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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE / COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES  
NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES COURSE 4/COURS DES ETUDES DE SECURITE  
NATIONALE 4

**REVOLUTION IN RECRUITING AFFAIRS : A NECESSITY**

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## **Abstract**

It can be easily demonstrated that in the recent past DND busily created strategies to adapt to the ongoing Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) but little attention was dedicated to address the looming HR crisis that created chaos within the organization. Recent CF intake forecasts indicate that the pressure on the recruiting process will continue to increase over the next 4 years. If it is people that we want to look after within the organization, then we do have serious reasons to worry about, and we must initiate the necessary plans and reactions to counter both the external and internal forces applying pressures on the CF ability to fill its personnel needs. To date many emergency reactions have been initiated to address the crisis situation, but much more remains to be done and sustained if the CF is to regain and then maintain the status of a desirable institution that young Canadians want to join. The one thing that is a certainty is that *“we will not be able to meet future CF recruiting challenges using tools of the past”*. An analysis of recent surveys and focus group conducted with young Canadian across the country provide a very interesting insight as to what still needs to be done in order to restore order in the Canadian Forces Recruiting Affairs.

# **REVOLUTION IN RECRUITING AFFAIRS : A NECESSITY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Maybe we should have no real reason to worry about the current low Canadian Forces (CF) manning levels, as there seem to be genuine actions taken to address the situation. Indeed, corporate priorities for 2002-2003 are showing a strong desire to address the issue of improving the Human Resource (HR) management in the CF, including the strengthening of the capacity to recruit and retain people. After all, one must walk the talk of “putting people first”<sup>1</sup>. It can be easily demonstrated that in the recent past DND busily created strategies to adapt to the ongoing Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) but little attention was dedicated to address the looming HR crisis that created chaos within the organization<sup>2</sup>.

*“The 1990’s was a decade of profound change for the Canadian Forces resulting from the impact of the Force Reduction Program and other institutional changes. One of the most serious challenges facing the CF as it enters the new millennium is how to recruit sufficient new members to sustain effective operational readiness. In FY 2000, approximately 28% of the CF recruiting targets for the Regular Force were not met. For the first quarter of FY 2001, the shortfall reached 42%. In addition, about 36% of the total 107 Military Occupational Categories (MOCs) were considered to have reached a critical stage with respect to manning levels. Recent CF intake forecasts indicate that the pressure on the recruiting process will continue to increase over the next 4 years”<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> VCDS, Corporate Priorities for Defence 2002 – 2003, 1901-5 (VCDS) 06 February 2002

<sup>2</sup> Tasseron, Jeff, Military manning and the Revolution in Social affairs, Canadian Military Journal, autumn 2001, p 53.

<sup>3</sup> DELTA Partners, Canadian Forces Recruiting Improvement Study, Department of National Defence ADM HR (Mil), September 2000,p I.

If it is people that we want to look after within the organization, then we do have serious reasons to worry about, and we must initiate the necessary plans and reactions to counter both the external and internal forces applying pressures on the CF ability to fill its personnel needs. The organization has very recently acknowledged that indeed it was facing a human resource crisis, and found itself forced to take drastic actions to remedy the critical situation, that some people truly believe came upon us as a surprise! Should we be having a recruiting problem when the size of our forces is only 0.2% of the entire Canadian population? While this perspective may give the impression that this is a small number, it can be easily countered by the fact that it also represents the number of Canadians killed during WWI (60,000), at the time 10% of the entire population<sup>4</sup>, and no one today would want to minimize the immensity of that sacrifice.

There are many factors influencing the capacity of the CF to satisfy its personnel needs from society and these factors will fall into two broad categories, “external” for which there is a need to adapt as the CF has limited capacity to control if at all, and secondly “internal” where the organization can easily initiate the necessary changes to maximize its ability to adapt to the societal changes. The increasingly diverse and aging population is forcing all organizations (including the CF) to become more flexible, more readily adaptable to continuous changes and accept to include HR considerations into the overall business and corporate strategies all around<sup>5</sup>. To date many emergency reactions have been initiated to address the crisis situation, but much more remains to be done and sustained if the CF is to regain and then maintain the status of a desirable institution that young Canadians want to join.

Despite the recent emergency measures put in place, one must realize that the CF was heading to a Trained Effective Strength (TES) below 50,000 personnel before the crisis was only finally acknowledged by senior leadership in the spring of 2000.

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<sup>4</sup> Myers, Kevin, *Salute to a brave and modest nation*, The National Post, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2002.

<sup>5</sup> DSHRC, DOR (CAM) Research Note RN 2000/13, An Analysis of trends in Human Resources Practices in Public and Private Sectors, (N.J. Holden), DND, December 2000, p 12-15.

