Vol. 24, No.2 | SPRING 2024

# CANADIAN MILITARY JOURNAL

National Defence | Défense nationale

Canada

# Guidelines for the Submission of Manuscripts

**The Canadian Military Journal is the independent flagship quarterly publication of the Profession of Arms in Canada. The Journal publishes professional and scholarly articles, commentaries, opinion pieces, book review essays, and book reviews, as well as select Letters to the Editor.**

It welcomes submission of manuscripts on topics of broad relevance to Canadian defence and the Defence Team, including, but not limited to, the profession of arms, security and defence policy, strategy, doctrine, operations, force generation, force employment and force structure, technology, procurement, military history, leadership, training and military ethics, institutional culture, recruitment, diversity, etc. Forward-looking pieces that present original concepts or ideas, new approaches to old problems and fresh interpretation are especially welcome.

The Journal welcomes submissions from members across all uniformed ranks. The Deputy Minister and Chief of the Defence Staff have delegated authority to approve manuscripts for publication in the Canadian Military Journal to the Journal's Editor-in-Chief, acting on recommendations of the Editorial Board. Serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces and civilian employees of the Department of National Defence need not and should not obtain prior clearance from their superior when submitting a manuscript.

In return, the Journal follows a rigorous double-blind peer review processes that draws on both uniformed and civilian expertise to ascertain suitability of submissions. Manuscripts will be assessed on originality and quality of the argument or discussion, relevance and timeliness of the topic, and quality of the writing style. Unless otherwise agreed upon, the Canadian Military Journal insists upon right of first publication of any given submission. Submissions should not be under review by any other publication while under consideration by the Journal.

**Submission uidelines:**

- Authors should submit two copies of their manuscript:
  - The first copy: A complete manuscript with a title, author name, author bio, author contact information, abstract, etc. Named and submitted as "Manuscript X Title-Author Name-Anonymized"
  - The second copy: An anonymized version with the author's name, contact information, and bio removed. Named and submitted as "Manuscript X Title-Anonymized"
- Manuscripts may be submitted in either of Canada's official languages;
- As a general rule, manuscripts should not exceed 5,000 words in length (but may be shorter), including endnotes.
- Manuscripts must be submitted in Word format (.docx or .doc) by email at cmj.rmc@forces.gc.ca;
- Since the Journal is a bilingual publication, manuscripts accompanied by graphics, tables, figures, charts, or maps which support the context of the article must be sent to us separately in a modifiable format to translate them in either official language. Acceptable formats include Word (.docx or .doc), PowerPoint (.pptx or .ppt), Excel (.xls or .xlsx), Vector file (.ai, .eps, .pdf) and any other format that allows the text to be modified. Any supporting photos must be provided in high resolution (minimum 300dpi) in .jpg or .tiff format for print quality and be followed with their appropriate caption and source.
- Manuscripts should conform to standard academic style, using Oxford English or Petit Robert spelling, with endnotes rather than footnotes.
- Endnotes should be embedded and not attached. Full bibliographic references are to be contained in the endnotes. Consult recent editions for examples of appropriate formatting.
- Acronyms and military abbreviations should be used sparingly, but, if unavoidable, they may be used in the body of the text provided that the term is written out in full the first time it is used, followed by the abbreviated form in brackets. Military jargon and slang terms should be avoided: all manuscripts should be readily intelligible to a general informed public readership.

**Retraction Policy**

The Canadian Military Journal is committed to integrity in publication. In consultation with the Editorial and Advisory boards, the Editor reserves the right to correct the record by publishing a subsequent correction or retraction. Retraction is based on the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) guidelines. That is, for an article to meet consideration for retraction, the article must have: unreliable findings (due to major error or falsification), plagiarism, copyright infringement, cases of redundant publication without full disclosure, failure to disclose competing or conflicting interests, substantiated reports of unethical research, or at the Editor's discretion should it turn out that content violates the Journal's ethical, professional, scholarly and other expectations.

CANADIAN MILITARY JOURNAL

Her Majesty's Canadian Ship Charlottetown's Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat on its way back from a dropping off members on an exchange with ESPS Alvaro De Bazan during Operation ACTIVE ENDEAVOUR with, Standing NATO maritime Group 1 in the Mediterranean Sea on March 20, 2012.

Photo: Corporal Ronnie Kinnie

Photo details on page 18.

Photo details on page 70.



CMJ Canadian MilitaryJournal

***Canadian Military Journal/Revue militaire canadienne*** is the official professional journal of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence. It is published quarterly under authority of the Minister of National Defence. Opinions expressed or implied in this publication are those of the author, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Department of National Defence, the Canadian Armed Forces, ***Canadian Military Journal,*** or any agency of the Government of Canada.  Each issue of the ***Journal*** is published simultaneously in print and electronic versions; it is available on the Internet at **www.Canada.ca/canadian-military-journal**.

Canadian Military Journal
PO Box 17000, Station Forces
Kingston, Ontario
CANADA K7K 7B4
E-mail: cmj.rmc@forces.gc.ca

CANADIAN MILITARY JOURNAL

www.Canada.ca/canadian-military-journal



NOTE TO READERS

As a bilingual journal, where citations are translated from their original language, the abbreviation [TOQ] at the end of the note, which stands for "translation of original quote," indicates to the readers that the original citation can be found in the published version of the Journal in the other official language.

Her Majesty's Canadian Ship WINNIPEG sails into a sunrise in the Eastern Atlantic Ocean on the morning of November 8, 2015 during Operation REASSURANCE.

Photo: Cpl Stuart MacNeil, HMCS WINNIPEG ET2015-5136-001

# Introductory Note from the Editor

**As the Canadian Military Journal approaches its 25th anniversary, recent debate highlights the publication's evolution over the past quarter-century. Initial articles tended to cover more conventional topics in military studies, such as equipment, doctrine, strategy, and history. CIMIC operations, parliamentary roles in NATO, and tactical nuclear doctrine, exemplify topics that dominated earlier issues. That is, CMJ's articles have always reflected the concerns and priorities of the day.**

CMJ emerged from the realization that the post-Cold War Canadian Forces were struggling with uncertainty about future security threats. Post-Somalia, critics highlighted to then Minister Young the liability of an anti-intellectual climate within the CAF. There are interesting and important continuities between concerns raised with Minister Young at the time, and what, a quarter-century later, Madame Arbour reported to then Minister of National Defence Anand. These echoes bolster the rationale for CMJ, and the editor's renewed steps to strengthen intellectual debates and exchanges of ideas among military professionals, scholars, and defence scientists. CMJ's role, then as now, is to kindle a spirit of inquiry within the profession of arms.

CMJ aims to strike a balance. Articles may examine external factors that will cause the military to adapt, such as shifting security threats, new roles/missions, and new technology, or they may look internally at facets of organizational or professional functions that may need to be changed. For drivers of external change, CMJ can stimulate debate on professional judgment regarding how to adapt and implement changes. But in all democracies, there is also a recurring debate in civil-military relations about the extent to which the military should adapt to societal change. As the CAF's institutional culture, personnel system, approaches to leadership, and professional values have been coming under extensive scrutiny, the way forward is necessarily subject to intense debate, especially in an organization whose members sign up for unlimited liability.

“ The mandate of CMJ’s Editor-in-Chief is enshrined in ministerial serial #63: “To create further intellectual debate among military professionals, public servants, researchers, academics, students and Canadians generally.” CMJ’s relevance and timeliness hinges on remaining true to its mandate. That means not all readers will necessarily agree with what they read.”

Traditionalist disciples of Samuel Huntington insist on protecting the military’s martial culture from the perceived threat of broader societal changes to set the military apart from society as a force capable of fighting high-intensity conflict. By contrast, progressive critics inspired by Morris Janowicz believe that a military that relies on volunteer service should not be isolated from broader societal change. They contend that a volunteer military’s functional imperative is best served when it reflects, represents, and practises the same societal values it purports to defend.

The mandate of CMJ’s Editor-in-Chief is enshrined in ministerial serial #63: “To create further intellectual debate among military professionals, public servants, researchers, academics, students and Canadians generally.” CMJ’s relevance and timeliness hinges on remaining true to its mandate. That means not all readers will necessarily agree with what they read. The disclaimer at the bottom of the Table of Contents states: “Opinions expressed or implied in this publication are those of the author, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Department of National Defence, the Canadian Armed Forces, Canadian Military Journal, or any agency of the Government of Canada.” As the former CDS insists in his foreword to this issue: “The purpose of professional journals, such as CMJ, is to provide a forum for informed discussion [...] to strengthen professionalism and [...] acknowledge we cannot assume to have all the answers.”

