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***MILITARY HR STRATEGY 2020
IGNORING THE PEOPLE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE***

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ABSTRACT

The Canadian Forces (CF) face a number of human resource challenges in the coming years, not the least of which is a pending attrition crisis brought on by a weak demographic profile coupled with a tightening Canadian labour market. While these affects threaten operational capability throughout the CF, they may well undermine the ability to develop and retain effective senior leadership. The Majors and Lieutenant Colonels of the 2012-2017 time frame are a particularly vulnerable cohort, owing to the synergies of demographics, traditional and emerging attrition factors, coupled with increasing external employment opportunities. These synergies have the potential to undermine the best efforts of succession planners, and thus the ability of the CF to develop and retain capable senior leaders. While the future does not bode well for the officer corps as a whole, the outlook is particularly bleak for women.

MILITARY HR STRATEGY 2020
IGNORING THE PEOPLE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE

The future ain't what it used to be.

Yogi Berra

Military HR Strategy 2020 – Facing the People Challenges of the Future considers a number of relevant retention challenges over the mid to long term, and suggests that retention issues could become severe depending on the how the future unfolds.¹ However, it overlooks some factors and, perhaps more importantly, it underestimates the potentially devastating impact of the pending convergence of internal and external attrition factors. Using a popular cliché, strategic HR planning is facing the Perfect Storm. While retention challenges will likely be felt across the Canadian Forces (CF) population, their impact on senior leadership has the potential to undermine traditional succession planning activities. This paper will demonstrate that over the next five to ten years, the synergistic effect of known or highly probable factors may preclude the Regular Force's ability to retain capable senior leaders. Further, it will show that the retention outlook for senior female officers is worse, and thus it is unlikely that women will be appropriately represented at senior levels of the CF.

This paper will begin with a general discussion on strategic HR planning, leading to an understanding of succession planning in general. It will then consider the importance of succession planning in the CF context, and the particular challenges facing CF planners. The task will then be to consider the CF succession planning dilemma in the 2012-2017 timeframe. One could simply conduct a critical review of *HR 2020* for what it either failed to consider, or how it fails to recognize the second-order effects of converging factors. Instead, the paper will adapt the strategic planning process described by Dr. Jarrell from the Department of Management at Drexel University to the Canadian Forces context.² In particular, it will study the setting, or the human resource domain as it affects the target population.³ Accordingly, after reviewing the demographics of the target population, the paper will then identify the internal and subsequently external factors affecting attrition. Using Dr. Jarrell's model as guide, cultural, economic, social,

¹ Department of National Defence, *Military HR Strategy 2020 - Facing the People Challenges of the Future* (Ottawa: Chief of Staff, ADM(HR) Mil, National Defence Headquarters, 2002), i. (Hereafter referred to as *HR 2020*).

² Donald W. Jarrell, *Human Resource Planning – A Business Planning Approach* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1992), 146.

³ *Ibid.*, 148.

demographic, and political factors will be considered.⁴ The emphasis will be on how each is likely to have a direct impact on the retention of senior leaders. The reader will not be surprised with a great many of the factors explored, as a majority have existed for a very long time. However, when the longstanding issues are taken into consideration with emerging or impending factors, the paper will draw the conclusion that the retention challenges of the future pose threats of a magnitude never previously experienced. For reasons that will be explained, the initial review will deal with male officers, after which, and to the extent they differ, the female officers' attrition challenges will be reviewed. After having considered all the factors threatening the retention of capable senior leaders, the paper will conclude that:

- a. It is very unlikely that women will be adequately represented among senior appointments; and,
- b. the effective command of the CF will be in jeopardy if actions are not taken soon to neutralize these threats.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 149-150. While the approach suggested by Dr. Jarrell is designed to facilitate all aspects of employment planning, only those elements relevant to the CF succession planning problem will be considered in this discussion.

PART I - SUCCESSION PLANNING AND ATTRITION IN TURBULENT TIMES

Succession Planning

Before considering the specific application of succession planning, it is useful to consider the broader activity of employment planning. Not surprisingly, from an HR perspective employment planning consists of forecasting the numbers and types of employees required to meet anticipated needs, and then determining the best means by which to secure those workers.⁵ Accordingly, it balances the requirement to hire new or replacement workers, along with internal movements.⁶ Succession planning follows a similar process, though with greater precision and attention to detail. Requirements are forecast for specific key positions, and then potential successors are identified using various techniques including replacement charts or manning tables.⁷ While both employment and succession planning efforts are designed to proactively ensure that human capital will meet predicted demands, succession planning takes on a significance disproportionate to the number of workers involved, owing to the cost of failure should key positions be unfilled, or otherwise occupied by unsuitable individuals.

Succession planning in the CF aims to achieve the same outcomes as the civilian effort, and thus is almost exclusively concerned with identifying key leadership or command appointments.⁸ Specifically, it is intended to :

...recognize, develop and ensure that the necessary people/competencies are available. Succession planning is integral to a constant supply of candidates to replenish the management pool, as is the continual training and development of the senior management.⁹

Individual environments approach succession planning in generally the same fashion.¹⁰ As an example, Air Command explains the purpose of succession planning,

⁵ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Kalburgi M. Srinivas, *Human Resource Management: Contemporary Perspectives in Canada* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd, 1984), 142.

⁸ As mentioned, the bulk of CF succession planning effort is aimed at identifying suitable members for Command and Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) appointments. However, certain high profile positions, such as Foreign Exchange positions or expensive training opportunities (such as the Test Pilot training) receive similar treatment.

⁹ V. Catano, I Jackson, and D. Macnamara, Report on Canadian Forces Human Resources System Review: A Framework for Effective Human Resource Management in the Canadian Forces (Ottawa: HDP Report for the Department of National Defence, December 2000), 32.

¹⁰ CF environments include air, land and maritime.

yet adds a selection criterion germane to this paper; “The purpose of the Succession Planning Process is to identify officers with the potential and *motivation* [emphasis added] to achieve senior appointments within the CF.”¹¹

While the aims of both civilian and military succession planning are similar, the military, unlike civilian organizations, has a unique challenge:

One could argue that nowhere is executive-level succession planning more critical than in the CF. Where other organizations can pick and choose from among the country’s leaders for their top positions, the CF must develop its own senior officers...in order to create a knowledgeable cadre in a profession where the body of knowledge is unique.¹²

Accordingly, in comparison to the civilian challenge, succession planning in the CF is both easier (because CF planners know who they have to draw from, as they have already been recruited), and more difficult (because planners must make do with what they have). In this regard, the strategic HR planners in the CF have been dealt a poor hand of cards. Owing to budget cuts and downsizing efforts of the mid-1990s, massive numbers of releases and severe reductions in recruitment have resulted in a very skewed demographic profile.¹³ In Figure 1 below, one observes that the base of the trough in 2004 represents officers with eight to nine years of service (YOS), though it spans a range of at least six to thirteen YOS.¹⁴

¹¹ Air Command Order (ACO) 1000-7 *Air Force Personnel Management*, (Ottawa : Commander Air Command, National Defence Headquarters, 11 August 2004), 9. Note that a similar order exists for Non-Commissioned Members (NCMs) within Air Command (ACO 1000-8 *Air Force Personnel Management – NCMs*).

¹² Karen E. Daley, *Some Important Trends in Human Resources*, Technical Report DRDC CORA TR 2005-39, (Ottawa: Directorate of Strategic Human Resources, ADM (HR-Mil), National Defence Headquarters, December 2005), iii. Admittedly, some members re-enroll, or transfer from the Reserve to the Regular Force, but these numbers are so small as to be inconsequential to the discussion that follows.

¹³ Catano, Jackson, and Macnamara, *Report on Canadian Forces Human Resources...*, 1, 41.

¹⁴ J.G. Currie, *Attrition from the Canadian Forces Regular Force Component 2004/2005: Issues and Concerns*, Revised November 2005, DMEP-A/RT Report 2005-001, (Ottawa: Directorate of Military Employment Policy, National Defence Headquarters, November 2005), 3.

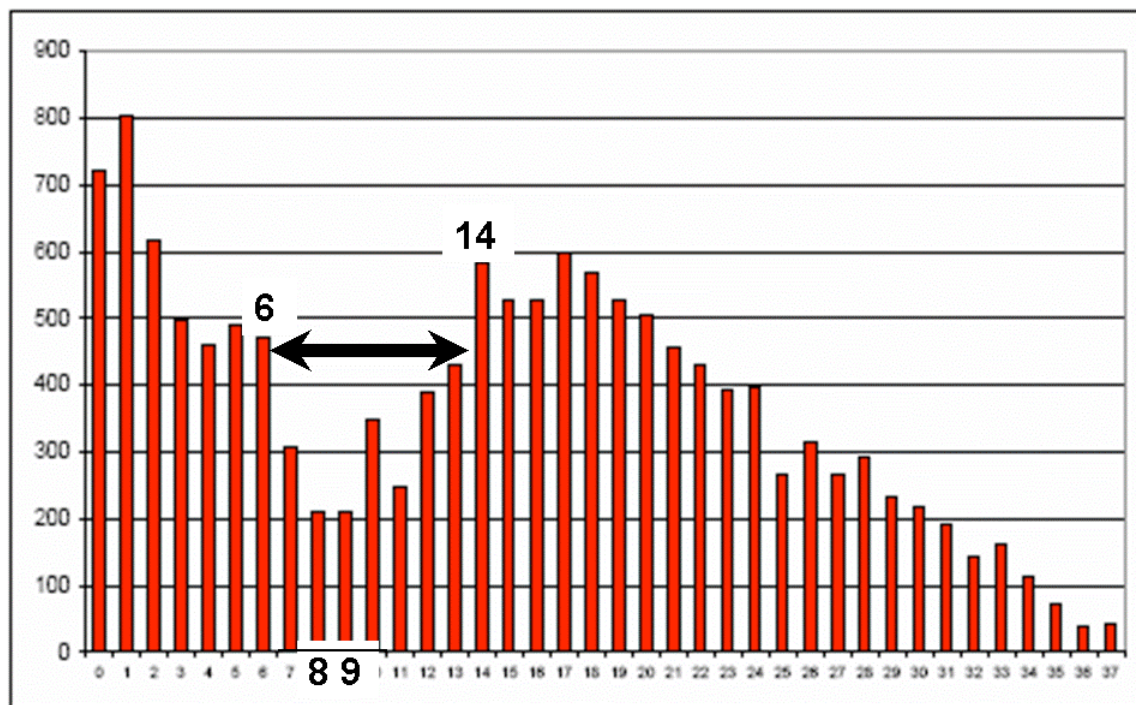


Figure 1 – Officer Tenure Distribution, 1 Apr 2004

Source: Currie, *Attrition from the Canadian Forces Regular Force Component 2004/2005*, 3.

Extrapolating to today, this trough spans nine to seventeen YOS, with the greatest shortage at the eleven to twelve YOS point. Looking to the future, and considering that the officers' voluntary attrition normally spikes at twenty YOS, there is great cause for concern.¹⁵ To put it another way, the best today's succession planners could hope for is a very challenging period starting in 2010, and lasting until roughly 2018, i.e. when the left side of the trough begins to pass the twenty YOS point. If, as predicted below, attrition rates rise, the situation could become much worse.