Maybe we should not be surprised at the difficulties encountered in finding enough and dedicated young Canadians to join the ranks, after all Canadians have been known to be “non military” as so often expressed by renowned historians such as Desmond Morton and Jack Granatstein. More importantly however, we must take into account that the new society from which the CF requires its new blood is now composed of a youth for which the Cold War and any previous military campaigns are simply a dim reflection of memory as they have never lived it, at least for those within the primary recruiting source cohort. Basically, those who are entering university now and during the recent past years were born in the early 80’s, and they do not associate with the attitudes and thinking related to the then significant military concerns. For them, it is hardly a political memory!<sup>6</sup> We must therefore pay much closer attention to who they are, what and how they think, as well as their vision of life and commitments lying ahead of them. In recent years, Canada has showed the lowest population growth equaled only to that of the 30’s and early 80’s depressions<sup>7</sup>. Immigration levels between the period 1996-2001 have represented more than 50% of the Canadian population growth. A quick glance at the CF population demographics in general, indicates even to the average Canadian that the CF is not what can be called a representative image of Canadian society.

Trying to make sense of the recruiting and attracting challenges, as well as proposing possible ways to address those challenges is the essence of this article.

### **THE NEW DYNAMIC SOCIETY**

*“What we are now embarking on is a major renewal of our human resources plan, policies, and programs to bring them into line with both our strategic concepts and the changes under way in Canadian society”<sup>8</sup>*

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<sup>6</sup> Alistair, Edgar, Defence Export Regulations: Sustaining a viable Canadian defence Industry, Wilfrid Laurier University, Research papers, 2001, p 1.

<sup>7</sup> In comparison with other countries Canada showed a growth rate of approximately 4%, where most less developed countries were at 8.4% or higher but more developed countries such as France, UK, Japan Germany and Italy all ranked lower than Canada. USA and Australia were at 5% and 6% respectively with an overall world population growth at 7%.

<sup>8</sup> People in Defence Beyond 2000, A Human Resource Companion to Shaping the Canadian Forces: A Strategy for 2020, A Matter of Teamwork, DND, p 2.

Despite the legal requirements to satisfy the Charter of Rights and Freedoms concerning the necessity to not discriminate on the basis of age, the prime recruiting population target will continue to be the youth of the 17-24 years of age cohort<sup>9</sup>. Many analysts are arguing that a large portion of the potential pool of applicants remains out of reach. The size of the potential Vs the actual applicant pool is at issue. If the potential pool was to be measured by counting the number of Canadians meeting eligibility criteria, then it is estimated that the applicants represent only .05% of the possible eligible Canadians!!! *Meaning that the potential applicant pool is virtually untapped<sup>10</sup>!!!*

The typical applicant continues to be the white English-speaking male, with high school education and likely working part-time<sup>11</sup>. The CF has yet to break this mold of the possible source population despite what some sectors of the CF are claiming to be significant efforts. Female applicants are still at an unacceptable level under 20% and a quick scan around wherever you are in the CF clearly support the data concerning the continued overwhelming majority of white males in the CF today. What needs to be clearly understood now is that by 2016, close to 1 million 17-24 youth cohort will be from visible minorities representing nearly 24% of the available total 17-24 youth population. Whether the CF wants it or not, it will have no choice but to take serious considerations towards this enlarging element of its typical youth Canadian cohort in reviewing and promulgating its recruiting plans and procedures. It will be a matter of institution survival.<sup>12</sup> The visible minority population in Canada will have grown from 6.3% in 1986

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<sup>9</sup> Hamel Claude, Pinch Franklin, Models of Military Service, Influences on Joining, Leaving and staying in the Canadian Forces, HDP Group Inc, July 2000, p 5.

<sup>10</sup> Hamel Claude, Pinch Franklin, p 8. In order to bring a more realistic approach to the very low % of .05% as showed above one must introduce additional considerations such as level of interest of the eligible pool of potential applicants and therefore the estimation rises to approximately 10% of the potential applicants. pool being tapped. While no definitive studies can support this additional consideration, it is still logical to advance that a very large segment of this estimated potential pool of applicant remains at large.

<sup>11</sup> DSHRC Sponsor Research Report 01-08, Canadian Forces Contact Survey (CFCS) Annual monitoring Report June 2000 – June 2001, September 2001, p 10.

<sup>12</sup> DSHRC Research Note 2/01, Youth in Canada, Population projection to 2026, p 8.

to 19.7% in 2016<sup>13</sup>. To make it even more significant, of the current population of Canada under 25 years of age, 50% are reported to be of origins other than Canadian, British or French<sup>14</sup>. In addition, the historical source of immigrants to Canada that used to be 60% from Europe, was reduced to 45% in 70's, and is now less than 25% in the 1990's<sup>15</sup>. Of the total number of immigrants entering Canada today, 60-65% are of Asian origin<sup>16</sup>. *“Those of Chinese origin could replace the francophones as the second largest linguistic group should immigration increase”*<sup>17</sup>

*“The major urban centers of Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal have long been the favored destinations of new immigrants to Canada. It is not surprising therefore, that the vast majority of visible minorities live in urban centers. Indeed, in 1996, almost 60% of those people self-identified as visible minorities lived in Toronto and Vancouver. In the same year just under one third of the population of metropolitan Toronto (32%) and 31% of metropolitan Vancouver were visible minorities. It is anticipated that coming decades will continue to see increased concentrations of visible minorities in major urban centers.”*<sup>18</sup>

It is a well-known fact that the Canadian population growth is currently sustained by significant immigration levels. With a 125000 per year immigration level, the population is forecasted to start declining by 2025, and by 2030 the death rate will surpass the birth rate. On the other hand, by maintaining immigration level at 250000 per year, Canada could maintain its current growth rate (4%), but by 2026, the visible minority segment of the Canadian population will reach 19.7%, from its current 12%.