By means of rigorous peer review as enabled by the editorial board, the Editor-in-Chief ensures that CMJ is a constructive contributor to professional debate. To this end, contributions need to meet standards of scholarly merit, including consideration of different identity attributes. CMJ’s quality assurance process benchmarks professionalism and strives to balance academic rigour with professional knowledge. Professions exercise a degree of self-regulation, including over which ideas are endorsed as relevant. This can lead to “the closing of the profession mind” or, worse, the institution’s social isolation. CMJ’s mission is to create space for debate that might otherwise be difficult or impossible to have. In an institution whose role some claim is to defend democracy, not to practise it, CMJ mitigates professional isolation by counteracting the risk that restrictive echo chambers pose by creating and championing a free(er) marketplace of ideas concerning the profession of arms in Canada.

CMJ 23.3 was a milestone: the first special issue, curated by an accomplished all-female guest editorial team and fostering debate on military culture. The Special Issue brought together authors who are serving and former military members, defence scientists, and civilian academics. It reflects concerns that service members and civilians working together are having about diversity, equity, inclusion, and fairness. Not unlike debates that Canadian society has been having for decades, they have just taken longer to play out in the military, and they manifest somewhat differently given the organization’s unique mandate in Canadian society. The Federal Public Service is the largest employer in the country. As the largest employer in the Federal Public Service, Canadians expect their armed forces to lead by example. Despite vigorous debate within and outside the CAF on how to move forward, there seems to be a broad consensus that the CAF has fallen short of the golden rule: the principle of treating others the way one would want to be treated by them.

Is the answer revolution or evolution? Far from impugning and tearing down the whole edifice to start anew, articles in 23.3 make the case for rehabilitating the CAF, akin to renovating a venerable institution whose institutional culture shows the same structural deficiencies as some of its physical infrastructure and fighting platforms. That renovation is up for debate, and the critics are right insofar as the stakes are far too high to get it wrong (again).

The same, of course, holds for many other dimensions of the CAF. The silver lining of an organization in need of reconstitution and modernization is the opportunity for debate to shape its future. To this end, contributors can submit articles, op-eds, commentaries, letters to the Editor, and book reviews on CMJ’s new online submission portal. CMJ is, after all, the official journal of the profession of arms in Canada. In that spirit, the editorial team cherishes engagement and feedback from readers. As authors, readers have the opportunity to shape the organizational odyssey.

In the spirit of debate, this issue starts with a Foreword by Canada's Former Chief of the Defence Staff. From among the letters to the editor received, the editorial team, guided by the aforementioned principles, has selected to publish two letters that represent the spectrum of views expressed. These letters have scholarly merit insofar as they make a professional and constructive contribution to the debate on the profession of arms. One contributor's rejoinder to 23.3 follows.

The following section contains three articles on military personnel. The first article is by the former CDS, co-authored with Lieutenant-Colonel (retired) Bill Cummings: reflections on character-based leadership, a topic we'll be revisiting in forthcoming issues of CMJ.

In "GOFO Selection," Major T. Kelley examines the lack of background diversity among General and Flag Officers (GOFOs) within the Canadian Armed Forces. Major Kelley analyzed a decade of GOFOs and identified their trades of origin. The data revealed that specific trades, such as the armoured corps, are disproportionately overrepresented among GOFOs. In comparison, support trades (such as personnel selection) are underrepresented. The Canadian Armed Forces can overcome this gap by identifying support trade personnel for operational command positions, thus broadening the leadership pool and fostering diversity of trade backgrounds among senior leadership.

In their article, "RISE to Resilience: A Strategy for Leveraging Positive Emotions," Cherif, Wood, and Lt Parnell discuss the prevalence of stress following the pandemic and the need for the Canadian Armed Forces to develop strategies to address these stressors. They propose the RISE framework (recognize, investigate, savour, and enhance) as a potential mindfulness-based practice for leveraging positive emotions. When properly harnessed, mindfulness can improve cognitive function and resiliency, reduce stress and reactivity, and minimize the effects of burnout. The article concludes that mindfulness can be combined with positive emotions to navigate the post-pandemic period and challenges within the workplace.

In "The CAF as an Employer of Choice for Indigenous and Visible Minority Canadians," Major Odartey-Wellington, Ph.D., discusses diversity and inclusion within Canadian institutions and focuses particularly on the Canadian Armed Forces. In his article, he notes that the CAF can become an employer of choice for Indigenous and visible minority Canadians if it creates an inclusive environment, fosters a sense of belonging and empowerment, and embraces transformational leadership.

Major-General (retired) J. G. Milne examines the income replacement benefits (IRB) provided to disabled Reserve Veterans in the Canadian Armed Forces in "Assessing VAC's research and its influence on income replacement policy for disabled Reserve Force Veterans." He finds that Reserve Veterans, who represent 47% of Veterans and 17% of IRB recipients, face potential unfairness in the calculation of their benefits, partly because the income for Reserve Veterans (a crucial component) is based solely on their military salary at the time of the injury and excludes civilian income. The article makes the case for an income definition that better represents a reservist's civilian earnings, so IRBs can be more equitable.

"The Roles, Duties, and Recollections of Chief Petty Officers in the Royal Canadian Navy," by Samantha Olson, delves into the role of Chief Petty Officers (CPOs) in the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN). Her interviews with retired CPOs provide a more nuanced understanding of the value of their roles, which are often overlooked and classified as organizational. This article offers excellent insights into the day-to-day responsibilities of CPOs, including the distinctions between sea and shore duties, the CPO's role as an intermediary, and their efforts to fill an advisory role.

Finally, Captain Nicolas Provencher emphasizes the importance of military intelligence. His article, "Trench Raids and Patrols in Intelligence Gathering," revisits the summer of 1916 to review the consequences for soldiers who were not properly informed about the terrain, the enemy, and the purpose of their relief operations. He describes the "baptism by fire" of the soldiers of the 2nd Division experienced in the Saint-Éloi sector during the First World War.

**NATO Maritime Group 1 conducts naval gunfire drills in coordination with Forward Observers and Joint Terminal Attack Controllers from Canada, Latvia and Spain in Liepāja, Latvia, on April 10, 2024.**

Photo: Corporal Bryan Bodo, Canadian Armed Forces Imagery Technician

Chief of the Defence Staff change of Command Ceremony for General Wayne Eyre to General Jennie Carignan at the Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, Ontario on July 18, 2024.

Photo: Private Michael Seelt

# Foreword by the Former Chief of the Defence Staff

BY GENERAL (RETIRED) WAYNE D. EYRE

**More so than ever, we are operating in a global security environment characterized by uncertainty and change. The profound changes underway in geopolitics, climate, technology, and our society are highly complex, consequential, and beyond the expertise of any one individual or institution to address. Change is always uncomfortable, and that feeling often expands to one of insecurity when one's underlying beliefs or assumptions are questioned. The nature of the confluence of challenges we face demands that a rich palette of ideas, concepts, and options from widespread sources, including from outside the CAF, be explored and discussed. We must have the intellectual confidence to do so.**

The purpose of professional journals, such as CMJ, is to provide a forum for informed discussion of scholarly work relevant to the readership. This has a dual function: to strengthen professionalism, in particular individual conduct, which means understanding and addressing the context in which we live and operate; and, to acknowledge we cannot assume to have all the answers. In fact, recognizing this complexity emphasizes the importance of challenging assumptions, comprehending the experiences and backgrounds of all members, and remaining open to new perspectives, ideas, and theories that we have not previously considered.

While we are happy to draw on the scholarly work these experts have to offer, all must appreciate that the responsibility to make decisions with respect to the profession of arms in Canada resides solely with the CDS. CMJ articles do not constitute doctrine, policy, or direction. There are well-established processes for how new ideas inform doctrine, policies, and programs. Our recent doctrinal update *Trusted to Serve* illustrates how scholarly work and professional perspectives intersect: the responsible staff I assigned to this task did extensive reading, engaged with academic experts, and consulted with individuals across the CAF to produce recommended updates to previous doctrine, which were assessed by the members of Armed Forces Council and formally published under CDS authority. The CMJ remains an extremely valuable forum for all of us, keeping us informed about important issues and, as I point out in the accompanying article, facilitating the self-awareness and inner work required to strengthen one's character.