Scope of Discussion

As will become clear, the attrition challenges facing the CF will go well beyond the problem of succession planning. However, the focus of this paper is on how these

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

challenges may undermine the effective command of the CF. Accordingly, the target population considered will be the majors and lieutenant-colonels in the years 2012-2017, as these officers form the pool from which the senior leaders will be drawn. Further, the paper will focus initially on male officers for two reasons. Firstly, they represent an overwhelming majority within the target population. Secondly, and most importantly, women as a whole face unique attrition challenges. Accordingly, after working through the problem as it affects men, women within this group will be considered separately in Part V. While outside the scope of this paper, many of the arguments will apply to senior NCMs and are thus a concern for the development of effective Chief Warrant Officers whose leadership will be equally vital during the same time period.¹⁶

Attrition

Before discussing the attrition factors that affect the target population, it is imperative to understand the relationship between the promotion potential and the willingness to accept frequent geographic moves, hereafter referred to as geographic mobility.¹⁷ It is well understood that a CF career will involve a much higher number of geographic moves in comparison with a similar civilian career.¹⁸ However, for officers who aspire to senior appointments, they must be prepared to move even more frequently in order to build experience at each rank level in both command and staff positions.¹⁹ Accordingly, geographic mobility is often considered the "...most important military

¹⁶ At the risk of trying to limit the scope of this paper to the extreme, as well as being accused of being exclusive, it should be noted that this paper will only deal with heterosexual married couples. This limitation should in no way be taken as a slight towards the homosexual members of the CF. Rather, it is simply a practical limitation, as a number of generalizations will be made throughout, and thus to properly and accurately account for the differences for two more social situations (i.e., gay couples and lesbian couples) would simply exceed the permitted length of this assignment. Further, the extant data would not support such detailed analysis of these groups.

¹⁷ Deborah Harrison and Luice Laliberte, *No Life Like It, Military Wives in Canada* (Toronto: James Lorimar & Co, 1994), 120. Indeed, the criterion of *motivation* noted in the Air Command Succession Planning Order (ACO 100-7) speaks directly to this requirement. As a Commanding Officer and a participant in Air Command Succession Planning activities, the author was required to explain this requirement to subordinates who demonstrated the potential to command, yet who had yet to express their willingness to accept the frequent postings required to rise in rank.

¹⁸ A 2001 study showed CF members had spent an average of 5.5 years in their current position, versus 11 years in the DND civilian sample. Source: L. Duxbury and Chris Higgins, *The 2001 Work-Life Balance Study: Key Findings at the Department of Defence (DND)* (Ottawa: Directorate of Human Resources Research and Evaluation Management, National Defence Headquarters Contractor's Report 2002-02, April 2002), , 3.

¹⁹ Following standard CF practice, in this paper senior appointments refer to positions for Colonels/Captains(Naval) and above.

advancement prerequisite...,”²⁰ a view supported by a study which showed the positive impact on out-of-occupation employment on promotion.²¹

Moving to the subject of attrition within the broader military context, the CF identifies four basic types:

1. Non voluntary: medical, *non renewal of contract*;
2. Functional voluntary: *poor performer leaving*;
3. Unavoidable non-functional voluntary: *good member pulled out by outside factors, often personal*; and
4. Avoidable non-functional voluntary: *member pushed out by internal factors*.²²

These four categories adequately describe the traditional categories of routine, peacetime attrition. Thus, realistic predictions of the quantity of each type should then form the basis for effective succession planning. However, the importance of more detailed analysis and the requirement for more rigorous succession planning rises when the factors affecting attrition are changing rapidly. As compared to benign, routine times, “turbulent environments ... may not give organizations sufficient time to muddle through...”²³ This view is shared by senior management within the CF. Sensing a turbulent environment on the CF’s horizon, Vice-Admiral Jarvis (then ADM(HR-Military)) stated in the Foreword to his 2005 Annual Report on personnel:

For this edition, we have added a section on retention statistics to monitor current trends in this area. With a large proportion of the CF at traditionally high attrition points of their careers, it is imperative that we

²⁰ Harrison and Laliberte, *No Life Like It...*, 120.

²¹ Alan C. Okros, *What Does it Take to Get Ahead? Examining the Determinants of Promotion Decisions* (PhD Thesis, University of Waterloo, 1993), 112. Notwithstanding that this study was completed roughly fourteen years ago, these finding remains consistent with current promotion board practices.

²² ADM (HR-MIL) INSTRUCTION 08-03 The Canadian Forces Retention Intervention Process 14 July 2003 available from http://www.dnd.ca/hr/instructions/engraph/0803_admhrmil_e.asp; Internet; accessed 13 February 2007.

²³ Srinivas, *Human Resource Management...*, 584.

closely monitor attrition as it can have serious consequences for succession planning and the sustainability of the CF.²⁴

Soft vs. Hard Attrition

While the Admiral made the link between attrition and succession planning, the CF's four categories of attrition fail to describe the complete problem facing the officer corps. The last two categories (functionally serving members who are either pulled or pushed out of the CF), describe voluntary release from the CF. However, for the purposes of developing officers for senior appointments, one must also consider those officers who do not leave the CF, yet who choose not to compete for promotion or accept command opportunities. The reader is reminded of the Air Command definition of succession planning quoted above which includes *motivation* as one of criteria used to identify officers suitable for consideration. Regularly, majors refuse to attend the Joint Command and Staff Program (JCSP) at the Canadian Forces College (CFC), knowing full well that the combination of the refusal and the lack of this key professional development qualification will seriously limit their ability to compete for promotion.²⁵ Similarly, albeit less frequently than JCSP refusal, one observes officers either turning down or otherwise avoiding command appointments at unit and formation level.²⁶ Quite simply, and for reasons that are explained in subsequent sections of this paper, there are and will continue to be officers who are simply not prepared to make the sacrifices required, be they related to increased geographic mobility or increased work pressures and associated rising work-life conflict.²⁷ In the CF, as in the civilian world, “[c]onsiderations for a balanced life may frequently mitigate against individuals advancing beyond what they view as their already comfortable niche in the organization.”²⁸ Accordingly, in the discussion which follows, the concept of attrition will include all officers who are unavailable for senior appointment, regardless of whether they actually depart the CF, or simply opt out of advancement opportunities.

²⁴ Vice Admiral G.E.Jarvis, *Foreword to Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2004-2005*, ed. Paul Bender (Ottawa: Modeling and Workforce Analysis Section, Directorate of Strategic Human Resources, Department of National Defence, December 2005), i.

²⁵ Officers' promotion boards assign certain point scores for all matter of educational and other qualifications. In the case of Majors being considered for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel, JCSP completion is worth more than a graduate degree for most occupations, and in most cases would place the officer well behind the competition.

²⁶ The author completed over five years as a member of Major/Lieutenant Colonel succession planning group for both the Air Staff and the Maritime Air community as a whole. During which time he witnessed or was briefed on numerous cases of Majors, Lieutenant Colonels, and in at least one case a Colonel, who have refused command appointments or otherwise engineered their career so they would not be offered such opportunities.

²⁷ Srinivas, *Human Resource Management...Canada*, 585.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 585.

When specifically referring to this latter group of officers, the expression *soft attrition*²⁹ will be used.

As the penultimate precursor to the discussion of the attrition factors threatening the CF's future leadership, it is worthwhile to consider the past. Although financial investment firms always remind potential customers that *past performances do not necessarily guarantee future returns*, an historical review of attrition dynamics in the CF will form a useful base from which to explore the future. With even a cursory review of the literature, it becomes immediately apparent that attrition in both civil and military sectors has been studied and written upon extensively. However, only a few of the more recent and more germane observations are offered for consideration. Beginning with research covering the years 1988-1999, Drs. Canto and Kelloway compiled the following reasons for all voluntary releases from CF:³⁰

Table 1 – Reasons for Leaving the CF, 1988-1999

Reason	Percentage Selected
Avoid family separation	16.0%
Back to school	15.5%
Want more challenging work	14.9%
Increased family stability (establishing roots in a community)	13.1%
Capitalize on pension	12.5%
Too much time away from home	10.7%
Better paying job	11.0%
Offered a civilian job with more responsibility	10.4%
Unlikely to be promoted	6.3%
CF career conflicts with spouse's career	4.6%

Source: Drs. Canto and Kelloway, "Comprehensive Analysis of Canadian Forces Attrition Data, 1988-1999," 119.

²⁹ As in "soft kill," a term which describes the neutralization of an enemy strength without employing kinetic effect.

³⁰ Dr. Victor Canto and Dr. E. Kevin Kelloway, *Comprehensive Analysis of Canadian Forces Attrition Data, 1988-1999*, (Ottawa: National Defence Headquarters, 2001), 119.

be.³¹ In a more recent study, the top three reasons for leaving the CF were found to

Table 2 – Reasons for Leaving the CF, 2001

Reason	Percentage Selected	Number of Responses
I am taking advantage of my pension and potential civilian salary	8.3%	783
I am going back to school or	6.4%	599
I want to increase my family stability by establishing roots in the community” or	6.3%	596

Source: F. Sayed and Major R.O. Morrow, “Canadian Forces Recruiting and Retention Strategies,” 13.

However, of those who selected “going back to school,” 82% were less than 35 years old, and 65% had less than 9 years of service.³² Further, 78% of those who chose the option of taking advantage of their pension had more than 20 years service.³³ Thus, considering the target population, and in anticipation of the succession planning discussion that will follow, emphasis is placed on the first and last reasons cited. Despite the plethora of attrition data available, the author was unable to identify a study which focused on the identical target population of this paper. However, an interesting report on General and Flag Officer attrition makes two relevant conclusions which can be extrapolated and applied to this paper’s target population.³⁴ First, and unlike the CF population as a whole, Generals did not cite the family reasons as frequently as the CF population, mainly due to the relative age of their children.³⁵ However, the report goes on to explain that Colonels, given their younger age, have more in common with the CF as a whole. The report finds that Colonels most frequently cite family stability and

³¹ F. Sayed and Major R.O. Morrow, Canadian Forces Recruiting and Retention Strategies: Discussion Paper for the NATO Working Group (HFM 107-RTG 037) on Recruiting and Retention (Ottawa: Directorate of Human Research and Evaluation, National Defence Headquarters Sponsor Research Report DSHRC Research Report 203-10, September 2003), 13.

³² *Ibid.*, 14.

³³ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁴ For the remainder of this essay, the simple collective term “Generals” will be used to refer to both Generals and Naval Flag Officers.

³⁵ Bill Wild, *Generals and Flag Officers: Why they Leave*, Contractor’s Report 02-01 (Ottawa: Submitted to the Director Human Resources Research and Evaluation, National Defence Headquarters, July 2002), 16.

“taking advantage of the pension and a civilian salary.”³⁶ Considering the relative younger age (and thus fewer years of pensionable service) of the Majors and Lieutenant-Colonels of concern to this paper, it is reasonable to assume that their reasons for leaving would place even greater emphasis on family issues, and perhaps a decreased emphasis on pension considerations.

The Perfect Attrition Storm

The final point to consider in advance of a review of individual attrition factors is the potential impact of some or all of the various factors converging to produce devastating results. This point cannot be made strongly enough. Understanding and recognizing the potential cumulative effect is key to understanding the magnitude of this problem. At the risk of over-explaining this phenomenon, and given that the intended readership of this paper should be familiar with the Principles of War, a brief analogy is offered to indelibly etch the point on the mind of the reader.

The reader is asked to assume for a moment that there exists an unknown enemy whose goal it is to sharply increase the rate of attrition of senior officers in the near- to mid-term. The enemy has a number of *weapons* available, those being the factors or reasons which might lead an officer to choose to leave the CF, or otherwise opt out of career progression. The question is: what is the enemy’s most dangerous course of action? The answer lies in the principle of concentration of force. By combining his weapons and synchronizing his attack, he stands to produce an overwhelming advantage and thus greatly increases the likelihood of delivering a decisive blow and therefore achieving his objective.³⁷

This sophomoric attempt at an educational analogy has no doubt tested both the reader’s imagination and patience. However, if nothing else, it should ensure that the reader never loses sight of the assertion that it is the potential synergistic effect of attrition factors which could elevate the threat to hitherto unseen levels – the *perfect attrition storm*.