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<sup>13</sup> DELTA Partners, Canadian Forces Recruiting Improvement Study, p 18.

<sup>14</sup> Department of Canadian Heritage, Strategic Research-Multiculturalism, A Graphic Overview of Diversity in Canada, August 2000, slide #4.

<sup>15</sup> Sauve, Roger, Canadian People Patterns, Western Producer Prairie books, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1990, p 10.

<sup>16</sup> Statistic Canada, Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada 1997, catalogue no 91-209-XPE, 1997, p 92.

<sup>17</sup> Okros, Al, Into the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Strategic HR Issues, DMC Discussion paper, DMC 1998, p 2.

<sup>18</sup> DSHRC Research report 2/2000, Development of HR 2020, A review of external driving factors, Dept of National Defence, December 2000, p 9.



More importantly the visible minority portion of the 17-24 years of age cohort will reach nearly a million, or 24% of the overall available cohort within the same period<sup>19</sup>. To further amplify the increasing dependency on immigration, in 1873 there were a total of 50,000 immigrants entering Canada<sup>20</sup>. In the 1996 survey, 18% of Canadians were reported to have been born elsewhere than Canada, and to make matters a little more difficult, the predominance of males within the immigrant population has slowly been shifting towards a female majority, a trend that can only complicate the task ahead of the CF recruiting efforts, given the traditional limited success at attracting a larger number of females in the CF<sup>21</sup>. Also of very important significance, is the fact that with the required (in order to create growth) level of immigration set at 250000, the current majority of white Anglo-Saxons population will be surpassed by visible minority population sometimes during the period 2030-2035<sup>22</sup>. The gap between the proportion of visible minority of the 17-24 cohort, and the proportion of visible minority in the CF grew from 7% to 15% in last 20 years. The organization is making “sternway”!<sup>23</sup>

The preceding diversity related factors are generating two serious problems for the success of the recruiting requirements of the CF. First, it points to the constantly decreasing number of available white Anglo-Saxon male youth that represents the historical major source of potential recruits (at least where the CF has been somewhat successful at attracting youth in the past). Secondly, the lack of success at attracting the visible minority youth population causes the failure of the CF to properly represent the changing demographic nature of Canadian society<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> DSHRC Research Note 2/01, Youth in Canada. Population projection to 2026, p 7-8.

<sup>20</sup> DSHRC Research report 2/2000, Development of HR 2020. A review of external driving factors, p 10.

<sup>21</sup> Statistic Canada, Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada 1997, p 93.

<sup>22</sup> DSHRC Research Note 2/01, Youth in Canada. Population projection to 2026, p 2.

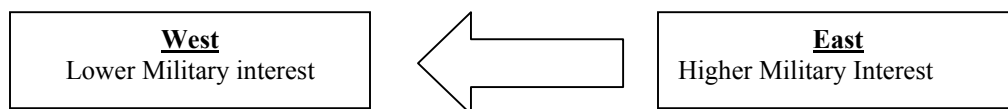
<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p 9.

<sup>24</sup> Hills , The Military in a Changing Society: The Impact of Demographics on the Canadian Forces, CFC Toronto 1998, p 2-3.

But there is much more than the issue of diversity to concern us with, and address...

Urbanization. The population distribution appears to have been left aside without the necessary attention. Metropolitan areas, where the large majority of immigrants are moving to, as well as being the destination of the movement towards urbanization in general, should cause the recruiting CF efforts to be more directly focussed to those specific areas<sup>25</sup>. The fact is that only 19% of all CF recruits come from the big centers where over 60% of the Canadian population resides<sup>26</sup>. Obviously a different strategy and/or concentration of efforts are required. Over the past, the CF has been relatively successful in smaller towns and communities from a recruiting point of view. Once again it is the past, and additional efforts must be directed towards addressing the increasing urbanization phenomena where significant improvement can be expected<sup>27</sup>.

Macro-Geographics. The trend continues to show that military interests towards the CF is higher on the eastern portion of the country and slowly decrease proceeding west while maintaining a relatively high level of interests in the prairies<sup>28</sup>. The unfortunate reality is the fact that there have been no special efforts towards addressing this imbalance. Once again, an indication for the strategic recruiting thinker that targeted recruiting becomes a valuable tool given the limited resources available to complete the task.



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<sup>25</sup> DSHRC Sponsor Research Report 01-08, Canadian Forces Contact Survey (CFCS) Annual monitoring Report June 2000 – June 2001, September 2001, p 6.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p 6.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p 3-4

<sup>28</sup> Hamel Claude, Pinch Franklin, Models of Military Service, Influences on Joining, Leaving and staying in the Canadian Forces, HDP Group Inc, July 2000, p 8.

Balancing work and Home. This new dynamic society will simply not accept to join and become part of an organization that is known for promoting “workaholics”, where 80% of officers are reporting bringing work home at night, and where 45% of DND managers are reporting being near burnout. The CF needs to lose its reputation of being an “anorexic” organization starving itself on its own workforce<sup>29</sup>.