**Her Majesty's Canadian Ship FREDERICTON's Air Detachment deck director signals the deck crew during the start-up of the embarked CH-124 Sea King helicopter on Operation REASSURANCE on March 3, 2015.**

Photo: Maritime Task Force - OP Reassurance, DND HS41-2015-0043-025

# Letter to the Editor

**BY LIEUTENANT-GENERAL (RETIRED) MICHEL MAISONNEUVE**

*Lieutenant-General (retired) Michel Maisonneuve served 35 years in the CAF and 10 more as Academic Director of RMC Saint-Jean. He served as the last Chief of Staff of NATO's Supreme Allied Command Atlantic and the first Chief of Staff of NATO's Supreme Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk, Va. He was named the 30th annual laureate of the Vimy Award in 2020.*

Dear Dr. Leuprecht:

I am writing this letter to comment on your summer 2023 issue, Vol. 23, No. 3, which dealt primarily with the transformation of military culture. The magazine raises important issues and provides much fodder for discussion.

As a general comment, I am surprised that such an important topic was featured in the CAF's professional journal without a single introductory comment from the editor. The editorial by the three civilian co-directors of the MINDS Network only served to further criticize the CAF and undermine morale: "Sexual misconduct is **widespread** as are discrimination and hostility towards women, two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, inclusive (2SLGBTQI+), Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour military members" (emphasis added). Really? "Widespread"? By what measure is this judgment made, and how widespread is it compared to that of society in general? And are there really many examples of a "toxic leadership culture" still to be found within the CAF?

The CAF have been on the path of eliminating discrimination for many decades. I was serving at NDHQ in the 1980s when the CDS, General John De Chastelain, published the first CANFORGEN about harassment; it emphasized that the CAF needed to respect all persons, notwithstanding their gender or sexual orientation. It was a powerful message that was a step ahead of what other nations were doing in their armed forces. I was proud to see what

followed, when all military positions were opened to women, including those on submarines. Who were we, the men, to say that a woman cannot serve in a position, whatever it may be, if she wanted to and if she met the required standards? As General Maurice Baril's Executive Assistant, I remember him saying to me that removing barriers to women in the military is only a first step; making them feel welcome was still required, but we were not there yet. I also remember well the mandated programs of the 1990s such as SHARP (Standards for Harassment and Racism Prevention). Granted, some went through the programs with tongue firmly in cheek, but these programs have shown that the CAF recognized the need for a culture change in light of society's changing norms, and that it was making an effort by involving all its members.

Following the investigation by Maclean's ("Rape in the Military") in 1998, a maelstrom of sexual misconduct issues emerged, leading to the CDS Operation Honour, the Deschamps report, senior officers being charged, the Morris Fish report, the Arbour report. It was an avalanche of "gathered" evidence claiming that the CAF was filled with horrible men who were racist Neanderthals. Very few or no interviews were held with servicewomen whose experience was nothing but positive, including in operations where the men were honourable and respectful. My basic training instructor in 1973, a Black sergeant, has a myriad of stories detailing how his white comrades came to his defence whenever he was slighted. And my personal impression of Ms. Deschamps's visit to RMC Saint-Jean is that she was not really interested in positive experiences. Obviously, the sentence from the editorial in the second paragraph above leaves no room for reason or for what my friend and colleague Dr. John Cowan calls the "middle ground."

**The Motor Vessel (MV) ASTERIX and His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) OTTAWA lead the way for HMCS VANCOUVER during a sail past of the Victoria shorelines after departing Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt, British Columbia, for the Indo-Pacific on August 14, 2023.**

Photo: Corporal Alisa Strelley, Canadian Armed Forces Photo

I have issues with a number of other precepts discussed in the published pieces. Must DEI offices really be created? Some major companies are now reducing their DEI efforts because they can make people feel tokenized. Are racist policies really embedded in our regulations? As per critical race theory, does the fact that a CAF member is white immediately make him or her racist in a binary manner? The editorial states that "military culture, policies and support are still largely informed by the heteronormative patriarchal assumption that families consist of a military man married to a civilian woman who cares for the family and home." Traditional families undoubtedly still represent the great majority and thus need to be supported, but I would venture to say that our network of MFRCs caters well to all types of families, hopefully including our young single privates whose family consists of their parents and siblings. I know from personal experience that this wasn't always the case, but it has improved and once again the CAF is given no credit for the steps already taken.

> "The editorial asserts that there has been no acknowledgement; I disagree totally. The scrutiny and proliferation of studies that have come about are vivid examples that acknowledgement has indeed occurred."

The editorial asserts that there has been no acknowledgement; I disagree totally. The scrutiny and proliferation of studies that have come about are vivid examples that acknowledgement has indeed occurred. There are so many root causes listed for the current situation that I had trouble reading them all: "Patriarchy, colonialism, white supremacy, heteronormativity, ableism, and classicism … sex, gender, sexuality, relationship status, parental status, race, ethnicity, skin colour, indigeneity, income, socio-economic class, education, language, ability, age, region, and life experience." Wow! There is no doubt that such a list will completely deter anyone from joining such a corrupt institution, and I still doubt that letting military personnel express their individuality with their uniforms will improve recruiting.

**A child patiently waits for his loved one as he waves his Canadian flag during the arrival Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) WINNIPEG, who is returning home after an eight and a half month deployment to Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Esquimalt on February 23, 2016.**

Photo: Cpl Brent Kenny, MARPAC Imaging Services ET2016-0056-13

Notwithstanding the opinion expressed in some of the articles, I believe meritocracy should still be paramount in progression decisions, with inclusion used as a means of deciding between equally qualified candidates; we could call it "inclusive meritocracy." History and tradition are issues that must be considered carefully. History does not change despite those who want to rewrite it. But it must be understood in the context of the era, appreciated (not necessarily agreed with) and learned from—not destroyed. I agree that some examples of what is called "tradition," such as Colonel Nobody, need to be removed; snuff can be kept in much more appropriate containers with just as much or more positive history. The Commanding Officer of that unit should have taken the initiative instead of waiting for a courageous subaltern to point it out. However, the example also shows that courageous young men and women within our CAF can be real agents of culture change. My personal experience with Happy Hours, for example, showed me that even in 1990, fitness-focussed young officers and soldiers were beginning to change attitudes towards alcohol and health. If young people don't want to go curling, change the tradition! The aim of these events and ceremonies is to promote teamwork and inclusivity while celebrating unit history. They can be modified but should not be outlawed.

Regarding underrepresented groups in the CAF, our recruiting efforts have not been as successful as some would like. We could ask, "who will fight for Canada?" Here again, inclusive meritocracy should be the norm; we should encourage the groups we are targeting, focus on getting the best candidates, and not penalize those who are not from underrepresented groups. Perhaps our efforts to move bases away from urban centres have also not helped us recruit from underrepresented groups.

"Perhaps our efforts to move bases away from urban centres have also not helped us recruit from underrepresented groups."

I take issue with the points in Dr. Taber's article regarding warrior culture, including conformity and uniformity being the wrong paradigms for an effective, operationally ready military force. I thought we had done away with the harassment and abuse of the past and believe that our instructor cadre and non-commissioned officers have a better understanding of how to build an effective fighting force. I have total faith in these individuals. If our military's most demanding fighting operations do not demand warriors with emotional fortitude and resilience, what do they require?

I found the articles by Capt (N)(retired) Al Okros and Dr. Karen Davis balanced and reasonable. As Karen states, there are (hopefully a majority of) women who were treated equitably in the CAF and who are frustrated by feminists who push for change without any experience. Al's discussion of identity is useful; we who serve or have served in uniform have adopted an identity that is sometimes not understood. Any future culture change will need to consider identity as an important factor, notwithstanding its patriarchal roots.

At this point, we must ensure all these CULTURE CHANGE efforts are not put above the requirement for military effectiveness. In my view, the pendulum has swung too far. Culture change is necessary, but not everything and everyone is bad in our armed forces; the word "widespread" is inappropriate. The CAF are the protectors of our sovereignty and the defenders of our values. Leading our military forces in today's world with the woke trends that permeate our society is a huge challenge for young officers and NCMs. The series of articles and other pieces in the issue paint everyone in the CAF with the same brush and will hurt the morale of those serving. It is time to end the self-flagellation.

**Sincerely,**

**LGen J.O. Michel Maisonneuve (retired), CMM, MSC, CD**
**Academic Director, RMC Saint-Jean, 2007-2018**

A soldier of the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, acts as the enemy force, before the final firefight during Exercise MAPLE RESOLVE in the 3rd Canadian Division Support Base Detachment Wainwright, Alberta on May 10, 2021.