Attrition Factors – Prologue

At the simplest levels, and similar to CF voluntary release categories previously described, attrition factors can be divided into two types; those which come “...from CF members’ dissatisfaction (push factors) or their attraction to alternative employment or

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

³⁷ Concentration of Force. To achieve success in operations, it is necessary to concentrate force, both moral and physical, superior to that of the enemy at the correct time and place. Concentration does not necessarily imply a massing of forces, but rather having them so disposed as to be able to combine quickly to produce overwhelming advantage and deliver the decisive blow against the enemy when and where required. Source: Department of National Defence, B=GJ-005/FP-000 *CF Operational Planning Process* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2002), 1-7.

related activity (pull factors)...”³⁸ Obviously, the CF’s greatest concern should be those situations when push and pull factors work in unison, again the concept of synergism. This is simple to say, but more difficult to put into practice. Essentially, one must predict the future impact of various possible combinations and permutations of relevant factors. As with the development of any strategy one must begin with “...a deep understanding of international and domestic trends...”³⁹ These trends, specifically as they influence the rate of attrition for the target population, will be discussed in the subsequent Parts. Likewise, human resource planning specialists underscore the importance of analyzing the second and third order effects of combining factors, albeit with slightly different terminology:

Futures Analysis – Determining the future state of a [factor] alone, such as future suppliers of labor, usually means little. It must be studied in the context of other [factors]... The future state of every [factor] that may present an opportunity or threat must be anticipated in the present.⁴⁰

The factors are ranked on the basis of two criteria:⁴¹

The extent to which they present opportunities/threats; and

The extent to which they tend to cause future states of other [factors] that themselves present significant opportunities or threats for the organization.

This then sets the stage for a detailed review of those factors which will tend to increase attrition in the target population, and thus threaten the CF’s ability to plan for succession of command.

³⁸ Claude Hamel & Franklin C. Pinch, *Models of Military Service – Influences on Joining, Leaving or Staying in Canadian Forces* (Ottawa: HDP Group Inc. Report Prepared for the Director of Military Employment Policy, National Defence Headquarters, July 2000), C-8.

³⁹ LGen K.R. Pennie “Strategic Thinking in Defence,” *Canadian Military Journal* (Autumn 2001): 21.

⁴⁰ Jarrell, *Human Resource Planning...*, 204. (Dr Jarrell uses the term “variable” vice factor, but for consistency throughout this paper, the word “factor” was substituted.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 207.

PART II – PUSH FACTORS

*Employees do not leave an organization – they leave bad management.*⁴²

Although renowned demographer and economist Professor David Foote is quick to assert that “demographics explain about two-thirds of everything,”⁴³ one quickly observes that the pending attrition crisis involves a great many complex issues. Indeed, the preceding quotation suggests there is more to the story than simply the demographics of either the CF or Canadian society at large. While the fragile demographic profile of the officer corps has already been explained, demographic issues will figure more prominently in the subsequent discussion of pull factors.

The first task at hand is to consider those dissatisfactions which tend to push members from the CF (or from aspiring to senior appointments) and thus increase attrition. To that end, the reader is reminded that references to attrition include not only those officers who choose to leave the CF, but also those who choose to opt out of career advancement.

In broad terms, the analysis will start with a review of how changing social norms affect attitudes towards family and work-life balance issues, and then move on to pay and benefits considerations.

Work-Life Conflict

In the simplest of terms, work-life conflict “...is having a job that interferes with your family life.”⁴⁴ Work-life conflict is nothing new, though interest and research of this subject is growing, particularly as more and more families shift away from the traditional model of the nuclear family. Indeed, HR planners are cautioned:

...that policy makers will miss reaching the needs of real families if they continue to base public policy on outmoded definitions of what a family is. Many policies are based on decades-old definitions of a male breadwinner or the idealized nuclear family of mother, father and

⁴² Linda Duxbury, Christopher Higgins and Donna Coghill, *Voices of Canadians: Seeking Work-Life Balance*, (Hull, Quebec: Human Resources Development Canada, January 2003), 76. See also L. Duxbury and Chris Higgins, *The 2001 Work-Life Balance Study: Key Findings at the Department of Defence (DND)*, (Ottawa: Directorate of Human Resources Research and Evaluation Management, National Defence Headquarters Contractor’s Report 2002-02, April 2002).

⁴³ David K. Foote with Daniel Stoffman, *Boom, Bust & Echo, How to Profit from the Coming Demographic Shift* (Toronto: Macfarlane, Walter & Ross, 1996), 2.

⁴⁴ Duxbury, Higgins and Coghill, *Voices of Canadians...*, 73.

dependent children. Increased longevity, divorce and remarriage trends, and non-traditional family structures have changed what a “family” is.⁴⁵

At the highest level, CF members are caught between institutional and individual values. Members are imbued with the ethical principle to “serve Canada before self.”⁴⁶ In general terms, such a philosophy stands at the heart of military service and the notion that members stand ready to pay the ultimate sacrifice in the defence of Canada. Of course, day to day life presents much less extreme yet often more complex challenges. More frequently, members are asked to find an acceptable balance between the demands of peacetime military service and the demands of family life. Accordingly, CF members share a great many of the same work-life conflict challenges with other Canadian workers. However, certain aspects of military life, most notably the requirement for geographic mobility and extended absences on training or operations, are too much for some families to bear. With respect to mobility, this is an enduring problem. The following quote from a 1978 study could have been made today; “Of all the tasks that a military family must accomplish in their relationship with the military establishment, the task of periodic geographic mobility appears to cause the most hardships and problems.”⁴⁷ While dated, this study explained the negative impact of frequent moves on spouses, children and the members themselves. In subsequent sections, these issues will be considered in today’s context.

Given that CF members are moved much more frequently than civilians within DND, it comes as no surprise military members outnumbered their civilian counterparts roughly three to one in saying they would leave the Department for family issues.⁴⁸ The same study found that within the CF, officers experienced a higher level of work-life conflict than NCMs, citing the prevalence of meeting work demands at the expense of time for their families or themselves.⁴⁹

Considering the thesis of this paper, the reader might ask, “so what, if work-life conflict is nothing new, what bearing will it have on changing the attrition rates of the target population?” The answer will be explained in greater detail in the following section, yet the key issue is how societal norms have changed in the last twenty years. In short, the husbands and fathers of today, and more importantly of tomorrow, have a much different view of their role within the family, and attach greater importance to setting the

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁴⁶ Department of National Defence, *Military HR Strategy 2020...*, 3.

⁴⁷ Michael W. Baker, *An Exploratory Study Identifying Hardships Confronting Canadian Military Families*, (Ottawa: Directorate of Social Development Services, National Defence Headquarters, July 1978), 12.

⁴⁸ Duxbury and Higgins, *The 2001 Work-Life Balance Study...*, 14.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 5,7.

conditions for their children's future success. This in turn reduces the amount of work-life conflict they are and will be prepared to accept.

Fatherhood and Parenting

While it seems obvious to even the most casual observer, Canadian fathers have shifted from their traditional role as "...the authority/provider... to a more involved and nurturing [participant]..."⁵⁰ in the modern family. In effect, one observes this shift "...as part of the gradual decolonization of society and emancipation of women and men from tightly scripted rules, roles and relationships."⁵¹ The rising expectation is that men should play "...a more significant parenting role in response to women's increased labour force participation."⁵² This has not been an easy transition, as men struggle to

...to work out their particular role as a fathering response to life course events in a rapidly changing world – the arrival of additional children, changes in work or workplace, starting school or moving house, to name but a few – which perturb the status quo and which may involve a reorganization of the division of labour and responsibility between the parents.⁵³

While the convergence in mothers' and fathers' parenting responsibilities suggests the target population will be less accepting of work-life conflict, one observes that the nature of parenting as a whole has shifted. Indeed, both mothers and fathers are expected to spend a greater amount of time with their children than before, thus aggravating the potential for work-life conflict.⁵⁴

Parenting, Children and Education

While the shift and convergence in parenting roles is clear, consider how both mothers and fathers are placing a greater emphasis on preparing their children for future success, and in particular on education. The impact of geographic moves on children, especially high school age students, has troubled CF families for a very long time.⁵⁵ Interestingly, it is not certain that frequent moves present serious challenges to a child's

⁵⁰ Heather Juby and Celine Le Bourdais. "The changing context of fatherhood in Canada: A life course analysis," *Population Studies* Vol 52, Issue 2 (July 1998): 163.

⁵¹ Augie Fleras, *Social Problems in Canada: Conditions, Constructions, and Challenges* (Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2001), 184.

⁵² Kerry Daly, *The Changing Culture of Parenting* (Guelph, Ontario: Vanier Institute of the Family, University of Guelph, 2004), 6.

⁵³ Juby and Bourdais. "The changing context of fatherhood in Canada: A life course analysis," 174.

⁵⁴ Daly, *The Changing Culture of Parenting*, 9.

⁵⁵ Baker, *An Exploratory Study...*, 63.

academic performance, although the negative social consequences are well accepted.⁵⁶ Regardless, there is a strongly held perception that, particularly in Canada where there is no standard high school curriculum, such moves threaten the children's academic success.⁵⁷ Again, while an age-old problem, its significance as a source of work-life conflict has increased in recent years. In the face of rising competition for higher education, there is a growing expectation that *good* parents will do everything possible to position their children for success.⁵⁸ Accordingly, the trend suggests that the parents of the future will be even less willing to move families, particularly families with high school age children. Further, post-secondary education considerations also encourage families to establish roots in a major centre offering university or other post-secondary training opportunities. While the high cost of travel and residence will factor into the decision, families would likely prefer to be collocated with their children as they mature and build their own lives, as opposed to having them scattered across the country. In summary, considering the predicted age of the target population and the relative weight of educational concerns, secondary education will likely have the greatest impact on attrition, though post-secondary issues will also affect long-term decisions made by these officers.

Family Health Care

CF members arguably receive some of the finest and well funded health care in Canada, yet the same cannot be said for their families. As with the remainder of Canadian civilian society, CF families are finding it harder and harder to obtain a family physician. "In 2003, more than 1.2 million Canadians were unable to find a regular physician."⁵⁹ This same report, quoting Fraser Institute research, suggests the number of doctors per capita in Canada will decrease until 2015.⁶⁰ An analysis of Quality of Life concerns conducted in 2001 confirms that family health care is a serious and growing problem for CF members and their spouses.⁶¹ In 2005, almost half of CF survey respondents indicated they had difficulty finding a family physician at their current

⁵⁶ Christopher Jessup, *Breaking Ranks – Social Change in Military Communities* (London: Brassey's, 1996), 47.

⁵⁷ Harrison and Laliberte, *No Life Like It...*, 142.

⁵⁸ Daly, *The Changing Culture of Parenting*, 11.