Religious beliefs. According to statistics, Canadians continue to be theistic with the large majority (83%) sharing Catholic and/or Protestant beliefs leaving a very small proportion to impact the demographic distribution available as potential applicant pool for the CF<sup>30</sup>. The CF is barely recuperating from the isolated cases of discrimination raised during the Gulf War<sup>31</sup>, and the efforts to widen the scope of adaptability are certainly very conspicuous if they exist.

Education levels. The population at large is clearly showing signs of a general desire and acceptance of the benefits associated with higher education. While a significant 25% of Canadians were reported to have grade 9 or less in 1976, this percentage was reduced by 50% to 12% by 1996. The definite trend towards post secondary education has been constant and increased from 24% to 34% of Canadians obtaining at least that level of education during the same period and the number of Canadians obtaining university degrees doubled from 6% to 12%. These facts have a significant effect on the recruiting aim of the CF where it has been shown that higher educated people have a tendency to display a lower interest towards the CF. Obviously, the need to find better ways to reach the more educated population remains to be addressed. One could conclude that the CF has doubled its problems by increasing the necessary level of education required to enroll and at the same time hasn't yet figured out how to make contact with this better educated

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<sup>29</sup> DRDC Manager Workshop, Bromont Quebec, March 2002 Speaker – Dr. Linda Duxbury.

<sup>30</sup> DSHRC Research report 2/2000. One must note however the slow trend towards a reduction of this overwhelming majority when comparing the 1945 95% of the population being either Catholic or Protestant.

<sup>31</sup> The legal ramifications of not allowing a Canadian Officer of Jewish belief during the Gulf campaign to be deployed based on his religious belief became a significant lesson learned for the CF.

crowd. The recent decision to adopt a policy of enrolling only degreed applicants into the Officer corps must therefore be monitored very closely and subject to adjustment as necessary<sup>32</sup>.

Literacy levels. With the literacy skills of nearly 48% of Canadians over 16 years of age assessed as low, and 22% as very low, the impact on the CF recruiting efforts is once again significant. To further compound the problem, 59% of immigrants are reported to possess low literacy skills. The aboriginal situation is not in a much better situation<sup>33</sup>. (High dropout rate, poor education system, large ethnic population are generally listed as possible causes of the problem) The end result from a CF perspective is a further erosion of the possible applicant pool that remains untapped! The encouraging trend indicates that with time this literacy problem will decrease.

Unemployment levels / targeted recruiting. With the continued trend towards better education, data is now showing that higher unemployment is causing Canadian youth to stay in school longer and therefore making them unavailable for recruiting purposes despite the traditional expectation of more recruiting applicants during period of low economic growth. While the overall increase in recruiting during economical hard times is likely to continue, this new trend should be acknowledged and the benefits of better educated possible applicants later in their life fully considered<sup>34</sup>.

## **THE OLD WAYS**

*“What we do know, is that we cannot meet future defence challenges using tools of the past”<sup>35</sup>*

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<sup>32</sup> With RMC/RROTP only producing approximately 25% of the CF officers, and allowing 10% to the cases of specialists, it leaves a significant 65% to the DEO degreed candidates option currently adopted despite denied ECs requests to maintain the CEOTP route feeding the system. The next few years will be critical in the assessment of this decision.

<sup>33</sup> DSHRC Research report 2/2000, Development of HR 2020, p 14.

<sup>34</sup> Hamel Claude, Pinch Franklin, Models of Military Service, Influences on Joining, Leaving and staying in the Canadian Forces, p 5.

<sup>35</sup> People in Defence Beyond 2000, A Human Resource Companion to Shaping the Canadian Forces: A Strategy for 2020, A Matter of Teamwork, DND, p 2.

It would be counter-productive to point the finger at any specific organization and/or particular staff, and therefore much more useful instead to simply establish a relative starting point from which the reader can visualize the necessity for changes in the domain of military recruiting practices and coordination. Canadian Forces Recruiting, Education and Training Systems (CFRETS) was mandated in the mid 90's to accomplish this task. Despite laudable efforts, this organization could not cover all facets of its mandate and the Force Reduction Program (FRP) impacts of the early 90's simply made their mandate unachievable. For nearly a decade, there was no one or group fully capable to understand and coordinate the entire recruiting process. The Environments were not satisfied that their requirements were well served by Canadian Forces Recruiting Group (CFRG), which caused a clear lack of recruiting accountability between the various organizations<sup>36</sup>. The continuous CFRG/ECs/ DMHRR battle to come up with acceptable and agreed recruiting requirements, resulted the CF coming well short of its recruiting target over at least the last 5 years if not more. There was no trend analysis conducted by CFRG, and the structural and accountability issues were simply not addressed properly. To the defence of those within CFRETS/CFRG, who were desperately trying to make ends meet, one must formally acknowledge their efforts that were simply negated by shortsighted views and simplistic desire by leadership to pass the Globe and Mail test of the day, and the imposition of unrealistic resources limitation on an already stretched staff<sup>37</sup>. In addition, unrealistic measures such as directing the physical stoppage of recruiting for a significant period of time, despite full recognition of the future impact of those actions, went ahead regardless. It was indeed a strategic mistake not to consider HR as a potential looming critical concern in the early 90's, and anyone pretending to be

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<sup>36</sup> Consulting and Audit Canada (CAC), Canadian Forces Recruiting, Education and Training System (CFRETS) Organizational Review, Report prepared for DND ADM HR(Mil), January 2001, p 24.

