁰ Ibid, 59.

³¹ Brown, Karyne., “*The CAF’s Human Resources Management Framework: A Strategic Capability Missing in Action*.” Canadian Forces College, 2022, 8. See also, Glaude, G.L. “*Canadian Forces Requirement for Military Human Resources Professionals*.” Canadian Forces College, 2010, 59.

CONCLUSION

19. The government's commitment to the long-term revitalization of the CAF is evident from previous strategies and policies. However, we must consider the lack of policy framework and investment in our people, which has led to personnel shortages and retention challenges. In this context, it is crucial to reconsider the imminent dissolution of the HRM specialty in the CAF as they play a critical strategic role in addressing many current challenges. Acknowledging the potential risks associated with the loss of specialized expertise and possible misalignment with our Defence Policy objectives is essential. Preserving a dedicated HR role is vital to ensure that the CAF remains resilient, adaptable, and capable of meeting the unique challenges posed by contemporary military operations both abroad and at home. Therefore, it is necessary to meticulously assess the potential repercussions and crippling of the CAF HRM in the short and long-term consequences of that decision.

RECOMMENDATION

20. It is recommended, based on the current findings in this paper, not to dissolve the HRM specialty. Instead, it is recommended that a more comprehensive review be conducted to assess the long-term implications of such change in the organization. This review should consider factors such as the impact on CAF members retention, recruitment processes, workforce diversity, and overall organizational culture. It is fundamental to thoroughly evaluate all potential outcomes before making a decision of this magnitude.

21. Secondly, to provide better support for our CAF members, it is recommended that an HR specialty career field be established and additional resources invested in its development.

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