⁵⁹ CBC News (quoting Statistics Canada), "Canada's doctor shortage to worsen without changes: Fraser report," Monday, August 28, 2006 [CBC News on line]; available from <http://www.cbc.ca/health/story/2006/08/28/doctor-shortage.html#skip300x250>; Internet; accessed 22 March 2007.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ J.E. Jefferies, *Quality of Life in the Canadian Forces: Qualitative Analysis of the QOL Questionnaire for CF Spouses*, Sponsor Research Report 01-19 (Ottawa: Directorate of Human Resources Research and Evaluation, National Defence Headquarters, December 2001), i (and numerous subsequent observations).

posting location⁶² Given that the survey included single members, and assuming the majority of those members were childless, one concludes that the 47% figure underestimates the problem for married CF members, or those with children. Even for military families without special medical needs, the lack of available health care creates enormous stress; indeed a tour can be completed without ever securing a regular family doctor.⁶³ For those with special medical needs, a posting to even an urban setting, let alone a rural environment with limited specialist care, is often a bridge too far for those families. Turning our attention to our target population, it is reasonable to assume that dissatisfaction with family health care will grow. As the doctor shortage becomes more acute, and the baby-boom ages (and thus consumes an even greater share of the civilian health care system's capacity) geographic stability, not mobility, will become even more important to ensuring one's family receives continuous, quality health care.

Eldercare

So far this discussion has focused on the needs of the immediate family, yet more and more one finds CF personnel in a care-giving crunch. A survey of the entire CF population observed that "...47% of those in the CF have eldercare responsibilities, vs. 60% of DND civilians."⁶⁴ Further, DND predicts "...as the Canadian population ages, the demands on families to provide care for aging parents will rise."⁶⁵ One might also assume that as the bulk of the Baby Boom begins to consume the commercially or publicly run eldercare facilities, then shortages may exacerbate the problem, requiring children to provide higher levels of care than at present. In considering the statistics, and given that on average CF members are younger than their civilian DND counterparts (40 versus 47 in this study)⁶⁶ then the higher percentage of civilians providing eldercare is entirely understandable. However, returning to the target population of this paper, it is reasonable to assume eldercare will have greater significance for them in comparison to the CF population at large. At that point in their career (and thus roughly forty years old), these officers will likely be either anticipating, if not already providing eldercare for their extended family members. Once again, geographic mobility will be a source of great dissatisfaction. In more extreme cases, the family's situation may require more

⁶² Jason Dunn and Karine Pepin, *"Your Say": Quality of Life Baseline Findings*, CORA Technical Memorandum DRDC ORD TM 2005-41 (Ottawa: Directorate of Strategic Human Resources, National Defence Headquarters, January 2006), 19.

⁶³ As a case in point, the author and his family moved to Ottawa in August 2004, and will be posted out July 07, and has yet to find a family physician who would accept his wife and children within his practice.

⁶⁴ Duxbury and Higgins, *The 2001 Work-Life Balance Study...*, 3.

⁶⁵ T. Wait, *Canadian Demographic and Social Values at a Glance: Impact on Strategic HR Planning* (Ottawa: Directorate of Strategic Human Resource Management, National Defence Headquarters Sponsor Research Report DSHRC Research Note 2/02, January 2002), 4.

⁶⁶ Duxbury and Higgins, *The 2001 Work-Life Balance Study...*, 3.

than simply geographic stability (as in the case of health care). On the contrary, it may require a move to be collocated with the loved-one in need, and possibly to a location where there are no opportunities for continued CF employment. Finally, the trend towards having children later in life will likely aggravate eldercare responsibilities, as more of the target population will find themselves simultaneously providing care to both children and parents.⁶⁷ Accordingly, it is reasonable to expect that the target population will face as much if not more work-life conflict than today, a problem made worse by physical dislocation from the extended family.

Spousal Employment

In the year 2007, it is inappropriate to use the expression “changing social norms” and “spousal employment” in the same sentence. Perhaps it would be more precise to say “changed social norms,” given that as long ago as 1994 roughly 75% of Canadian women worked outside the home, yet only about half of the wives of CF members could make that claim.⁶⁸ From a more recent study, one learns that 7 out of 10 two parent families have both parents in the paid labour force.⁶⁹ It might be safer to say that society has changed, though CF practices and policies have yet to accommodate these changes. In particular, it is the requirement for geographic mobility which causes the greatest problems and thus it is not surprising to learn that spousal employment was cited as the second greatest dissatisfier amongst CF spouses.⁷⁰ While the frequent moves are the most obvious factor affecting a spouse’s ability to secure meaningful employment, even so-called “portable” careers suffer greatly from geographic mobility. For example, nurses and teachers may stand a good chance of securing employment in their field at a new location, but with every move they must start again at the bottom of the seniority list, thus forsaking career development and advancement.⁷¹ While the immediate financial impact on a family should not to be underestimated, the problem goes well beyond the second paycheque. Supplementary health and dental benefits are forgone with the loss of spousal employment,⁷² to say nothing of the spouse’s pension plan. This latter consideration is aggravated by the fact that the member’s pension is reduced by half upon death – yet it is inconceivable that the surviving spouse’s expenses will decline by the

⁶⁷ Major C. Evans, *Work-Life Balance in the Canadian Forces & Department of National Defence*, D Strat HR Project Report 01-2004 (Ottawa: Directorate of Strategic Human Resources, National Defence Headquarters, February 2004), 12.

⁶⁸ Harrison and Laliberte, *No Life Like It...*, 122.

⁶⁹ Daly, *The Changing Culture of Parenting*, 5.

⁷⁰ Jefferies, *Quality of Life in the Canadian Forces...*, 10.

⁷¹ Captain J.E.M. Ewins, *CF Household Survey*, Reaction Research Report 00-1 (Ottawa: Directorate of Human Resources Research and Evaluation, National Defence Headquarters, 200), 41.

⁷² While CF members’ benefit package includes health and dental coverage, it is limited. As an example, the insurance payout for a child’s dental braces is only about 50%. If the member’s spouse receives independent coverage, that policy will usually make up the difference.

same amount, hence the requirement for additional pension income. To further exacerbate this dissatisfaction, current regulations favour members who divorce and remarry over those who remain married to the same spouse.⁷³ A final financial consideration for military spouses relates to the prevalence of divorce in the CF. While a succeeding section will discuss divorce specifically, and notwithstanding the fact that current pension regulations provide a greater payout to members who remarry, the spectre of divorce for a military spouse raises serious financial concerns. Given the difficulty establishing and maintaining a career (and thus accruing the financial benefits associated therewith), divorced military wives stand a greater chance of growing old in poverty.⁷⁴ Accordingly, military wives, like their sisters in civilian society, are attaching greater importance on securing their financial independence through work outside the home.

While there is the suggestion that CF “[c]ompensation must provide for fair and equitable treatment and support a reasonable standard of living in relation to other Canadians,”⁷⁵ there is no indication that current compensation calculations take the loss of spousal employment into account. Indeed, when CF pay rates are benchmarked against Public Service pay, a “military factor” is applied, yet there appears to be no recognition of the financial impact that geographic mobility has upon spousal, and thus family income.⁷⁶

Financial considerations aside, the feminist movement and Dr. Maslow explained the importance of self-actualization, and thus the strong desire for spouses to work outside the home. However, “[m]ilitary wives rarely have the opportunity to pursue a ‘career’ in the middle-class sense of acquiring extensive training or experience and applying it in a challenging job, learning to do the job well, and enjoy a degree of public success.”⁷⁷ While it is difficult enough for those CF spouses who are unable to secure

⁷³ A surviving spouse is entitled to half of the member’s pension following death. However, a member who divorces (and thus yields half of his pension to the first spouse in a divorce settlement) and then remarries is left with half. Upon his death, and assuming he predeceases his second spouse, half of the half continues to flow to the second spouse – thus a member who remarries ends up with a potential 75% pension benefit split between the two spouses, vice the 50% benefit the single wife is entitled to.

⁷⁴ Harrison and Laliberte, *No Life Like It...*, 230.

⁷⁵ John E. Finn, *Report on the Canadian Forces Guiding Principles on Military Compensation Determination* (Ottawa: HDP Group Report for the Department of National Defence, 2001), ii

⁷⁶ The “Military Factor” values the major characteristics unique to military service. Note that the military factor places a value on the exigencies of military life, which include “posting turbulence,” among other issues such as being subject to the code of Service Discipline and separations from family. Presently valued at 7.5% of pay for NCMs, and 6.5% for officers, it clearly is not meant to replace lost spousal income. Source: National Defence Backgrounder – CF Pay 15 April 2003, available from http://www.dnd.ca/site//////////newsroom/view_news_e.asp?id=1045; Internet; accessed 3 April 2007. See also: Evans, *Work-Life Balance in the Canadian Forces...*, 16.

⁷⁷ Harrison and Laliberte, *No Life Like It...*, 152.

meaningful employment (owing principally to the problems of geographic mobility,) of late their predicament is worsened, due to societal backlash against “stay-at-home spouses.” Dr. Kerry Daly of the Vanier Institute of the Family notes,

The decision to be a committed stay at home parent may be treated as an anomaly. For example, mothers or fathers who do choose to stay at home with their children may experience increasing social isolation and may subtly be called to account for why they aren’t working for pay by family and friends.⁷⁸

While CF Quality of Life efforts are ongoing in an attempt to assist spouses pursuing meaningful employment opportunities, it is difficult to conclude the CF either accepts or is prepared to acknowledge the magnitude of this problem. Consider the following excerpt from a Frequently Asked Questions page on the CF Recruiting website:

Q. I have a good job of my own. What will happen to me when my spouse gets posted?

A. There are usually resources at the family centre to help you find another job. Military spouses are also given preferential treatment when civilian jobs paid from non-governmental funds become available.⁷⁹

Such a response might satiate someone working as a server in a fast-food outlet. However; consider a marine biologist accompanying her husband to CFB Moose Jaw, or the Associate Chair of Dentistry at the University of Alberta whose husband is posted to Ottawa – would these women be equally satisfied with this curt response?⁸⁰

Divorce

The divorce rate in Canada has steadily declined since a peak in 1987,⁸¹ after having risen sharply since 1968 when the divorce laws were changed. Notwithstanding the decline, the 2003 rate is still roughly four times that observed in 1968.⁸² In the last five years, divorce rates have remained steady for both the Canadian and CF populations

⁷⁸ Daly, *The Changing Culture of Parenting*, 8.

⁷⁹ CF Recruiting Group Family Services Website, available from http://www.recruiting.forces.gc.ca/v3/engraph/resources/familyservices_en.aspx?bhcp=1; Internet; accessed 16 February 2007.

⁸⁰ These two examples, are but two real-life cases involving colleagues of the author, and serve to highlight the complexity of some spousal employment situations.

⁸¹ Dr. Anne-Marie Ambert, *Divorce Facts, Causes and Consequence*, (Toronto: York University, 2005), np.

⁸² Ambert, *Divorce Facts...*, np.

as a whole. As a group, roughly 4% of officers are reported as either divorced or separated; however, that figure does not take into account how many of previously divorced officers have subsequently remarried.⁸³ Interestingly, CF members are almost twice as likely as civilians in DND to have been married more than once.⁸⁴ Another study noted that 38% of Canadian marriages would end in divorce before the 30th wedding anniversary.⁸⁵ This same study was unable to identify a similar statistic for CF marriages, yet it did find that roughly 24% of members reported being divorced at least once since they joined the military.⁸⁶ Considering the relative youth of the CF in comparison to the larger Canadian population, it is reasonable to assume that this 24% figure is comparable to the 37% figure for all Canadian marriages. The key point is that these latter statistics highlight the fact that divorce affects many more CF members than the 4% figure cited in the 2004/2005 Annual Report! Indeed, high rates of divorce and remarriage are nothing new for Canadians, and Canadian men as a whole are struggling to deal with the issues of separation, divorce and remarriage.⁸⁷ However, consider the situation from the perspective of the target population. Acute work-life conflict can arise in cases where children are involved. A geographic move will either mean the member moves away from his children, or maintains custody and moves them away from their mother (if the divorce agreement so permits). Either situation may be so unpalatable to either trigger release, or induce the officer to opt for geographic stability over career advancement.