<sup>37</sup> It was due to the inability of CFRG to fully support the ECs recruiting requirements that CMS himself directed the creation of Environmental Recruiting Coordination Cell within his staff, as well as creating regional coordinating cells to work with CFRG to significantly increase Naval and general CF awareness in communities across the country. That Recruiting Coord cell model was later adopted in part by both CLS, CAS as well as the Australian Defence Force Personnel Dept.

surprised by the recent appearance of an HR crisis within the CF is merely ignoring the facts of reality<sup>38</sup>.

Very recently, (2001-2002) many new significant HR and namely recruiting initiatives have been launched to attempt to rectify the situation. While many of those initiatives have already bared fruit, they were reactive actions in nature and far from standing on permanent solid ground to this date<sup>39</sup>.

Much work remains to be done, and the necessary funding to make it all happen is yet to be identified and re-allocated. Should there be any doubts or even a sense of complacency in the part of the reader, the following examples will provide a sample of the scope of the remaining challenges<sup>40</sup>. They provide some very current (spring 2001) and interesting insights that can be very helpful in focusing the CF efforts towards better and more effective attracting and recruiting strategies<sup>41</sup>;

- General knowledge of the CF was vague, rudimentary, often uninformed and incorrect;
- There was zero to low awareness about officers, Reserves, and terms of commitment;

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<sup>38</sup> Tasseron, Jeff, Canadian Military Journal, autumn 2001, p 54.

<sup>39</sup> The current efforts to address the recruiting challenges have already shown positive results but are of temporary nature through CDS mandated efforts to the ECs with still limited additional funding. During the 3 years of surge recruiting and BRT training, CMS has been tasked to provide over \$8M from his annual allocation for the three years with limited relief from the center. One must also keep in mind that the very extensive LTCP(HR) developed through ADMHR(Mil) has yet to be fully funded.

<sup>40</sup> The survey was conducted for DND in March 2001 in Montreal, Toronto and Calgary. The groups of youth cohort (200) who took part were students (15-20), University Graduates (21-24), young working adults (21-24), and visible minority group (18-24). The adults influencers groups were comprised of 90 Canadian citizens who were involved with youth of the 17-24 cohort either as a parent, community leaders, coaches, teachers, and social workers.

<sup>41</sup> Les Etudes de Marché CREATEC, Attitudes towards a CF career and advertising implications, Part One: Youth, Final report for Dept of National Defence, March 2001

- Recruiting centers were not mentioned in many groups and there was even a low awareness that they existed (not surprising given the hidden location they are located in!)
- CF recruiters and the information received from them was viewed with varying amounts of suspicion and distrust (low credibility and one sided);
- Sexism in the CF continued to appear as a concern (much more than racism);
- CF advertising was generally considered invisible, not aggressive enough, indistinguishable from American ads and very low on relevant and meaningful information;
- There was a very poor overall public image of the CF
- Career advancement of female and visible minorities still seen as limited;
- Young people wanted options and trial period availability;
- Young people wanted to see a better balance between the advantages and the down sides of a career in the CF (there are negative factors and they say the CF is hiding them) A desire for an up front honest approach;
- The financial incentives were seen as suspicious;
- They appreciated that there is more to the CF than adventure!;
- Least helpful source of information were identified as; career counselors, newspapers and surprisingly the recruiters visiting the schools!;

Not surprisingly, and given the staff reduction to the recruiting organization during the past military personnel reduction efforts, education advisors, teachers, and school counselors have had the least role to play in influencing the potential recruits indicating a significant failure of the “Outreach Program” where the schools, college, and universities are no longer providing the necessary info and guidance to potential recruits<sup>42</sup>. Something must be done to counter the current perception of the generation “Y” cohort where only 35% believe that the CF is a career of choice<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> DSHRC Sponsor Research Report 01-08, September 2001, p 7.

<sup>43</sup> Tasseron, Jeff, Canadian Military Journal, autumn 2001, p 59.

Needless to say, the situation is far from being resolved and now is not the time to sit and watch. Despite these critical indicators, there is a belief now within DND that the recruiting problems are no longer an issue, and that the CF is doing well again in filling its personnel requirements. Despite recent relative success, and from a pure numbers point of view, there are many Military Occupations (MOCs) still critically undermanned, regardless of the “Corporate Recruiting Blitz” that has at best temporarily masked the problem. ECs (Navy, Army, Air Force) will not be able to maintain their current over-tasked level of support to the recruiting and basic training efforts through providing incremental staff to recruiting centers across the country, as well as running their mandated and unfunded Basic Recruits Training tasks (BRT), without impacting on operational capability.

The reader should not be left with a comfortable sense of complacency given what is clearly to be done to attract and recruit the necessary personnel for the CF. To ensure that the reader does not fall in that trap, a quick overview of direct personal concerns and attitudes expressed by the Canadian youth cohort will provide the necessary final topping to the huge attraction and recruiting tasks lying ahead.