Photo: Cpl Rachael Allen, Canadian Forces Combat Camera, Canadian Armed Forces Photo

# Culture Change is Difficult but Necessary

**DR. STEPHEN M. SAIDEMAN, PATERSON CHAIR IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AT CARLETON UNIVERSITY, DIRECTOR OF THE CANADIAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY NETWORK**

**DR. STÉFANIE VON HLATKY, CANADA RESEARCH CHAIR IN GENDER, SECURITY, AND THE ARMED FORCES AT QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, CO-DIRECTOR OF THE CANADIAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY NETWORK AND FELLOW, CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL AND DEFENCE POLICY**

**In the Summer 2023 issue of the Canadian Military Journal, the co-directors of the MINDS Collaborative Network Grant *Transforming Military Cultures* (TMC) curated a collection of articles on changing the culture of the Canadian Armed Forces. Drs. Maya Eichler, Nancy Taber, and Tammy George received much more attention than most CMJ issues receive, going well beyond the expected scholarly exchanges between academics and practitioners. The co-editors of this issue have been the target of vitriol for suggesting that critical theories can offer insights in support of CAF culture change efforts. Let there be no doubt, however, that while the Department of National Defence produces CMJ, it operates independently and holds all submissions to a double-blind peer review process. It is important to protect this space for respectful dialogue between civilian and military experts.**

Addressing the past and current problems that have harmed many of those serving in our military can be provocative, and we live in a time where conversations, academic or otherwise, about race, gender, discrimination, and the legacies of the past can be quite heated. We support the co-editors and contributors of the special issue for not shying away from the challenge of introducing ideas they no doubt knew would elicit strong reactions. Indeed, the vocabulary of feminism and critical theories that

focuses on exposing and dismantling structural inequalities can be triggering to those who see no problem with the status quo. This should not distract the security and defence community from engaging with the core contribution of the special issue, which is to show how anti-oppression frameworks drawn from critical theories can inform strategies for culture change in the CAF. We may or may not agree with every word in this issue, as academics rarely see eye to eye, but the freedom to engage in critical thinking is essential not just for a free society but for a more effective military. Just as every military exercise or campaign should have a lessons-learned process afterwards, every democracy is better off for having a vibrant conversation with academics pursuing their ideas freely.

We wrote this letter to demonstrate the need for the CAF to change its culture, to demythologize existing efforts and the broader conversation about diversity, equity, and inclusion, to consider some of the resistance to culture change, and to explain the importance of academic exploration in democratic civil-military relations.

There are at least three reasons for the CAF to change its culture: to better reflect contemporary Canadian society, to reduce or repair the harm done to current and former CAF members, and to broaden the recruiting pool so that the CAF can reverse its personnel crisis by attracting Canadians from all walks of life.[1] The military recognizes the need to change the CAF's culture, rather than just launch a short-term operation to "fix" the sexual misconduct problem. It has stood up a key agency—the Chief of Professional Conduct and Culture—to head these efforts. Retired Supreme Court justices have repeatedly recommended not just tweaking a few institutions,[2] but changing norms and values, the shared understanding of appropriate behaviour—that is, the culture of the military. Defence Ministers have committed to these recommendations, and there are different mechanisms to hold their progress to account, like the appointment of an External Monitor, as stipulated in the Arbour Report. The CAF needs to change and continue to adapt, so we will not relitigate the point here.

This brings us to the special issue and the terms that critics of culture change find so upsetting—feminism, critical race theory, and diversity, to name a few. While critical race theory has become a slur in American politics, something used to justify removing references to racial injustice from history books, the CMJ special issue recognizes that the military used to be run entirely by white men and largely excluded others from powerful positions. In the introduction, Drs. Eichler, George, and Taber argue: "Culture change requires not just addressing sexual misconduct *or* homophobia ***or*** racism or the legacies of colonialism, but understanding them all as interrelated root causes of the military's culture problem." This approach is at the heart of TMC, from which the special issue emerges as one of the key contributions. To support this position, the contributors rely on the root causes, lived experiences of racialized military personnel,

**Technicians from Air Task Force-Romania change one engine on a CF-188 Hornet in Constanta, Romania during Exercise RESILIENT RESOLVE on March 17, 2016.**

Photo: MS Steeve Picard, 3 Wing Bagotville BN03-2016-0125-021

contested military identities, familial norms, critical feminist education, and trauma-informed pedagogy as they relate to transforming military cultures (p. 4)."Drs. Eichler and Brown start with an article that shows how critical scholarship can provide a different take on the root causes of sexual harassment, assault, and abuses of power in the military. Dr. George shifts gears to assess how lived experiences measure up to such analytical frameworks, highlighting the work performed by racialized members who must constantly negotiate and adjust to an institution that is rigidly rooted in traditions and customs. Belonging, in that context, can be arduous and alienating. In another article, Dr. Taber grapples with questions that are critical to the implementation of the new CAF ethos and supporting doctrine relevant to the profession of arms. She makes the case for critical education as a necessary component of how members of the armed forces can transcend the antiquated "warrior ideal" (p. 31). It is antiquated partly because CAF members in the 21st century must be proficient in much more than the use of force. In today's complex environment, adaptation and challenging the status quo are essential, which makes critical education and learning crucial for military leaders who strive to meet the challenges of the modern battlespace, at home or abroad. Dr. Davis presciently noted, commenting on her own military experience, "When we are confronted with a new perspective that challenges our identities and understandings of the world, we look for flaws and ways to discount or undermine that new information or the person who conveys the information (p. 70)."

This is no time to dismiss alternative ways of thinking on a defensive impulse. What could be more important for members of the CAF than to seriously consider all knowledge that could make the institution better. Throughout these contributions, and we have only picked a few highlights, the special issue is challenging

> “What could be more important for members of the CAF than to seriously consider all knowledge that could make the institution better.”

conventional ways of thinking but is far from presenting the military as beyond repair.

Critics of greater inclusivity often argue that efforts to bring in group x or y will harm unit cohesion—that the ship or the squadron or the platoon will not be that united because it was forced to include different people. This argument was used to keep African Americans out of the US military,[3] to keep women out of combat,[4] and to keep gays and lesbians out of the military.[5] In each case, the real threat to unit cohesion was not those previously excluded groups but the intolerant inheritors of past privilege. Why, then, is there such resistance to efforts to make the military more diverse, equitable, and inclusive? Why do people get upset when they point out that the military was once entirely dominated by white men? First, as Machiavelli noted a long time ago, the beneficiaries of the old way of doing things do not want change as that would reduce their power and privileges.[6] Second, one’s self-esteem essentially rides on how one’s group is doing, and if one’s group is no longer better off than others, then that relative loss can be most upsetting to how one feels about oneself.[7] To be sure, there is much confusion, and academic jargon can cause unease. But there is also politics—that some actors are hoping to use fear of the loss of status to mobilize support. This is the populism we see doing much damage around the world.[8]

Finally, this controversy is focused on academics presenting their perspectives on culture change in the CAF. What is the role of academics here in Canada and especially in defence?[9] Many democracies have very little expertise in military matters, and, indeed, few civilians are engaged in the management of the military or control of the armed forces. In Canada, parliamentarians have little interest or knowledge of the armed forces,[10] and generally stick to talking points and point scoring as we saw in the aftermath of the Vance controversy. Few democracies have the think tank environment that is present in the US and the UK. Here, research on the Canadian military and on defence in general is almost entirely done by professors and graduate students at universities and colleges across Canada. And indeed, this is on full display in this special issue, with most contributions coming from university professors and doctoral students.

The 2019 Defence Review concluded that this expertise needed to be better connected to government,[11] which led to the Mobilizing Insights in Defence and Security [MINDS] program within the Policy branch of the Department of National Defence. The Transforming Military Cultures network is one of nine that MINDS currently funds. We have co-founded two of the other networks (the Canadian Defence and Security Network and the Network for Strategic Analysis), connecting the military and DND to the research that academics are doing on military personnel, civil-military relations, great power competition, domestic emergency operations, and more. TMC was funded because it was and is presenting alternative views of the culture change challenge, forcing the military not to adopt specific strategies, but to be more aware of the legacies of the past, to consider the challenges of maintaining the status quo, and to consider the multiplicity of groups who have been harmed in the past and how to avoid doing such harm in the future.

We should therefore read this special issue of CMJ seriously, go beyond being offended by various terms and labels, and assess how Canada and the CAF can do better, to build on the capacities and talents of all groups.

## Notes

1 News stories about discrimination may undermine trust in the military, reduce support for defence spending, and discourage Canadians from supporting recruiting efforts. Jean-Christophe Boucher, Charlotte Duval-Lantoine, Lynne Goliquer, and Stephen Saideman, “Towards Subjective Control? The Impact of Discrimination in the Armed Forces on Public Opinion, A Canadian Study,” working paper.