Financial Compensation

As a push factor affecting attrition, the subject of pay and compensation presents a complex challenge. While pay levels are often cited as a concern, research suggests that for the most part CF members are less concerned about the amount of pay received than the amount of pay received per hour of work.⁸⁸ This is a particular concern for the target population as "...Senior Officers ... are not satisfied with the amount of time they

⁸³ Paul Bender, *Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2004-2005*, (Ottawa: Modeling and Workforce Analysis Section, Directorate of Strategic Human Resources, Department of National Defence, December 2005), 18.

⁸⁴ Duxbury and Higgins, *The 2001 Work-Life Balance Study...*, 3.

⁸⁵ Jason Dunn, *A State of Crisis? An Exploratory Examination of Family Breakdown in the CF*, D Strat HR Research Note 17/04 (Ottawa: Directorate of Strategic Human Resources & Directorate of Quality of Life, National Defence Headquarters, January 2006), 13.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁸⁷ Juby and Bourdais. "The changing context of fatherhood in Canada: A life course analysis," 174.

⁸⁸ Dunn and Pepin, "Your Say" ..., 25. see also F. Syed and Major R.O. Morrow, *Canadian Forces Recruiting and Retention Strategies: Discussion Paper for the NATO Working Group (HFM 107-TRG 037) on Recruiting and Retention*, Sponsor Research Report 2003-10 (Ottawa: Directorate of Strategic Human Resources Research and Evaluation, National Defence Headquarters, September 2003), 10.

have for family, friends, and leisure.”⁸⁹ The target population is well aware of this phenomenon, given they observe their superiors who arrive at work before them, and leave later. Further, rates of pay are readily available, so the target population knows accurately what they stand to gain financially should they be promoted. As an example, consider a Major working in Ontario; he knows that should he be promoted to Colonel, he stands to increase his after tax income by roughly \$16,000 per year,⁹⁰ yet at the cost of longer hours and more frequent postings. When one considers the spousal employment issues raised above, the increased pay for the extra work and responsibility is not nearly as tempting as the gross pay figures might initially suggest. Further, the generous CF pension plan provides another complication. If the Major in our example is approaching his twenty year point, he knows that he could retire and draw a forty percent pension, which would initially yield an after tax income of between \$28,000 and \$33,000 per year.⁹¹ Again, while there is little evidence to suggest CF members are particularly dissatisfied with their pay, it is also clear that the rate at which pay increases with rank provides little offset to the potential loss of spousal earnings or the increased work-life conflict that promotion and geographic mobility would bring.

⁸⁹ Evans, *Work-Life Balance in the Canadian Forces...*, 27.

⁹⁰ Maximum incentive Maj's and Col's pay are \$100k/\$129k respectively, which in Ontario would yield an after tax incomes of \$71k/\$87k respectively. See calculations in Table below. Sources: Pay Rates available from Director of Compensation and Benefits CBI 204.41 available from http://www.forces.gc.ca/dgcb/dppd/engraph/Apr2006CF_payrates_e.pdf, and Tax Calculations completed on Ernst & Young Tax Calculator, available from http://www.ey.com/GLOBAL/content.nsf/Canada/Tax_-_Calculators_-_2006_Personal_Tax; Internet; accessed 4 April 2007. The Maj to Col example was chosen, as this is a realistic goal for most well performing Majors. For simplicity, maximum incentive pay levels were used, thus in practice the initial pay raises on promotion would be much less than this table suggests.

	Pre-Tax	Pre-Tax (\$k)	After Tax (\$k)	Yearly Increase	Monthly Increase	Yearly Increase	Monthly Increase
	per Month	per Year	Per Year	Maj to		LCol to	
Maj	\$8,329	\$99,948	\$70,596				
LCol	\$9,161	\$109,932	\$76,246	\$5,650	\$471		
Col	\$10,758	\$129,096	\$86,767	\$16,171	\$1,348	\$10,521	\$877
BGen	\$12,325	\$147,900	\$96,844	\$26,248	\$2,187	\$20,598	\$1,717
MGen	\$15,383	\$184,596	\$116,510			\$40,264	\$3,355

⁹¹ This figure was calculated using the websites cited above; the \$33k figure assumes the pension was his only source of income, the \$28k figure assumes the Major has found a new job with a salary of roughly \$70k, such that he has maintained his overall gross income of \$100k.

Financial Compensation – Counter Argument

One point that should be acknowledged is the effect of rising divorce rates and thus how members value their pensions. While the literature review did not reveal studies or statistics to quantitatively support the following counter-argument, succession planners are already seeing how divorces are affecting members' pension considerations.⁹² In short, some members lose a large fraction of their pension as part of divorce settlements. In such cases, when the member retires, his income decreases much more dramatically than had he been entitled to receive an unreduced pension.⁹³ Accordingly, some divorced members are inclined to work longer to maintain an acceptable income. To date, the effect appears most pronounced for older divorced members who are showing an increased desire to complete more than thirty-five years of service.⁹⁴ Whether this dynamic will have a significant impact on the retention of the target population remains to be seen. Intuitively one might conclude it will be less, given the relatively fewer YOS the target population will have completed.

Efforts to Improve the CF Quality of Life

Most of the above mentioned factors could be grouped under the umbrella of Quality of Life (QoL), for which DND has established a Directorate (DQoL) whose "...mission is to monitor, promote and continuously improve the quality of life of CF members and their families."⁹⁵ Indeed, DQoL and other like-minded agencies have worked hard to reduce the impact of the factors discussed in this section. Notwithstanding the link between QoL efforts and these retention challenges, this paper will not conduct an analysis of the various QoL initiatives. To be clear, this work has had a positive impact on members and their families, and is generally very well received. However, "...there has been no direct link between the introduction of quality of life (QoL) initiatives to address these problems and any increased or decreased likelihood to remain in the military."⁹⁶

⁹² As a member of a Capability Advisory Group responsible for succession planning for Majors and Lieutenant Colonels, the author has seen first hand how some divorced officers are opting to serve longer in order to offset their loss of pension income, as described in this sub-section.

⁹³ Consider that after 35 Years of Service (YOS), a member is normally entitled to receive roughly 70% of his current pay. If, for example, the member divorced after 30 YOS, and thus lost half of his pension entitlement to his ex-spouse, then upon retirement he would see his income drop to roughly 40% of his current pay (half of 30 YOS = 30% plus full benefit of 5 YOS = 10%).

⁹⁴ CF pensions are based on the formula 2% X (Years of Service) X (Average Annual Pay for best 5 Years) up to a maximum of 35 years. Accordingly, few members work beyond 35 years, as their effective pay (actual pay – pension income forsaken by continuing to work) drops to a very low value. In effect a member otherwise entitled to his full pension would be working for roughly 15%, of his pay.

⁹⁵ Directorate of Quality of Life, http://www.forces.gc.ca/hr/qol/engraph/home_e.asp; Internet; accessed 20 March 2007.

⁹⁶ Syed and Morrow, *Canadian Forces Recruiting and Retention Strategies...*, 9.

PART III – PULL FACTORS

*You don't have to do anything to retain employees when they have nowhere to go.*⁹⁷

The preceding quotation is perhaps an oversimplification, yet the point is well made. Obviously, the real message is that when attractive opportunities exist outside of an organization, then the retention challenges can become extreme. For the purposes of effective succession planning, the prediction of outside opportunities, or pull factors, is of the highest importance. As with the previous discussion of push factors, this section will outline what factors might increase attrition. Further, as these factors will encourage officers in the target population to actually leave the Regular Force, the use of the term attrition will refer to voluntary withdrawals, or to use the ADM HR (Military) classification: “Unavoidable non-functional voluntary: *good member pulled out by outside factors, often personal.*”⁹⁸ The observant reader will have noticed the reference to the target population leaving the *Regular* Force, and not simply leaving the military. This distinction will be explained in a succeeding section, in which the Reserve Force, along with the Private Sector and the Public Service will be considered as three areas of employment which will exert a strong pull on the target population.

Financial Rewards

Before discussing those employment sectors which will pull on the target population, it is appropriate to consider the financial incentives for leaving the Regular Force. To a certain degree, this subject has been covered under Push Factors, both in terms of spousal/total family income, and as a function of the marginal increases of rate of pay per hour that come with promotion. As those factors are pushing on these officers, the potentially large financial rewards offered from civilian employment will likely be very attractive to this same group. Private sector employment has always offered the greatest possible salaries,⁹⁹ and there are already indications that these salaries will increase ahead of inflation, owing to tightening labour markets.¹⁰⁰ While less lucrative, employment within either the Public Service or the Reserves offers strong financial incentives as well. The Public Service in particular offers the prospect of long term,

⁹⁷ Tim McConnell, “Retention Strategies for IT Professionals (Part 1): Not a Problem? Think Again,” *Up Date*, 2 Issue 3 (January 2004), 11.

⁹⁸ ADM (HR-MIL) INSTRUCTION 08-03 The Canadian Forces Retention Intervention Process 14 July 2003 available from http://www.dnd.ca/hr/instructions/engraph/0803_admhrmil_e.asp; Internet; accessed 13 February 2007.

⁹⁹ Kathryn May, “Pay up for top PS talent,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, Tuesday, 13 March, 2007, 4.

¹⁰⁰ Carolyn Baarda, *Compensation Planning Outlook 2006*, Report Prepared for The Conference Board of Canada (Ottawa: AERIC Inc, 2005), i.

continuous employment. Accordingly, the target population, which has grown comfortable receiving a steady pay cheque, may be sufficiently tempted by the relatively low risk but yet still significant returns possible with a second career in the Public Service, especially considering the potential to simultaneously draw a pension.

Reserve Force Employment¹⁰¹

The CF Reserves present a very attractive option, and thus a strong pull on the target population. While the pay is less (Reserve pay is roughly 85% of Regular Force pay at the same rank),¹⁰² when one considers the previously discussed financial incentives, including pension and spousal income, this factor is negated. Further, owing to the CF Pension Modernization Project, Reserve Force officers have more options available to build or improve their pension returns.¹⁰³

Like civilian employment, Reserve employment offers the prospect of geographic stability. Unlike civilian employment, the Reserves allow the officer to remain in a military environment, which after twenty or more years in the Regular Force is often a significant factor.¹⁰⁴ Further, Reserve work itself is essentially identical to that which the officer was doing in the Regular Force. Thus, the officer can comfortably bring his experience and knowledge to bear immediately, whereas civilian employment may require greater adjustment, both in terms of the nature of the work and in the culture of

¹⁰¹ As a preamble, it is understood that some readers may take great exception that the Reserves are being grouped with the Private Sector and the Public Service as a cause of attrition. Indeed, one could quite rightly argue that, given the Total Force concept, it should not matter whether an officer with high potential chooses to serve his country in either Force. In principle, that assertion is unequivocal. There are and will be many cases where officers transfer components, in either direction and provide outstanding leadership. Further, Reserve officers may in fact form part of the solution to the pending manning crisis. However, the reality is that if too many of the target population transfer to the Reserves, the pool from which the future senior leaders can be chosen may become dangerously shallow. Again, that is not to suggest some of these officers, or other Reserve officers who have never served in the Regular Force could not fill some key leadership roles. However, it is doubtful that the Reserves would be able to produce sufficient numbers of candidates with the requisite experience, not to mention geographic mobility, to meet the total requirement.

¹⁰² See Reserve rates of pay, Directorate of Pay Policy Development, available from http://www.dnd.ca/dgcb/dppd/pay/engraph/2006OffResFPay_e.asp?sidesection=3&sidecat=28; Internet; accessed 20 March 2007.