### **CANADIAN YOUTH SPEAKING OUT**

As acknowledged in the preceding sections, a lot of hard work has already been done, and significant research and initiatives are ongoing in an attempt to better understand the factors and attitudes that impact on the changes witnessed within today’s changing Canadian society. While David Foot proclaimed that “*demography is the most powerful and underutilized tool we have to understand the past and to foretell the future*”<sup>44</sup>, he may be partially right, but he may also be underestimating the impact of the immigration on the end state of baby-boom “Echo” when he forecasts that this “Echo” cohort will be 45% fewer than the baby-boomers themselves. In fact, the immigration

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<sup>44</sup> Foot, David K, Boom Bust & Echo 2000, Profiting from the Demographic Shift in the New Millennium, Macfarlane Walter and Ross, Toronto, 1998, p 2.



levels required to maintain population growth would likely fill this advantage that the “Echo” would traditionally have had as a smaller cohort. To complete the required analysis, Michael Adams convincingly argues that the impact of changing values is the main factor that must be addressed in order to study the current transition of the Canadian society. In reality, one could easily conclude that they are both right, and it is truly the combination of both the demographic and changes of attitudes that will provide the best possible analysis required to make sense of what and why Canadians are thinking the way they do.

A brief summary of the results from recent (spring 2001) focus groups sessions will be presented here in an attempt to portray for the reader a clearer understanding of the mind of the Canadian youth cohort towards the CF, beyond the systemic problems that were discussed previously<sup>45</sup>.

A key implication for the approach that will need to be taken to improve CF attraction and recruiting success is a clear understanding of the stated basic deterrents to joining the CF as expressed by the participating youth. They are as follows;

- **Loss of personal freedom, choice, identity, and individuality** (As if there were no more discretionary personal decisions once you join)
- **The commitment “trap”**(Once you are in, it is impossible to get out even if you realize that it is not for you)
- **Separation from family and friends** (As if Canadian Forces members are continuously away from home and family)
- **Isolation and lack of social/personal life**
- **Living and working conditions** (As if CF members were chronically overworked and under severe working conditions on a continuous basis)

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<sup>45</sup> Les Etudes de Marché CREATEC, Attitudes towards a CF career and advertising implications, Part One: Youth, Final report for Dept of National Defence, March 2001. The survey was conducted for DND in March 2001 in Montreal, Toronto and Calgary. The groups of youth cohort (200) who took part were students (15-20), University Graduates (21-24), young working adults (21-24), and visible minority group (18-24).

- **Fear of physical training and demands**
- **Conflict with moral and ethical beliefs**

To the above listed identified deterrent to joining the CF can be added, other concerns such as; **risk of death/disability**, concern about **sexism**, **poor image of the CF** (*from the point of view of an organization continuously reported as under-funded and lacking the necessary manpower to accomplish the tasks*), and **lack of accurate information**. The overall main strategic findings of the study identified that deterrents to joining strongly outweigh the motivations, joining the CF is perceived as a trap from which it is very difficult to escape. Youth only associate the CF with “combat related” jobs, and not at all with the existing supporting aspects and elements<sup>46</sup>. Needless to say, we must find better ways to convince the young Canadians that the CF are much more than what they have been able to perceive to date.

*...the more money you offer, the bigger the financial incentive, the more suspicious people become about the CF trap’’<sup>47</sup>*

One of the most significant factor within the findings is the concept of the CF “Trap”, that has been so clearly expressed at all levels. For the majority of Canadian youth, it can be extrapolated to the simple fact that there is no trial and error period available to see if you like or not. The latency of such trial program basically puts the CF out of the youth considered career options. As will be discussed in the following “New Approaches” section, there are ways, old and new, to attempt to address these shortcomings. In some cases, it is simply a matter of resolve and desire to improve, as well as some actual “thinking outside the box”.

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<sup>46</sup> Les Etudes de Marché Createc, p 6-7.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, p 7.

## **NEW APPROACHES**

By and large, the current CF strategic approach appears to be in the right direction. The challenges as presented in “People beyond 2000” and HR Strategy 2020<sup>48</sup>, can be easily related to the concerns expressed earlier. Those concerns can be expressed in terms of Systemic Problems as mentioned earlier and categorized under three broad headings, Recruiting Practices, Inducements and Redefining the Applicant Pool. Both HR CF strategic documents provide the necessary level of attention as shown in the table below<sup>49</sup>;

<b><u>Recruiting Practices</u></b>	<b><u>Inducements</u></b>	<b><u>Applicant Pool Redefinition</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broaden the scope of CF recruiting</li> <li>• Improved advertising by “branding “ the CF as an employer of choice</li> <li>• Increased internal communication to serving members</li> <li>• Establishing relationship and partnership with educational institutions and guidance counselors</li> <li>• Improve efficiency of recruiting procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that defence is an attractive career to a better educated population</li> <li>• Adapt to the changing nature of the family unit</li> <li>• Adapt to the expectation of the spousal career and employment</li> <li>• Recruiting incentives</li> <li>• Reduce training requirements through lateral entry program allowing for maximum equivalencies and accreditation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage the increased female participation in all economic, politic and social life</li> <li>• Expanded employment horizon to attract and retain people from across the Canadian cultural mosaic</li> <li>• Focus on a diverse applicant pool</li> </ul>

<sup>48</sup> HR Strategy 2020, Facing the People Challenges of the Future, Draft, April 2002

<sup>49</sup> People in Defence Beyond 2000, DND, p 7.