2 The Deschamps Report is here: https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/sexual-misbehaviour/external-review-2015.html. The Arbour Report is available at: https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/report-of-the-independent-external-comprehensive-review.html

3 Karin De Angelis and David R. Segal. “Minorities in the military.” *The Oxford handbook of military psychology* (2012): 325-343.

4 Leora N., Rosen, Kathryn H. Knudson, and Peggy Fancher. “Cohesion and the culture of hypermasculinity in US Army units.” *Armed Forces & Society* 29, no. 3 (2003): 325-351.

5 Elizabeth Kier. “Homosexuals in the US Military: Open Integration and Combat Effectiveness.” International Security 23, no. 2 (1998): 5-39.

6 Machiavelli, Niccolo. The prince and other writings, chapter 6.

7 Donald L. Horowitz *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

8 Weyland, Kurt. “Populism’s threat to democracy: Comparative lessons for the United States.” Perspectives on Politics 18.2 (2020): 389-406.

9 Thomas Juneau and Philippe Lagasséé “Bridging the academic-policy gap in Canadian defence: What more can be done?” *Canadian Public Administration* 63, no. 2 (2020): 206-228.

10 Philippe Lagassé and Stephen M. Saideman, “Public Critic or Secretive Monitor: Party Objectives and Legislative Oversight of the Military in Canada,” West European Politics, 40, no. 1 (2017): 119-138

11 https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/canada-defence-policy.html

Canadian Army troops and Canadian Rangers deploy from Goose Bay to northern Labrador on a Royal Canadian Air Force-piloted Chinook helicopter during Operation NANOOK on August 18, 2017.

Photo: Mona Ghiz, MARLANT PA NK50-2017-223-028

# CAF Culture Change: Let's avoid finding new ways to make old mistakes

**BY CAPTAIN(N) (RETIRED) ALAN C. OKROS**

*Dr. Alan C. Okros is a full professor at the Royal Military College Department of Defence Studies and has been supporting Chief Professional Conduct and Culture initiatives.*

**To echo the Editor and the former CDS, the CMJ's goal is to provide a forum for informed exchanges of ideas that have scholarly merit. On occasion, it also seeks to provide responsible journalists the opportunity to convey ideas to a broader audience by preparing balanced articles that are subject to fact-checking and their editor's review of tone and bias. One may suggest that the recent CMJ Special Issue on Transforming Military Cultures has achieved the first of these outcomes.**

The Special Issue brought together authors who are serving and former military members, defence scientists, and civilian academics. As a contributor to that special issue, I offer some comments to "continue the conversation." I will start with my reference to "scholarly merit," particularly for journals intended to inform a specific profession such as medicine, law or, in this case, the profession of arms. I see scholarly merit as coming either from arguments that have academic rigour or those based on reflective professional experience. Individuals' perspectives drawn from their relevant professional experience are a valid component of the informed discussions CMJ seeks to facilitate. However, I added "reflective" to indicate there is a difference between one having accumulated 25 years of experience (and a degree of professional wisdom) and having experienced the same thing every day for 25 years.

Some who seek to defend the status quo have done so drawing on their own experiences without fully recognizing that the same experience is not shared universally by all who have served

in the CAF. Following the report by Justice Deschamps and again that of Justice Arbour, I have had numerous exchanges with CAF members who take exception to descriptions of the CAF as having a problematic culture of systematic harassment, discrimination, and sexual assaults, usually justified by, "I've never seen any of this nor would I tolerate it." Following the 1998 Maclean's articles highlighting rape in the military, my colleague Karol Wenek explained that round of "never seen/wouldn't tolerate" statements by CAF senior officers of the day—and the rash of inside stories leaked to the media—by describing what he called the "unresponsive chain of command."[1] He highlighted how "inability to hear" and "unwillingness to listen" combined to enable those in the chain of command to claim they had been unaware of issues.

This may explain why some readers might concur with Michel Maisonneuve's skepticism that sexual misconduct and discrimination towards those in several equity-deserving groups are "widespread." The facts speak for themselves: 25,916[2] serving or former CAF members have become claimants under the Heyder-Beattie sexual harassment class action settlement[3] (42% of whom are men[4]); during 2022, 3.5% of Regular Force (7.5% of women, 2.8% of men) and 3.4% of Primary Reservists (8.9% of women, 2.2% of men) were subject to criminal code sexual assaults in the previous 12 months; 34% of women in the Regular Force and 38% of women in the Primary Reserves experienced a sexualized or discriminatory behaviour in the previous 12 months; and 61% of Regular Force and 67% of Primary Reservists agreed that sexual misconduct is a problem in the CAF.[5] It should be noted that the "good news" from this survey was that the percentage of Regular Force members who stated that they witnessed (saw or heard) or personally experienced sexualized behaviour or discrimination based on gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation in the military workplace or involving military members in the 12 months prior to the survey has dropped to only 67% from 2018 (70%) and 2016 (80%). So, to the almost 26,000 who have experienced sexual misconduct, the CAF is adding almost 20% of the Regular Force each year and the majority of those in uniform know it is happening.

Michel is correct that the CAF has been on the path of eliminating discrimination for many decades, which the Special Issue as a whole also highlights. I contributed to the initial development of the SHARP programme and provided input to aspects of Operation HONOUR (i.e., challenged some of the assumptions on which this programme was based). Unfortunately, the 2022 StatsCan data amply demonstrate that these initiatives have not yielded the expected results.

Why does the CAF still have the number of sexual assaults and extent of harm reported by StatsCan? The CAF responded quickly when troops started encountering improvised explosive devices (IEDs) particularly when driving the padded roller skates that were the Iltis jeeps. Would we just write off 8% of soldiers being killed and 37% wounded every year due to IEDs? Bonnie

"Why does the CAF still have the number of sexual assaults and extent of harm reported by StatsCan? The CAF responded quickly when troops started encountering improvised explosive devices (IEDs) particularly when driving the padded roller skates that were the Iltis jeeps."

Robichaud filed her sexual harassment complaint against a CAF supervisor with the Canadian Human Rights Commission on 26 January 1980, so it has been 44 years since this issue was formally brought to the attention of senior military leadership. Would folks have walked around in 1961 saying, "Yup, that ridge up there in Vimy is a tough nut to crack; pity about all the troops we've lost each year but let's try the same mass assault one more time!"

To distinguish between lessons identified and lessons learned, there are two parts to the issue of acknowledgement that Michel highlights: properly understanding (and acknowledging) what the core problem is and developing effective solutions (including verifying the solution actually worked). We have difficulty even achieving the first when criticisms are dismissed because the researchers ostensibly did not talk to the right people,[6] or when someone drags out a great anecdote from a senior NCO to trump rigorous social science analyses. The research conducted by the Canadian Forces Personnel Applied Research Unit in the mid-80s clearly illustrated there was a problem—so it's not for want of initial lesson identification.[7] In moving to solutions and lessons learned, Connie Kristiansen's scathing 1989[8] critique of the way in which some of the research data were interpreted and the dismissive rationalizations by senior officers in order to preserve the status quo served as an early indicator that external perspectives were likely to disrupt the comfortable narratives that tended to dominate the internal military echo chamber.

Let's start with the reality stated by the former CDS and incorporated in the introductory article by the guest editors: yes, there is something wrong with military culture and no, the current military leadership does not purport to have all the answers. Successive Ministers of National Defence have stated they want it addressed as a high priority. Thus, the political authority has

issued definitive intent. This is where the CMJ Special Issue comes in. The various articles present different scholarly perspectives in the spirit of assisting Defence leadership and serving CAF members. As recognized by Stephen Saideman and Stéfanie von Hlatky, the intent is to present ideas, frameworks, and questions—drawn from scholarship that has applied these specifically to the context of the armed forces—to assist leaders to avoid finding new ways to make old mistakes. These include focussing on competence but not attending to character[9]; rewarding mission success but not assessing toxic leadership, demoralized teams, or broken individuals[10]; overemphasis on a narrow set of war-fighting skills as the basis for delivering the full range of integrated security solutions[11]; leaders relying solely on position power and not earning subordinates' trust and confidence to be able to draw on personal power[12]; applying legal mechanisms to enforce the law rather than professional approaches to ensure discipline and maintain professional standards[13]; and, seeking to change the behaviours of individuals (offenders, potential complainants, bystanders, commanders) without amending dysfunctional aspects of the social systems in which they are embedded. As stated by the co-editors of the Special Issue in their introductory article, the authors are, in fact, answering the call from CAF leadership for informed scholarship and seeking to engage with those who have the intellectual confidence to consider perspectives that can help them understand deeper causal factors.