¹⁰³ See the CF Pension Modernization website, available from: http://www.forces.gc.ca/dgcb/cfpmp/engraph/resforce_fulltime_e.asp?sidesection=5; Internet; accessed 20 March 2007.

¹⁰⁴ Albeit based on anecdotal information, almost all of the author's colleagues and subordinates who left the CF to pursue civilian employment cited the lack of camaraderie within their new organization, an aspect of the military they missed greatly. Indeed, some returned to the CF and accepted part-time (Class A) Reserve work not so much for the pay, but to maintain the ties with the people, culture, and camaraderie they had previously enjoyed.

the workplace. Frankly, for the high performing members of the target population that this paper is particularly concerned with, i.e. those who have the potential to lead the CF at the highest levels, this should not be a consideration. Indeed, such officers should have the confidence to tackle any challenge and thus should not feel the need to remain wrapped in the “security blanket” of the CF. However, it is the author’s experience that a large percentage of even the strongest officers undervalue their skills and experience, and thus tend to underestimate their ability to compete and excel in a civilian setting.¹⁰⁵

What the strategic planner should keep in mind is how the dynamics of Reserve employment opportunities have and continue to change. In years past and notwithstanding the emphasis on “Total Force” employment, component transfer was a cumbersome process that often failed to exploit the skilled talent pool leaving the Regular Force. The recent expansion of the CF and in particular the formation of four new operational-level headquarters¹⁰⁶ has led to serious shortages of qualified Regular Force personnel. Many Reserve officers have been hired to either fill these new positions, or otherwise back fill other Regular Force billets, a process which is now much more efficient, thanks to improvements to expedite the component transfer process.¹⁰⁷ Some might suggest that this recent phenomenon is simply a transitory challenge, i.e. a short term spike in demand. This may be true, depending on how these headquarters are rationalized or structured in the future, but the fact remains that this recent activity has resulted in two significant effects. First, Regular Force officers are now so accustomed to working alongside Reserve Officers, particularly in the National Capital Region, it has become institutionalized. It is accepted as a common occurrence, and thus perceived by more of the target population as a viable career option. Secondly, it can become a vicious circle. As the CF employs more Reservists to offset Regular Force shortfalls, it thereby encourages more Regular Force members to transfer to the Reserves, which then exacerbates the Regular Force manning challenge. This is not a new phenomenon in the CF.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Aside from the author’s own observations of fellow officers spanning a twenty-eight year career, this subject is raised at CF Second Career Assistance Network (SCAN) workshops, in which the point is strongly made that CF officers rarely recognize just how much their skills, experience and work ethic are valued in the civilian labour market.

¹⁰⁶ Deputy Chief of Defence Staff organization has devolved Operational Command functions to Canada Command (Domestic Operations), Canadian Expeditionary Force Command (International Operations), Support Command and Special Operations Forces Command. As of early 2007, these changes have created a requirement for approximately 600 staff and operations officers, mostly at the Capt-LCol level, supported by Senior NCMs.

¹⁰⁷ Ruthanne Urquhart, “Component Transfer process easier, faster,” *Canadian Forces Personnel Newsletter* Issue 11/05, 16 November 2005, np.

¹⁰⁸ When the CF chose to contract Cormorant helicopter maintenance, it soon discovered many of the best technicians released in order to accept positions with the winning contractor, and thus exacerbated the technician shortfall in the CF.

Regardless of whether the recent demand spike returns to more manageable levels or not, the reader should conclude that Reserve employment has become and likely will remain an attractive option for the target population than it was in years past. In turn, this may reduce the number of suitable Regular Force officers in the succession planning pool.

Civilian Sector Employment – General

As previously alluded to, and as should be obvious to even the most casual observer of Canadian society, the labour market is starting to tighten and will continue to do so. The overwhelming factor in this discussion is the Baby Boom generation's retirement, those Canadians born between 1947 and 1966.¹⁰⁹ This cohort has already begun to retire; given the average retirement age in Canada has dropped from 64.9 in 1976 to 61.4 in 2005.¹¹⁰ The impact of these workers retiring will continue to be felt through the period of concern to this paper, such that "...by 2025 more than 20 percent of the population will be over the age of 65, double the proportion of 1980."¹¹¹ All predications indicate that soon, the effects of a strong economy coupled with this aging cohort will severely diminish the amount of available labour. HR 2020 was primarily concerned with how demographic changes will result in a declining recruitable cohort.¹¹² However, this paper is concerned with retention, not recruiting. Accordingly, the following discussion will review general employment predictions, and then concentrate on those sectors that stand to exert the greatest pull on the target population.

In 2002, the Department of Human Resources Development Canada (DHRDC)¹¹³ predicted that by 2007, one million new jobs would have been created, and an additional million openings would result from retirements.¹¹⁴ These forecasts appear accurate, as supported by the decline in the jobless rate in Canada. Unemployment rates are now settling in at thirty-year lows.¹¹⁵ Likewise, the Conference Board of Canada has observed the relative decrease in available labour and shown a link to a demand for rising wages.¹¹⁶ Further, and *a propos* to this discussion, the Board predicts that the labour force will only grow by 1.8% in the 2005-2010 period, after which the growth rate "will

¹⁰⁹ Foote and Stoffman, *Boom, Bust & Echo...*, 18.

¹¹⁰ Executive Action, *Canada's Demographic Revolution: Adjusting to an Aging Population*, (Ottawa, The Conference Board of Canada, March 2006), 1.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Department of National Defence, *Military HR Strategy 2020...*, 11.

¹¹³ DHRDC is now known as HRSDC – Human Resources and Social Development Canada.

¹¹⁴ Department of Human Resources Development Canada, *Job Futures* (Hull: Applied Research Unit, HRDC, 2002), 8.

¹¹⁵ CBC News On Line, *Jobless rate edges down to 6.1 per cent*, available from <http://www.cbc.ca/money/story/2007/03/09/unemployment.html>; Internet; accessed 4 April 2007.

¹¹⁶ Baarda, *Compensation Planning Outlook 2006*, ii.

plummet to 0.49%.”¹¹⁷ Therefore, the Board suggests that given “... the demographic reality of our aging population, attracting, *retaining*[emphasis added] and motivating employees will be the number-one challenge for compensation and human resources professionals for the foreseeable future.”¹¹⁸ In its 2003 report, Statistics Canada argues that managerial occupations appear most vulnerable to this shift, given that “...the average age of managers was under 40 in only 2 of the 14 sectors surveyed.”¹¹⁹

While the predictions as a whole do not bode well for the retention of the target population, this last observation by Statistics Canada is particularly worrisome.

Public Service

Although the civilian labour market as a whole stands to exert a strong pull on CF members, the Federal Public Service (PS) poses a unique threat to retention due to three major factors.

Demand

First off, like the civil sector at large, a huge demand for skilled knowledge workers is just beginning to emerge, yet the demand will be proportionally much larger in the PS. The Vice-President of HR Management Modernization, Mr. Rick Burton explained that in part, the problem stems from PS hiring practices. He noted that “...the last time the Public Service hired in significant numbers was back in the 60’s and 70’s. That’s when members of the great Baby Boom were entering the workforce. Now many of those boomers are getting ready to retire.”¹²⁰ Thus, while the term “retirement wave,” is often used to describe the effect of the Baby Boomers retiring from the Canadian work force, the expression of choice in the PS is “retirement tsunami!”¹²¹ In September 2006, the Clerk of the Privy Council, Mr. Kevin Lynch, spelled out just how serious this situation is. He noted that in the late 1980s, over 60% of the PS were aged between 25-

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Statistics Canada, *The Retirement Wave – Perspectives on Labour and Income*, 75-001-XPE, Vol 15, No 1 (Spring 2003), 44.

¹²⁰ Rick Burton, Vice-President of Human Resources Management Modernization, *Modernizing People Management: Off to a Good Start*, Speech to Material Management Conference, 4 May 2005; available from http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/hrmm-mgrh/psma-lmfp/centre/topics-sujets/Rickspeech_e.asp; Internet; accessed 21 Feb 07.

¹²¹ Brian Marson, “Organizational Alzheimer’s: A Quiet Crisis,” *Canadian Government Executive*, (September 2005) [journal on line] available from <http://www.networkedgovernment.ca/OrganizationalAlzheimersMarson>; Internet; accessed 19 January 2007.

44.¹²² By 2006, the situation had essentially reversed itself, such that 50% of PS employees were 44-64, and slightly more than 40% were in the younger 25-44 age group.¹²³ Similar to the broader national situation, the senior management of the PS is especially vulnerable to this shift.

... the average age of Assistant Deputy Ministers is now 53 years, and the average age for all executives ranges from nearly 50 years (EX-1s) to 52 years (EX-3s). Put differently, almost 10% of public servants today have at least 30 years of pensionable years of service, [as do] 26 % of executives.¹²⁴

If those PS statistics are not sufficiently threatening to the target population, consider the civilian work force within DND itself. Rates of retirement will increase, and start peaking around 2011.¹²⁵ “During the period 2011 – 2015, it is predicted that approximately 750 civilians (out of a total of roughly 20,000, or around 4%) will retire each year from DND.”¹²⁶ Within the total workforce, the EX group presents a specific threat to the target population of this paper. Of those members of the EX group who were employed in 2002, two-thirds are expected to have retired by 2011.¹²⁷ This last figure should present an enormous pull on the target population, as the EX group represents Colonel and General equivalents in the PS, thus the same type of senior management positions the officers in question were being groomed for in the CF. To make matters worse, the PS has the same retention concerns as the CF regarding competition from the private sector. Indeed, as Mr. Lynch pointed out in his March 2007 remarks, “[l]ike everyone, we face the strongest national labour market in over 30 years, with many career options for Canada’s best and brightest.”¹²⁸ Already there is a strong

¹²² Privy Council Office, “Public Policy and the Public Service Matter,” Remarks by the Clerk of the Privy Council And Secretary to the Cabinet to the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE) National Policy Summit, September 26, 2006, available from http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Language=E&Page=Clerk&Sub=ClerksSpeeches&Doc=20060926_ccce_e.htm; Internet; accessed 19 January 2007, np.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Department of National Defence, *HR Strategy Horizon One: Facing the People Challenges of the Future for the Civilian Workforce 2003-2005* (Ottawa: Chief of Staff, ADM (HR-CIV), National Defence Headquarters, 2002), 10.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 9, 10.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 10.

¹²⁸ Kevin Lynch, Remarks by the Clerk of the Privy Council, And Secretary to the Cabinet Master of Arts in Public Administration Society of Carleton University March 09, 2007, Ottawa, Ontario Remarks to Carleton University School of Public Administration available from http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Language=E&Page=Clerk&Sub=ClerksSpeeches&Doc=20070309_lynch_e.htm

suggestion that the PS should increase wages now if it wants to compete successfully with private organizations for strong performers, particularly in senior management positions.¹²⁹

This is a “no-win” situation for the CF. If the PS fails to retain its best and brightest, there will be simply that much more of a leadership vacuum for the target population to be drawn to. On the other hand, if the PS attempts to reduce attrition through rising wages, then it will merely increase its attractiveness to the officers in question.

Culture

The second major concern regarding the PS and its ability to pull on the target population relates to the propensity of these officers to join a familiar organization. While CF and PS cultures are not identical, there are strong similarities common to all Federal Departments, and for all employees in and out of uniform. Further, members of the target population have most likely supervised, worked with or worked for civilians in DND, and thus are familiar with the PS. Consider that many critics have argued that the CF has already become too “civilianized.”¹³⁰ While that debate goes well beyond the scope of this paper, it is safe to say that CF members and other PS workers share a common language, are subject to the same or very similar Federal Government policies and regulations, and share the culture of service to Canadians.