Both strategic documents are steering the CF in the right direction and will certainly prove to be part of the solution to the challenges ahead. Indeed the strategic implications derived from the findings of the recent focus groups as well as other related sources identified earlier easily fit within the stated overall objectives. To address the less systemic but rather more operational and strongly deterrent related problems, the following represent the findings from the limited literature as possible plans of action towards practical and implementable solutions<sup>50</sup>;

- Strategic Recruiting Oversight. Monitoring/overseeing committee such as MHRPPC and/or the recruiting oversight Ctee (ROC) must continue to be given high visibility as well as focus by all stakeholders, including and most importantly the ECs;
- Develop offerings that fit the needs of young people, related mainly to freedom of choice, and build on their propensity to try (Propensity to join study are basically non existent in Canada contrary to the extensive work done on behalf of the US military<sup>51</sup>. Development of such tool must be given significant priority within the ongoing research efforts if we are to provide the necessary strategic analysis tools to the HR management leaders);
- Co-op programs in schools must be further advanced and developed. It could be a means to address the very clear need for a trial and error period expressed as a fundamental requirements of today's youth;
- DGPA annual communication plan is far too restricted, and must be extended to EC generated events such as Open houses, CFRG must institutionalize a formal OUTREACH program with Education establishments across Canada. They must be structured and not run on an adhoc basis. The US Armed Forces have gone a further step ahead with introducing legislation that facilitates access to high schools for the purpose of advertising and making contact with a larger pool of

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<sup>50</sup> Les Etudes de Marché CREATEC, Youth, Final report for Dept of National Defence, March 2001

<sup>51</sup> McDonald L, Orvis R, Sastry N, Military recruiting Outlook, Recent Trends in Enlistment Propensity, Prepared for the United States Army, RAND, 1996

- possible applicants<sup>52</sup>. Production and distribution of advertising and Public Relations material must be done in consultation with ECs and must include youth oriented media such as CDs and videos<sup>53</sup>;
- Demystify and reassure young Canadians about a number of current turn-offs about the CF (commitment, physical requirements, living conditions, social life, sexism etc...);
  - Testimonials from people in the form of print, electronic, story article, interview or advertisement are reported as very effective. There has been clear demonstration that having actual CF members talking to potential candidates has had a very positive impact. Young Canadians want to hear it from people with whom they can associate and compare themselves to, not to old retiring officers that we have been sending to recruiting centers until recently...<sup>54</sup>;
  - The practice of sending “retiring Officers” to their last posting of choice into the local recruiting centers must never be repeated. Today’s recruiters must be young, with ambition and capable to associate with the public in a manner to convince potential applicants that the CF is a career of choice;
  - Send young serving members to educational establishments to ensure youth can relate to those presenting the CF to them. Not the old chief/senior officers alone. They too are required to some degree, but must be made available to the “influencers” such as parents, guardians etc... for information basis only. They should not be the primary contact with the possible youth applicant.
  - Job fairs must become a priority for DGPA as well as full participation by all Environments. The Multi-Media fair that was conducted in the fall of 1999 could

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<sup>52</sup> Crawley Vince, *Recruiters to get more access to high schools*, [Air Force Times](#), Vol 62, Issue 28, p28, 2/4/2002

<sup>53</sup> The Navy has produced many recruiting public affairs material such as mini CD on which full recruiting information is available for all the naval MOCs as well as a short video to place the possible applicants in the context of the life in the Navy, sports water bottles have been produced and are now being used in many communities sports organizations as a method of identification of the existence and support of the Navy. Both naval Formations have gone ahead and led the way in Bus and truck recruiting advertisement wrapping with outstanding results. The bottom line is that you must go to the young Canadians instead of simply waiting for them...

<sup>54</sup> Les Etudes de Marché CREATEC, [Youth](#), March 2001, p 37.

have been a very significant success with necessary senior leadership support as well as firm and serious participation by all ECs. This event has yet to be repeated but must be fully supported and correctly advertised in order to avoid the minimal success of its original version. There is clear potential for maximum benefits with relatively limited costs. The conduct of those events in large cities would further mitigate the problem associated with limited recruiting success in metropolitan areas as well as maximize the reach towards the immigrant population that has been shown to establish itself in those large city centers. DGPA and CFRG must start to think outside the box and extend their reach beyond the historical venues and methods<sup>55</sup>;

- Pay critical attention to advertising credibility (*CF advertising was generally considered invisible, not aggressive enough, indistinguishable from American ads, and very low on relevant meaningful information*<sup>56</sup>);
- Friends of the military. How to take full advantage of the high influence by “friends of the military”, who have clearly demonstrated to have the best access and influence on possible applicants? How to deal with the visible minority who is not influenced to the same degree by this primary factor?
- Targeted advertising. The naval Marine Engineering Technician Training Program (METTP) and the Naval Combat System Technician Training Program (NCSTTP) are two success stories of very careful and dedicated targeted recruiting efforts, where the potential applicant population was made aware of the quality programs offered as well as their associated nationally recognized technician certification (The ADM HR(Mil) LTCPHR is now proposing a similar initiative/approach for the Army and Air Force);
- Describe CF programs in the terms that young people can clearly understand mentioning options and choices available;

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<sup>55</sup> In 2001, the Navy had initiated a special project to have a tall ship recruiting cruise in the Great Lakes in the full force of the summer but reluctant and under-funded CFRG failed to deliver on earlier agreed commitments and CFRG was simply not that far ahead of the recruiting curve. The plan is to be launched again in 2002.