Steve and Stéfanie identified the vitriol evident in certain responses to some of the concepts, particularly, critical race theory (CRT). Reference to CRT appears a total of five times in four of the 14 articles in the special issue but drew some attention in certain ideological echo chambers. CRT is an example of academic work that has been subject to significant misinformation and disinformation.[14] It can be traced to scholars at the Frankfurt School in the 1930s and emerged in the late 1970s through work by Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, and Jean Stefancic, among others. CRT puts an emphasis on structures and systems that produce broad social outcomes, not on the beliefs of individuals. It does not label all white persons as racist but, when properly understood, can enable those responsible for changing the underlying systems and structures to take (more) informed decisions. We do need to root out bad apples but also understand the consequences of putting good apples in warped barrels. CRT and other theories can enable us to understand how the social systems in which we are embedded shape our thinking and actions. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission called on us to find ways for each person to consider how they know certain facts, why they hold certain assumptions, and how their personal preferences influence their decisions and actions. We all hold our own worldview which embodies a host of stereotypes, mental schemas, preferences, and biases; when we act on biased information without consciously thinking about it, we can cause preventable harm or discrimination. Thus, just as with drawing on ethical frameworks or enhancing our understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing and doing, CRT informs self-insight and self-understanding.

The two letters presented in response to the Special Issue also highlight another recurring clash of narratives: the social imperatives for culture change related to addressing harm and ensuring the CAF reflects the population it serves versus the perception that changes will erode morale and military effectiveness. Elsewhere, I have argued that this is not a zero-sum game.[15] To be sure, the military demands individuals with emotional fortitude and resilience, but the CAF does require more. This starts with the secondary outcomes highlighted in CAF leadership doctrine: maintaining the profession's reputation and earning public trust, confidence, and support.[16] As the doctrine identifies, reputation, trust, confidence, and support are enhanced or eroded through the public's perceptions of the CAF's effectiveness and legitimacy. As demonstrated in the fallout of the Somalia affair, both are assessed based on whether the behaviours members exhibit reflect principles that Canadians value. So, at the individual level, the more important of the two is maintaining high standards of professional conduct and, again, the StatsCan data is discouraging—as was the parade of senior officers who were parked in the penalty box when juniors finally had some confidence they would be listened to if they came forward.

More critically, the CAF does not rely primarily on individuals to be successful, the emphasis being on building cohesive, effective teams that will succeed under arduous conditions. And we are not going to have cohesive teams when some members experience being shunned, marginalized, discriminated against, or subject to harmful actions. Also crucial is that the key idea missing in the conflicting narratives on culture change and

**A Canadian Armed Forces member of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence Battle Group Latvia fires a C7A2 Automatic Rifle from a defensive position against 1st Fusiliers, Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, British Army from eFP BG Estonia acting as opposition forces during Exercise BOLD FUSILIER in Tapa, Estonia on October 13, 2023.**

Photo: Captain Joffray Provencher, eFP BG Latvia Public Affairs and Imagery Section, Canadian Armed Forces Photo

combat effectiveness comes from the literature on why soldiers fight. In the context of the US military in Iraq, Wong et al. (2003) picked up on the academic consideration of this issue from seminal publications by Shils & Janowitz (1948) and Stouffer et al. (1949), along with the still debated and often misquoted work of S.L.A. Marshall (1947). In his 2005 reply to commentary on his work, Wong (2005) asserted, "today's soldiers, just as those in the past, fight for each other. *Why They Fight* also reports, however, that today's soldiers are motivated in combat by notions of freedom and democracy."

Issuing orders informs *when* soldiers engage in combat; understanding peer loyalty and internalized values explains *why* they do so and, more critically, why they persist when the going gets really tough. As for the importance of cohesive, effective teams and professional socialization, none of the articles in the special issue argue against these concepts. However, as I presented in my article:

> *"The focus on teams explains the emphasis given to small group cohesion and the personal judgments that occur in policing social hierarchies: individuals assess whether their peers will be able to 'cut it' when the moment arises and if they will have their buddy's back. As illustrated in Brown and Tait-Signal's work, the challenge is that many military members are using gendered and racialized stereotypes to erroneously judge others."*

Lenny Wong's comment on the shift in motivation to notions of freedom and democracy and Michel's statement that "the CAF are the protectors of our sovereignty and the defenders of our values" raise an interesting question. There has been an ongoing professional debate since the Somalia Commission on the values integrated in the military ethos. But which values? Those

**Family members and friends wait for the arrival of Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) FREDERICTON, which returns from Operation REASSURANCE, at Halifax, Nova Scotia, July 5, 2016.**

Photo: MS Ronnie Kinnie, Formation Imaging Services Halifax

interested in the most recent updates might wish to read the article in this journal by Martinelli et al. on the 2022 publication of *The Canadian Armed Forces' Ethos: Trusted to Serve*. As they pointed out, "as part of CAF efforts to address the harmful subcultures that led to such class actions,"[17] the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) ordered the renewal of *Duty with Honour*. Reflecting an idea incorporated in the original *Duty with Honour*[18] is the need to balance continuity with change. This means acknowledging that some will look back to history and tradition seeking to see certain facets preserved; however, also recognizing that the profession of arms is never static and must evolve.

I will offer three key points from the work on *Trusted to Serve*. First, for the majority of those currently serving who agreed with the StatsCan survey that sexual misconduct is a problem in the CAF, *Trusted to Serve*, along with initiatives such as character-based leadership and emphasis on inclusive behaviours, demonstrate that senior military leadership is giving thoughtful consideration to academic input and is not rejecting novel ideas or being misled by disinformation campaigns or manipulative dog whistles. As the former CDS highlights in his comments, the CDS exercises control over the regulation of professional standards and professional practices—which also means charting the course for needed culture changes. Those who suggest current culture initiatives have been politicized are not criticizing the government of the day; they undermine the vital ground of the CDS as the head of the profession of arms.

Second, the associated work on character-based leadership illustrates that CAF doctrine and daily leadership practices also need to be kept up to date. While some have stated that the current CAF description of effective leadership reflects what has always been emphasized, the reality is this is an example of the type of wishful misremembering used to justify the status quo. As part of the review our team conducted in 2001–2003, I noted three key aspects of the doctrine that was in force at that time. The first was that there were separate manuals for junior officers and non-commissioned members and none for senior officers. The two assumptions were that officers and NCMs led in different ways and that once one was promoted to Major/Lieutenant Commander, there was nothing more to learn. Second, there were 14 instances in the Junior Officer manual that emphasized that the reason one undertook these leadership activities was to get promoted. My favourite was the statement, "Commanding Officers should closely monitor the work the men do as they will always do the least possible."

Third, the primary rationale for an update to leadership doctrine is to address the "huge challenge for young officers and NCMs" presented by Michel. Instead of turning the clock back, the solution is to inform and enable leaders at all levels. Character-based leadership and inclusive behaviours exemplify the continued evolution of leadership concepts and practices which will enable the CAF to harness the strengths of Canadian diversity

and enable each person who chooses to serve in uniform with the opportunity to attain their career potential. The vast majority of the CAF consists of straight, white men. In view of the recruitment crisis, this is not sustainable. Let's combine a few statistics: almost 58% of all Canadian undergrads are women,[19] 37% are visible minorities,[20] and 4% of adult Canadians identify as part of the 2SLGBTQI+ communities.[21] This means that about two thirds of the Canadian university population is not straight, white men. The CAF needs and eagerly wants as many of these men who wish to join as possible. However, contrary to critics who claimed the special issue eschewed recruitment challenges, this is precisely one of the central points conveyed throughout the articles in this issue. Because the CAF has not successfully diversified, it is not meeting minimum levels of recruitment or retention, let alone harnessing the full range of talents, worldviews, and lived experiences of those who might join.[22] Demographic trends are unequivocal, especially on natural birth rates as well as family composition.[23] The 2021 census revealed almost 25,000 Regular Force members were either in common-law relationships or single parents.[24] When combined with dual-service couples and those whose partners also have a demanding career, the chain of command and supporting Military Family Resource Centres must find "workarounds" to enable all families to survive and ideally thrive when constrained by policies designed for traditional family structures. Whistling past the graveyard and asking external academics not to make pointed observations does little to help senior leaders move from lessons identified to effective lessons learned.