As already discussed, if improving financial compensation is the target population’s primary motivation for release, the target population would instead look to the private sector. However, this group of officers has grown accustomed to the predictable nature of government service, thus risk aversion might well influence the target population to seek steady employment with the PS, yielding the potentially larger financial returns in exchange for the certainty of continuous employment. The preceding discussion focused on the Federal PS, however Provincial Governments are facing similar labour challenges. While the cultural similarities between the CF and Provincial bureaucracies are not as close, the nature of government employment is nonetheless similar, thus these organizations would also be attractive to the target population.

bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Language=E&Page=Clerk&Sub=ClerksSpeeches&Doc=20070309_carleton_e.htm; Internet, accessed 3 April 2007

¹²⁹ May, Pay Up for Top Talent, np.

¹³⁰ LCol Martin Villeneuve, PhD, Tzvetanka Dobрева-Martinova, PhD, and John G. Currie, *Buying Low Attrition or Building High Retention? That is the Question*, DMEP-A/RT Report 2004-06 (Ottawa: Directorate of Military Employment Policy, National Defence Headquarters, June 2004), 15.

Risk

The third major factor that will increase the Federal PS' pull on the target population stems from recent legislative changes affecting the way public servants are hired. In 2003, the Public Service Modernization Act (PSMA) was passed, from which stems the Public Service Employment Act (PSEA).¹³¹ The PSEA, which came into force 31 December 2005,¹³² changed how individuals are hired. Of key importance to the target population, CF members may now "...participate in an advertised internal appointment process..."¹³³ First, this obviously means that CF members now have access to previously unavailable employment opportunities. Secondly, and of equal if not greater importance, members can now compete for positions without first having applied for or having taken their release from the CF. Now, members can make application for PS employment while still on the CF payroll. This is essentially a no-risk proposition for a member considering release; i.e. one has nothing to lose by trying. This small but important change could well have huge consequences for CF succession planning, especially given the fact that officers applying for such positions may do so without otherwise announcing their intentions to their Chain of Command. This could well lead to short notice retirements that could completely undermine succession plans.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Leslie Goddard, "Modernizing the Public Workforce," *Canadian Government Executive*, (December 2005) [journal on line] available from <http://www.networkedgovernment.ca/ModernizingWorkforceGoddard>; Internet; accessed 21 February 2007.

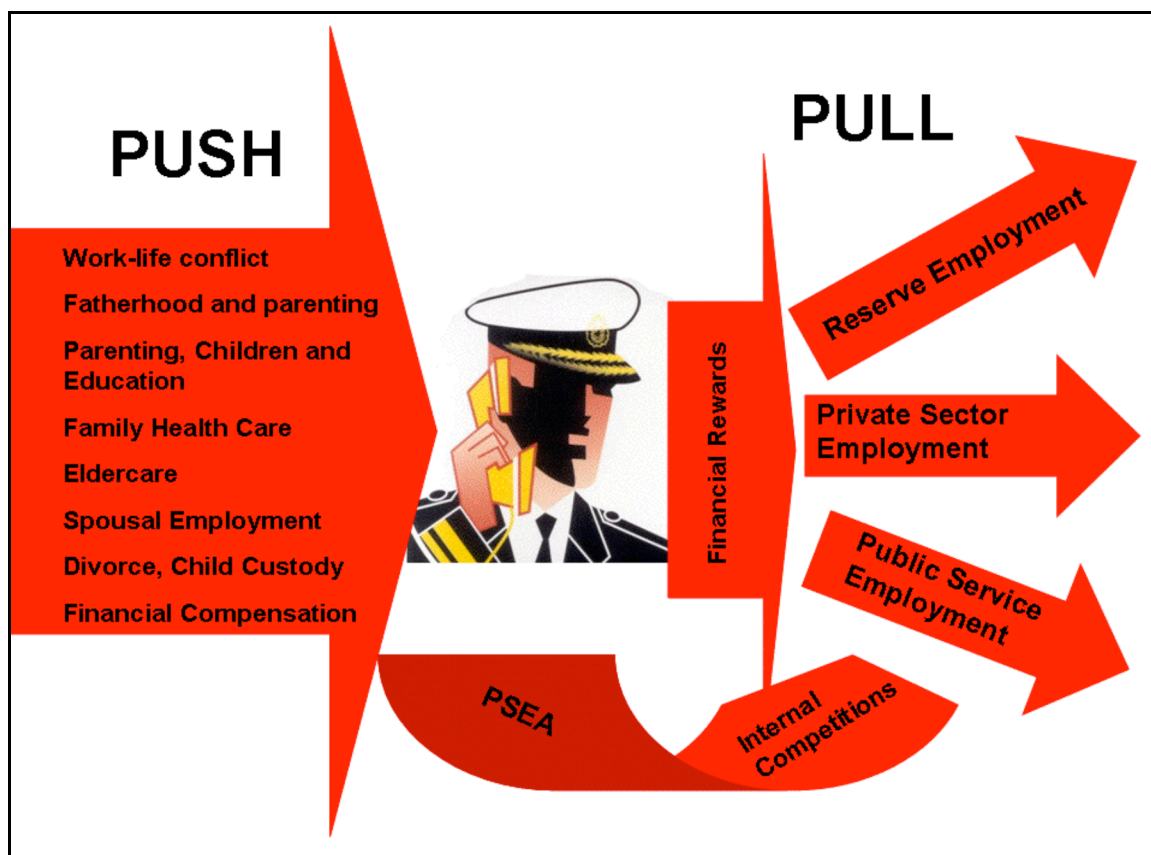
¹³² Public Service Commission of Canada, "Legislation," http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/centres/legislation_e.htm; Internet; accessed 30 March 2007.

¹³³ Public Service Employment Act (2003, c. 22, ss. 12, 13) available from <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/P-33.01/index.html>; Internet; accessed 30 March 2007.

¹³⁴ Most officers in the target population are only required to provide thirty days notice before retiring.

PART IV – INTERMEDIATE CONCLUSIONS

Before moving on to consider attrition and female officers, the reader is reminded that the object of this “Futures Analysis” was to identify those factors which threatened to increase attrition. Accordingly, each factor “...must be studied in the context of other [factors]...The future state of every [factor] that may present an opportunity or threat must be anticipated in the present.¹³⁵ Even if the push factors were simplified to seven general concerns, this would yield 5,040¹³⁶ possible permutations, and that is without considering the pull factors. Accordingly, in the interests of simplicity, Figure 2 is offered to sum up how these factors may act in concert, and thus serve to increase the target population’s attrition rate.



¹³⁵ Jarrell, Human Resource Planning..., 204.

¹³⁶ Given seven factors, number of permutations equals 7!, or 5040.

Figure 2: Push/Pull Factors

As discussed throughout this paper, most of the push factors are not new. However, the impact of some of these factors has greatly increased over the two or three decades (such as how fathers today are much more involved with their children, or the increased prevalence of working women, particularly in management or professional fields.) As the discussion noted, many of the target population stand a good chance of being affected by some if not all of these factors. Had it not been for the anticipated pull factors, the situation might not be so threatening. However, short of a catastrophic downturn in the Canadian economy, there is every reason to expect that civilian employment will pull hard on these individuals (to say nothing of Reserve employment opportunities). This then is the perfect attrition storm.

PART V – CONSIDERATIONS FOR FEMALE LEADERSHIP

In Part I, it was suggested that women should be considered separately in this paper, owing to the fact that they face unique retention challenges. Generally speaking, it should be expected that those opportunities that tend to pull on the male portion of the target population will similarly pull on the female component. One might try to identify some areas where women might be affected differently than men, either due to legal¹³⁷ or illegal discriminatory practices. However, there are no significant issues that could be identified in the research to indicate major differences between the genders' employment prospects. Similarly, there are no obvious reasons to believe female members of the target population would react any differently to the financial incentives to leave the CF or transfer to the Reserves. Thus, for the purposes of this discussion, it will be assumed that both men and women will be pulled equally and only push factors warrant a separate discussion.

Push Factors

As the reader will recall, all of the push factors, save for financial compensation, were in some form or another a work-life conflict issue with family implications. Accordingly, this paper will first dispense with any further discussion of financial compensation considerations, and assume that dissatisfaction will apply equally to men and women.

Thus, one is left to take a concentrated look at the dynamics of family issues from the standpoint of a female officer, and having done so, one will conclude that female members of the target population are and will be subject to a much greater push than their male colleagues. As explained to the NATO Committee on Women in the Forces, "Mid-career attrition is often the result of a work-life balance conflict or second career aspirations."¹³⁸ Further, the Directorate of Strategic Human Resources at DND explains that "...women have consistently demonstrated higher attrition rates... than their male counterparts."¹³⁹ The article goes on to suggest that available research cites family related reasons as the most common factor.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Here reference is made to affirmative action programmes such as Employment Equity.

¹³⁸ Lieutenant (Navy) J. Bowser, *et al*, *Retention of Women in the NATO Forces* (Ottawa: Directorate of Human Resources Research and Evaluation, National Defence Headquarters, Sponsor Research Report 2004-01, January 2004), 9.

¹³⁹ J. Bowser, "Representation by Component – Women – Canadian Forces 1997 & 2002," *D Strat HR News*, Vol 3, 2004, 2.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*.

As a slight counter-point, one finding which comes out clearly in the literature is that wives' and husbands' (and thus mothers' and fathers') roles are converging.¹⁴¹ Indeed, as was shown in Part II, fathers are shifting towards a more involved parenting role. One might assume, therefore, a corresponding convergence of the effect of work-life imbalance attrition factors. However, while fathers may be investing nearly as much time in raising their children or carrying out household duties, it also clear is that mothers "...continue to carry most of the responsibility dimension that involves the planning, scheduling, orchestration and coordination of family activities."¹⁴² While the bulk of this responsibility relates to childcare, women are similarly more likely to bear the responsibility for eldercare.¹⁴³

The underlying cause of this dilemma relates not to changing societal norms, but in fact just the opposite. Whereas the CF has opened all occupations, save Catholic priests, to women, society is less inclusive and more discriminatory:

Specifically, gender norms, community-based social networks and informal rules often serve to reinforce women's greater responsibility for parenting. For example, women were more likely to feel judged by other mothers and to feel guilty as a mother whereas men were more likely to be greeted with community discomfort when they increased their involvement in care activities.¹⁴⁴

The research does not suggest this situation will improve fast enough to have a significant impact on the target population. Notwithstanding the CF's inclusive stance towards gender integration, such societal norms affect women and their advancement. Consider the issue of Maternity and Parental Leave. In theory, the CF policy is gender neutral. A mother is entitled to 17 weeks of maternity leave, after which she may take a further 37 weeks of parental leave.¹⁴⁵ A serviceman is entitled to take parental leave as well, though if both the mother and the father are CF members, the 37 weeks of parental leave must be shared between them.¹⁴⁶ If either the mother or the father has aspirations of rising to the top of their field, both will be loathe to take almost two years out of their career, i.e. to be two years behind their peers in terms of building experience and or

¹⁴¹ J. Pleck, and J. Steuve, "Time and paternal involvement," in *Minding the Time in Family Experience: Emerging Perspectives and Issues*, ed. Kerry Daly, 205-226. (Oxford: Elsevier Science, 2001), np.

¹⁴² Daly, *The Changing Culture of Parenting*, 12.

¹⁴³ Bowser, "Representation by Component...", 2.

¹⁴⁴ Daly, *The Changing Culture of Parenting*, 14.