<sup>56</sup> Les Etudes de Marché CREATEC, Youth, Final report for Dept of National Defence, March 2001. p 4.

- Provide and publicize tools that young Canadians can use to explore and evaluate CF job options. The Internet case may have finally been broken, despite the earlier revelation that the CF had never been included on the HRDC Web Site as an option for employment. Very recent online recruiting initiative and source of information will certainly prove to be a success;
- While a larger percentage of the target population is starting to indicate they are being influenced by advertising to some degree, friends with CF experience, and personnel with prior military experience continue to be the primary influencers, and the CF must find a better way to take full advantage of this proven capability<sup>57</sup>;
- Posters on buses, subway, schools, clubs etc are still showing a significant influencing on actual recruits, with internet, theatre and TV still leading the way<sup>58</sup>;
- Option of possibly contracting out part or the entire CF recruiting efforts outside the CF by consultant and hiring/advertising firms along the same model as the US Army require further development as a possible alternative<sup>59</sup>;
- Necessary analysis and development of the option to provide recruiters with incentives for introducing potential applicants to the CF requires attention and evaluation for possible future implementation;
- Even within the identified cohort of 15-24, there are differences in attitudes towards their personal careers that must be taken into account when attempting to make the CF a career of choice for them<sup>60</sup>. Our approach towards those varying levels of intentions and desires of the youth cohort must be carefully orchestrated to provide the necessary information at the right time.

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<sup>57</sup> DSHRC Sponsor Research Report 01-08, September 2001. P 7.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, p 7.

<sup>59</sup> United States dept of the Army, Agency group 09, Army Contracts Out recruiting, FDHC Regulatory Intelligence database, 02/19/2002.

<sup>60</sup> Les Etudes de Marché CREATEC, Youth, March 2001, p 21.

<u>Sub-Groups</u>	<u>Planning Stage</u>	<u>Advertizing Need</u>
15 – 17	Pre-planning	Awareness
18 – 20	Evaluation	Consideration
21 – 24	Choice	Decision

## CONCLUSION

At the end of the day, viewed from the outside, the CF must present itself as an organization that... “ *Look after our people, invest in them and give them confidence in the future*”<sup>61</sup> if that cannot be achieved, we will have failed...

*“The CF will require the right number of the right people to ensure integrity of operations on behalf of Canadian society. CF recruitment is sustained by images of an organization that: is relevant to individuals and communities in Canadian society; solicits membership based upon valid, reliable, transparent and defensible military requirements (both current and projected); and maintains continuous contact with Canadians through competent, professional recruiting staff and the use of the most relevant media options available”*<sup>62</sup>

The Canadian Forces must therefore organize its recruiting and advertizing efforts in a way that will adapt to the changing realities of the new Canadian society. It must be able to clearly identify the applicable deterrents to joining the CF and draw the necessary plans of action to address the concerns of the young Canadians who will show an interest in this professional organization of ours, and they will. Errors of the past must never be allowed to be repeated and the lessons drawn from those mistakes must be a continuous reminder of the challenges lying ahead. The CF recruiting staff must become much more original in their method of work and adapt to the changing thinking and attitudes of the

<sup>61</sup> HR Strategy 2020, Facing the People Challenges of the Future, Draft, April 2002, p 3.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p 15.



young Canadians from coast to coast. Above all, all of us must make a necessary professional effort towards extending a better understanding of the Canadian Forces by the public in general. It is very difficult to convince anybody to join an organization that they do not know and that is continuously under scrutiny for lack of funding and necessary attention by its political masters. One thing is for sure; the CF has never lacked the necessary professionalism to accomplish this task.

*“DND efforts into the challenges of recruiting must be equal to the commitments and efforts dedicated to military operations”<sup>63</sup>*

Each and every member of the Canadian Forces is responsible for representing the organization and promoting its values across the country. The Canadian youth cohort is trying to look up to the members of the Canadian Forces and they want to know more about what we do, how we do it and most importantly how it would impact on them should they consider to make it a career. Hoping that the problem will go away because there has been a series of recent crisis reactions to address the critical reality of the recruiting difficulties of the past few years can only lead the Canadian Forces to failure. Such an outcome is not an acceptable option for the Canadian Forces. In fact, it is an end state that can be easily avoided with persistent and dedicated attention from all its serving members, along with the required leadership engagement at all levels...

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<sup>63</sup> Tasseron, Jeff, Canadian Military Journal, Autumn 2001, p 59.

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