Thus, my fourth comment from the work on *Trusted to Serve* and my observation on diversity statistics, is to turn to Michel's valuable contribution on the concept of "inclusive meritocracy." In other fora I have put forward the idea of preserving merit-based career decisions while attaining the objectives under the *Employment Equity Act* by applying selection based on the concept of "first amongst equals": amongst individuals who are equally qualified, base initial selection on institutional goals (not quotas) to increase representation across all levels. Articles that examine how the CAF might advance inclusive meritocracy are likely to pique the interest of the CMJ readership.

As for my overall comment on responses and reactions to the special issue, there are significant problems when some believe the best course of action to move forward is to rely solely on using a rose-coloured rear-view mirror. The fundamental reality remains that a significant number of those currently serving—women, men, and diverse individuals—are being subjected to preventable military sexual trauma,[25] physical abuse, bullying, and harassment. The actions needed to address required changes while preserving critical professional capacities requires that senior CAF leaders sift through a wide range of perspectives to take decisions. Fortunately, they are prepared to consider concepts, theories, and empirical research that challenge taken-for-granted assumptions, professional worldviews, and their personal preferences to do what is right for those serving, and for the Canadians who rely on the CAF to deliver the military component of integrated national security.

## Notes

1 Wenek. K.W.J. (1998) I*t Takes Two to Tango: Voice and its Alternates*. Unpublished staff paper, Directorate of Policy Analysis and Development, ADM (HR-Mil).

2 https://www.caf-dndsexualmisconductclassaction.ca/

3 https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/proactive-disclosure/secd-state-of-caf-19-april-2021/reference-material/heyder-beattie-final-settlement-agreement.html

4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qVIyj1Cf1Y

5 https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-603-x/85-603-x2023001-eng.htm

6 Hence why M.C. Gagnon formed "It's Just 700," after the Deschamps Report was dismissed using similar logic as presented by Michel.

7 I served as a researcher at that time including as one of two tasked with developing the research design for what was intended for the Combat Related Employment Women (CREW) trials and, in 1995, served as the last Commanding Officer of CFPARU.

8 Kristiansen, C. M. (1989). *The Canadian Forces survey on homosexual issues reconsidered: An external review of the Department of National Defence Charter Force Report*. Ottawa: Queen's Printer.

9 Chief of Defence Staff (2005). *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*. Ottawa: Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, p. 12.

10 *Conceptual Foundations:* pp. 19-20.

11 As called for under successive assessments of the future security environment, Defence White Papers/Policies, CAF doctrinal updates, and the 2022 NATO Strategic Concept.

12 *Conceptual Foundations*: pp. 58-60.

13 *Conceptual Foundations*: Chapter 3.

14 Misinformation is false or inaccurate information–getting the facts wrong. Disinformation is false information–manipulating ideas with the deliberate intent to mislead.

15 Okros, A. C. (2019) Introspection on Diversity in the Canadian Armed Forces, in Alistair Edgar, et al. (Eds) *Strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces Through Diversity and Inclusion*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

16 *Conceptual Foundations*: p. 19.

17 They cite the Heyder-Beattie and Purge cases as well as two others yet to be finalized.

18 I led the team that produced this volume.

19 https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3710013502

20 https://higheredstrategy.com/visible-minority-students-in-canadian-post-secondary-education/#:~:text=The%20highest%20level%20is%20among,of%20students%20are%20visible%20minorities.

21 https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/12-581-x/2022001/sec6-eng.htm

22 Okros, A.C. (2020) Harnessing the Potential of Digital Post-Millennials in the Future Workplace. Cham, Switzerland: Springer

23 https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/subjects-start/families_households_and_marital_status

24 https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810014701

25 For more on MST, see the US Department of Veterans Affairs information at https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/topics/military-sexual-trauma.asp#:~:text=Military%20sexual%20trauma%20(MST)%20is,harassment%20experienced%20during%20military%20service.&text=MST%20includes%20any%20sexual%20activity,Being%20pressured%20into%20sexual%20activities

The former Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Wayne Eyre, CMM, MSC, CD speaks with soldiers deployed on Operation UNIFIER-UK on October 28, 2022 in the United Kingdom.

Photo: Corporal Eric Greico, Canadian Armed Forces Photo

# On Character

**BY GENERAL (RETIRED) WAYNE D. EYRE AND LIEUTENANT-COLONEL (RETIRED) BILL CUMMINGS**

*Gen Eyre joined Army Cadets at age 12 and has been in uniform ever since. Gen Eyre attended Royal Roads Military College Victoria and Royal Military College of Canada Kingston. Upon commissioning in 1988 he joined the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI), and has had the great privilege of spending the majority of his career in command or deputy command positions, including commanding 3 PPCLI, 2 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group, 3rd Canadian Division and Joint Task Force West, Deputy Commanding General – Operations for XVIII (U.S.) Airborne Corps, Deputy Commander United Nations Command in Korea, Deputy and for a short time Commander of Military Personnel Command, and Commander Canadian Army. He served as the Chief of Defence Staff from February 24, 2021 to July 18, 2024*

*Operationally, Gen Eyre has commanded a rifle platoon with the United Nations Force in Cyprus; 2 PPCLI's Reconnaissance Platoon with the UN Protection Force in Croatia (including the Medak Pocket); a rifle company in Bosnia with NATO's Stabilization Force; the Canadian Operational Mentor and Liaison Team in Kandahar, Afghanistan advising 1-205 Afghan National Army Brigade in combat; as the Commanding General of NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan, where he oversaw the force generation, institutional training, and professional development of the Afghan National Security Forces; and as the first non-U.S. Deputy Commander of United Nations Command Korea in its 69 year history, and as such was the most senior Canadian officer ever permanently stationed in the Asia Pacific region. Among various domestic operations, he was the military liaison to the Government of Manitoba for the 1997 floods, commanded a company fighting the 1998 British Columbia wildfires, commanded the Task Force that secured the 2010 G8 Summit, and commanded the military response to both the 2015 Saskatchewan wildfires and the 2016 Fort McMurray, Alberta evacuation.*

*As a staff officer, Gen Eyre has served with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, Land Force Western Area Headquarters, in the Directorate of Defence Analysis at NDHQ, and as the J3 of Canadian Expeditionary Force Command. He is a graduate of the U.S. Army Special Forces Qualification Course, the U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, the U.S. Marine Corps School of Advanced Warfighting, and the U.S. Army War College. He holds a Bachelor of Science and three master's degrees (Military Studies, Operational Studies and Strategic Studies). His decorations include the Commander of the Order of Military Merit, the Meritorious Service Cross, the Commander-in-Chief Unit Commendation, the Chief of the Defence Staff Commendation, the Order of National Security Merit from South Korea, the National Order of the Star of Romania in the rank of Commander, the French National Order of Merit in the rank of Commander, and was four times awarded the U.S. Legion of Merit, including two in the rank of Commander.*

*Lieutenant-Colonel (retired) W.G. (Bill) Cummings, CD, is a highly-experienced infantry officer from The Royal Canadian Regiment. His 36 years of uniformed service includes operational tours in Cyprus, Bosnia and Afghanistan. Bill is currently employed as a civilian as the Senior Staff Officer Professional Concepts and Development at the Canadian Defence Academy in Kingston, Ontario.*

**Over the last several years, we have put much emphasis on "character" as central to who we are as members of the Canadian Armed Forces. The concept of "competence," where we have traditionally focused, remains vital, but not as much as character. Character leads, competence follows—meaning that with good character as a foundation, competence can be built. To take this further, arguably most of our strategic failures over the past half-century have been the result of flaws in character, and not competence. Thus, its centrality in our new professional ethos, *Trusted to Serve*.**[1]

So, what is "character"? Many people use the term character, but few take the time to understand its true meaning. The Concise Oxford dictionary cites character as the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual.[2] The Concise Oxford is channeling an over 2,300-year-old understanding of character originally established by Aristotle, who viewed virtue[3] as both intellectual—meaning the excellence of reasoning powers in terms of prudence and wisdom, and moral—meaning the control of emotions or desires in obedience to reason, in terms of temperance. Character is about pursuing such virtue as a way of being. Aristotle's conception was based on an understanding that humans find their highest purpose in the active pursuit of a life well lived, a virtuous life.

Recent study of the concept of character by Positive Psychology researchers builds on the work of Aristotle and a great many others to posit that, from an internal perspective based on trait theory, character is founded upon a set of virtues supported by character strengths.[4] Academics have taken this research further to develop a leader model based on character whereby character is comprised of values, virtues and personality traits.[5] Whether a value, virtue, trait or strength, each represents a positive statement towards human thriving and excellence that echoes Aristotle's conception of phronesis or practical wisdom.