¹⁴⁵ Queens Regulations and Orders 16.26, 16.27

¹⁴⁶ Queens Regulations and Orders 16.27

taking advantage of training opportunities.¹⁴⁷ Today, more and more male officers are taking advantage of parental leave (hence the statement above that the policy is gender neutral). Yet, both the women and the men who take parental leave do so with the knowledge that while they are caring for their children, their competition (for promotion) may not be. For example, officers who want to maximize their opportunities for gaining experience and mastering their profession will likely take less time off, and thus may forgo parental leave benefits all together (it will be assumed that female officers within this very motivated group will take maternity leave at least until it is medically appropriate to return to work). In the end, the situation amounts to competing values; the primacy of service before self (and the corresponding positive impact on one's career aspirations) versus the duty to care and nurture children. In this case, the research clearly asserts that due to societal pressures and gender based values, women struggle much more than their male colleagues as they attempt to achieve an appropriate work-life balance.

Societal norms aside, there is one final aspect to work-life conflict that warrants closer investigation, and that is regarding spousal issues. To simplify this discussion, consider two scenarios: first a family in which the husband is a civilian, second a married service couple.

The first case raises some interesting issues. One might assume that it would be a situation very much the same as described in Part II, i.e. the example of a civilian woman married to a male officer. On the one hand, that would be true, as the CF treats civilian husbands and wives the same. However, much as society unfairly places higher expectations on a mother's role and responsibilities (see Daley's quotation above), is it reasonable then to assume societal norms may make life more difficult for the civilian husband? Regrettably, the author was unable to locate any serious research on this matter. DND, on the other hand, seems to suggest that there really is no difference, as once again supported by their seemingly superficial response to an FAQ on the recruiting website:

Q. Aren't most military spouses women? What about the husbands? Will I be an exception?

A. Approximately 16% of CF personnel are women, and many have spouses or partners. You may be pleasantly surprised by the number of peers you will meet on your first posting. If you are uncomfortable in women-dominated support groups, why not create a new group? At the end of the day, both military men and women lead an ordinary life, and there is nothing to prevent you from socialising with any of them; many

¹⁴⁷ Assuming two children, thus one year per child.

sports, physical and social activities are organized and provide you with opportunities to make friends.

This straightforward response is accurate, but it begs questions about issues more important than sports groups or social activities. The reader is asked to remember that the focus of this paper is developing senior leaders, which implies a requirement for geographic mobility. One must then ask if husbands in five to ten years are going to be willing to sacrifice their careers in order to facilitate the progression of their wives? Admittedly, there are more and more men opting to be the stay-at-home parent, or if they do work outside the home, they do so in a manner that does not interfere with their wives' work. The unanswered question is will such men constitute a large percentage of the husbands of the officers within the target population? Some might venture a guess, but as it turns out, the question is largely irrelevant. The reality is that most married service women do not have civilian husbands. While the research did not uncover specific statistics for the target population, in 2006, CF women outnumbered men roughly six to one in their likelihood to have a service-spouse.¹⁴⁸ Accordingly, the discussion regarding spousal employment must be viewed in that context. For example, the financial implications of geographic mobility are largely negated, given service couples remain employed and thus continue to receive all benefits despite the frequent number of moves. On the other hand, there is no guarantee that the couple will be posted to the same location, thus the work-life conflict aspect of imposed separation takes a heavy toll. This problem increases when one considers that the higher in rank the female officer rises, the fewer the number of locations where the couple can be collocated. At this point there is a certain degree of convergence between problems facing the service couple and those of the civilian/military couple. If the servicewoman aspires to higher rank, it is almost certain her service spouse will have to make sacrifices to his career (eg, accept a retrograde position) in order to remain collocated. Such compromises are made today, and undoubtedly will continue to be made as more women penetrate deeper into the senior ranks. The question remains: will sufficient numbers of servicemen will be willing to support their wives in this manner?

Before leaving this section, it is imperative to note that this treatment of attrition factors for women has merely scratched the surface. This discussion was simply aimed at comparing and contrasting how the attrition factors raised in Parts II and III affect female officers differently than their male colleagues. In reality, the subject of female attrition is an enormously complex subject that includes a host of other issues that go well beyond the few factors reviewed, and the scope of this paper. For example, the impact of societal norms and expectations received only superficial treatment, yet the "values gap" between

¹⁴⁸ Dunn and Pepin, "*Your Say*" ..., 22.

women and the CF raises a great many recruiting and retention concerns that have not been dealt with here.¹⁴⁹ At the beginning of this paper, the assertion was that the retention outlook for senior female officers was very bleak. Consider the statistics to date. In the five years 2001 – 2005, the percentage of female officers rose slightly from 13% to 15%.¹⁵⁰ During that time there was a commensurate increase in the numbers of Lieutenants and Captains (rising from 32% to 38%).¹⁵¹ There was a slight increase in the number of Majors, rising from 8 to 9%, and Lieutenant-Colonels showed an almost fifty percent increase, rising from 4% to 6%, but that is where the progress stopped.¹⁵² Admittedly, as one looks to Colonels and above, the sample size is very small, thus one must exercise caution with the statistics (indeed, for General Officers, the numbers fluctuate between one and four women, thus it is difficult to draw any meaningful conclusions). Nonetheless, given that the percentage of Colonels has stayed essentially flat during that period may suggest that many of the attrition factors described above are already taking their toll. Suffice to say, if there is a perfect attrition storm brewing for male members of the target population, one can only conclude that the future looks worse for female senior leaders.

Table 3 – Female Population and Fraction for Officers

Rank/ Grade	2001		2002		2003		2004		2005	
	Female/ Femmes	%	Female/ Femmes	%	Female/ Femmes	%	Female/ Femmes	%	Female/ Femmes	%
Gen/Offr g�n	2	3	2	3	1	1	1	1	3	4
Col	11	4	13	4	14	5	14	4	12	4
Lcol	38	4	48	5	54	5	58	5	63	6
Maj	229	8	258	8	275	9	290	9	300	9
Capt	807	14	838	14	847	15	888	15	910	16
Lt	184	18	182	19	214	21	219	22	243	22
2Lt/Sit	108	17	131	17	157	17	170	18	188	17
Ocdt/�lof	338	26	370	26	381	24	415	24	387	23
Total	1 715	13	1 840	14	1 943	14	2 033	14	2 084	15

Source: Jarvis, “Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel 2004-2005,” A-98.

¹⁴⁹ K.F. Davis, *The Future of Women in the Canadian Forces: Defining the Strategic Human Resource Challenge*, DSHRC Research Bote 10/01 (Ottawa: Directorate of Strategic Human Resource Coordination, National Defence Headquarters, November 2001), 2. See also Bowser, “Representation by Component...”, 2.

¹⁵⁰ Jarvis, Annual Report on Regular Force Personnel..., A-98.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

PART VI - CONCLUSIONS

This paper began by describing the concept of succession planning, and pointed out its importance in the CF context, i.e. that the CF is a closed system and thus must develop its senior leaders from within. It then considered what constitutes attrition from the standpoint of developing senior leaders – which includes the traditional sense of members voluntarily withdrawing from the CF, and also those individuals who choose to simply opt out of career advancement. Having identified the target population of concern as the Majors and Lieutenant-Colonels of the 2012-2117 period, it explained how succession planners will be forced to cope with a diminishing pool of potential candidates for senior appointments, given the officer corps' weak demographic profile.

The paper moved on to describe push factors, and their effect on the target population attrition. Notwithstanding that many of these factors are not new, their impact has risen over the last twenty years, and may become acute in the future, given changing societal norms. Turning to pull factors, the paper explained why Reserve Force, Private and Public Sector employment opportunities will create a strong demand for the target population in a tightening labour market.

Of greatest concern for succession planners, the paper illustrated the potentially devastating synergistic effect of these push and pull factors during the period in question. The paper went on to compare and contrast how female officers face unique retention challenges, and thus why women may be even more severely affected than men. From this discussion, and unless the CF acts soon to neutralize these threats, one can draw two conclusions:

- a. It is very unlikely that women will be adequately represented among senior appointments; and,
- b. the effective command of the CF will be in jeopardy.

PART VII – AREAS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

One might ask, “so what, won’t the promotion boards do what they always do, rank the members, and those at the top will *get the nod*, and life will go on?”¹⁵³ Sadly, that might be exactly what happens. The reader is reminded of the thesis of this paper, and the requirement to retain *capable* senior leaders. Herein lies the problem. There will undoubtedly be outstanding young Majors and Lieutenant-Colonels who have shown strong potential for advancement, yet will they have the requisite experience to match? Will their lack of experience preclude *effective* command of the CF? A review of the facts suggests it will. One is reminded of the naval toast for Thursday, to “A Bloody War or a Sickly Season.” Promotion opportunities will abound for those who so choose.

So, what to do? On the one hand, the problem seems insurmountable – the combination of push and pull factors appears poised to conspire to defeat the best efforts of HR planners and the CF leadership as a whole. While it goes well beyond the scope of this paper to recommend appropriate strategies to reduce attrition across the CF, and given the glut of research on the topic, this will be generally avoided. However, the reader should consider one conclusion from a relatively recent report; “The possible attrition crisis may require consideration of HR practices that were unthinkable a few years ago.”¹⁵⁴ Indeed, research for this paper has uncovered reams of recommendations and suggestions which if implemented could address a number of the push factors mentioned above.

Returning to the problem of developing senior leaders, a few parting thoughts are offered. One of the CF’s weaknesses is its relatively small size; yet this could also prove to be a strength. Given the CF’s size, the absolute number of potential senior leaders is actually quite small. Thus, therein lies the opportunity to manage “...one person at a time.”¹⁵⁵ Senior leadership could become more directly involved in mentoring these candidates, and nurturing the intrinsic values of military service so blatantly missing from the preceding discussion, which had more to do with transactional considerations. If the promising members of the target population are:

- a. made to feel valued,
- b. understand the plan for their career, and thus the leadership challenges and opportunities that await them, and

¹⁵³ *get the nod* is slang for being promoted.

¹⁵⁴ Villeneuve, Dobрева-Martinova, and Currie, *Buying Low Attrition or Building High Retention...*, 3.

¹⁵⁵ Charles M. Farkas and Suzy Wetlaufer, “The Ways Chief Executive Officers Lead,” *Harvard Business Review*, May-June 1996, 115.

- c. are reminded of the non-monetary but nonetheless considerable rewards which come from serving one's country, one's organization, and most importantly, one's subordinates; then sufficient numbers may remain engaged.

In effect, such an effort reinforces the sense of shared values, or a "value proposition,"¹⁵⁶ to which these officers will be attracted to – a higher sense of purpose.

It all comes down to time and effort on the part of senior leadership.

Consider this brief analogy. If a fisherman is happy keeping whatever fish he can drag up on the bank of the river, then his technique matters not. Sure, the good fish will not come along so easily, but the smaller creatures can be dragged in. On the other hand, if he wants to keep the big fish, he knows that the strength of his line alone cannot overcome the *pull* of the fish, especially when combined with the *push* of the fast flowing water. No, the wise fisherman takes his time and gently *leads* his trophy to the bank. The next generation of senior leaders needs to be similarly led.

To conclude, time is not an ally,¹⁵⁷ thus actions to prepare for this storm must be taken sooner rather than later.

The last call from the Met office forecast a deepening demographic trough which will arrive simultaneously with a strong current of employment opportunities, aggravated by long standing and emerging waves of dissatisfying attrition factors. Strap-in for a rough ride, the perfect attrition storm is coming.

¹⁵⁶ Lieutenant General (Retired) F.R. Sutherland, Senior Directing Staff, National Security Studies Course 9, Human Resources Management Framework – Lecture Notes, nd. 36.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

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