David Brooks provides an enlightening insight into character when he describes "résumé versus 'eulogy' virtues. Résumé virtues 'are the ones you list on your résumé, the skills you bring to the job market' and are akin to the competence discussed above. Eulogy virtues are more character oriented, and 'are the virtues that get talked about at your funeral, the ones that exist at the core of your being—whether you are kind, brave, honest or faithful.'[6] In the sense of the military profession, to combine the two, a professional life well lived is one that strives for excellence in living the military ethos and pursues the highest levels of professional competence in a virtuous, or positive manner.

One might ask then, what exactly are the virtues? Marcus Aurelius summed it up well when he said, 'A person's worth is measured by the worth of what they value.' What we value as a profession is summed up in our military ethos. Our ethical principles, military values.[7] and professional expectations set the standard for how we achieve military results. Ultimately, a professional life well lived is living what the profession values, so that there is no gap between what we think, say, and do.[8] This is leading a life of integrity; it is not an easy path, and the work

"One might ask then, what exactly are the virtues? Marcus Aurelius summed it up well when he said, 'A person's worth is measured by the worth of what they value.'"

> “The true test of character is whether you manage to stand by lived values when the deck is stacked against you. If personality is how you respond on a typical day, character is how you show up on a hard day.”

is never done. There is no perfection, there are always areas for improvement. Like physical fitness, it requires commitment as a professional daily practice: living the profession’s ethos and pursuing the highest standards of personal character and professional competence—in a word, professionalism. For this reason, the ethos is not something that is read once and then left on the shelf to collect dust. It needs to be our constant companion and guide.

It is in times of adversity—personal and professional—that genuine character manifests.[9] ‘The true test of character is whether you manage to stand by lived values when the deck is stacked against you. If personality is how you respond on a typical day, character is how you show up on a hard day.’[10] It is in these trials that the negative characteristics of ego can manifest,[11] where embracing a sense of victimhood and/or entitlement runs roughshod over asserted values and true character emerges. We are in a profession that prepares for, and occasionally practices the most challenging of human endeavors—war—and thus strength of character is essential. Hard days are what we do.

Since the publication of *Trusted to Serve*, the CAF has had more time to delve into the concept of character and unpack it. What we have come to realize is that the military ethos alone is insufficient to fully impart the values and virtues that sailors, soldiers, aviators, and operators need to internalize and live if the CAF is to become a better place to work and a more effective military force. Why? Because human behaviour is complex and defies nuanced description by an ethos containing only about twenty terms. Remember, an ethos is only a characteristic spirit of an organization, which in essence describes a profession’s idealized identity. It is not the full description of the organization’s norms and practices, which at times has led to some serious failures in professionalism in terms of character. Certainly, that lived culture has privileged ways of being, especially in terms of narrow leadership approaches focused predominantly on competence and results, which have reduced our military’s effectiveness by harming subordinates, marginalizing others, and diminishing trust across our teams.

Can character be taught? Great minds have wrestled with this question for millennia. While some believe it is innate and fixed, others believe it can be developed. We are in the camp of the latter, but it requires constant effort: “Moral excellence, according to Aristotle, is the result of habit and repetition.”[12] Petersen and Seligman speak of developing character strengths through practice (moral habit).[13] Crossan, Seijits and Gandz echo this approach in terms of intentionally developing character dimensions and elements Aristotle’s way, through a commitment to practice.[14]

It is for this reason that we are moving towards positive leadership models based upon a set of universal virtues and character strengths which transcend ethnicity, culture, religion, and time, and that reside in everyone. The universal virtues and character strengths stem from the foundational research of positive psychologists Petersen and Seligman into a classification of universal virtues and character strengths for human thriving.[15] Twenty-four character strengths build to support six core virtues of wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence.


Building on this foundational research, The University of Western Ontario Ivey Business School’s Leader Character Framework adapts these virtues and character strengths into eleven interdependent character dimensions and fifty-three supporting elements working together, with the character dimension of judgment fulfilling the special role of mediating “… the way that the other dimensions determine individuals’ behaviours in different situations.”[16]


Both the VIA classification of character strengths and this transformational leadership approach have, enhanced individual and team wellbeing and sustained excellence as their goal. Therefore, it is entirely in harmony with our extant leadership doctrine, ethos, and the imperative of military effectiveness. Key to this Leader Character approach is a focus on improving our leaders" judgment so that the military imperative of mission success and the welfare of our teams receive a more balanced consideration in military decision-making regardless of the nature of that military duty.

It will come as no surprise when we say that leadership, like living the military ethos, is a constant professional practice. For the ethos it is pursuing professionalism, for leadership it is developing strength of character. It is the mindful habit of ensuring that what you think, say, and do aligns with our ethos and the leader character strengths as we perform our military duty. But the question that begs asking here is, "How does one live the ethos and how does one develop strength of character?" And to be fair, we as the profession of arms need to do better in this area than we have done in the past. Our colleges and individual training establishments have done a good job of providing theoretical frameworks and knowledge, but the profession has not placed enough emphasis on experiential learning in the workplace, where this new knowledge needs to be reinforced and mastered.

The process of living the ethos more strictly or developing one's character strengths is identical and frustratingly simple, yet difficult to implement. The method for living a professional life of character, whereby there is no gap between think, say, and do is Aristotle's method—becoming while doing. Internalizing, living, and developing values and virtues is no different than learning how to play guitar or swim competitively. It requires the intention and commitment to develop this competency in terms of time, effort, persistence of habit, and mindset. It helps to develop this competency with a group of like-minded people who have a similar commitment to pursuing excellence in that competency, and who will also provide you frank yet helpful feedback and positive support. This feedback is critical, as aspects of our character are built up or toned down based on use or lack thereof, and honest feedback from those around us is required to see this ebb and flow if we are to be successful in this lifelong commitment.

Research by Tascha Eurich indicates that one of the many challenges that face us in this journey is that only about 15% of people are truly self-aware. Self-awareness has two aspects—internal and external. Internal self-awareness is "… how clearly we see our own values, passions, aspirations, fit with our environment, reactions…, and impact on others." In a sense it is what Marcus Aurelius believed in knowing what one values. Though some research indicates that reflection in-action and reflection on-action are ways to achieve self-understanding,[17] other research indicates that more than just introspection is required.[18] To be clear, self-reflection and introspection are still required to come to an understanding of oneself, though we need honest feedback from those around us to best understand our biases that come to affect such reflection and introspection.[19]

The second component, external self-awareness is "… understanding how other people view us, in terms of those same factors listed above."[20] Given that the majority of people are not self-aware in general, it should come as no surprise that in order to change in a meaningful direction most people will need relevant and constructive feedback from those people around them. In effect, living the military ethos and developing strength of character to improve one's leadership potential are both team-based activities.

If our desire is to develop strength of character in leadership, as we should, then the most important group of people around us to solicit feedback from is our subordinates. Although we have a formal performance review process for developing our subordinates, which has implications for career progression and command succession, the CAF does not have a widespread mechanism for upward feedback for purely developmental purposes.[21] This is where leaders at all levels need to accept the risk, bridge the power-distance gap, and create the leadership climate for such upward feedback for developmental purposes. The risk of which we speak is not risk to the team, but risk to the leader's ego. Ryan Haliday reminds us, "… [L]earn from everyone and everything… Too often, convinced of our own intelligence, we stay in the comfort zone that ensures that we never feel stupid (and are never challenged to learn or reconsider what we know). The second we let the ego tell us we have graduated, learning grinds to a halt."[22] And such self-assessment needs to be informed through honest feedback from those around us.

> “If our desire is to develop strength of character in leadership, as we should, then the most important group of people around us to solicit feedback from is our subordinates.”

Probably the most important aspect to developing strength of character or living the military ethos is one’s mindset. Carol Dweck’s research tells us that a growth mindset is the belief that abilities can be cultivated and that a growth mindset is the starting point for change.[23] Talent only takes us so far. Those with a growth mindset understand this and use their humility to know that they could be better and their curiosity to seek ways to achieve it. Angela Duckworth’s research reinforces this by showing us that effort counts twice towards success, and that grit, or the passion and perseverance to see something difficult through to completion, is also required to ensure that we put that effort in.[24] Like fighting spirit, it is the determination to commit to and pursue this learning and change as a daily habit or practice.

Key to developing this positive experiential learning environment are the leaders’ personal examples of courage, humility, and vulnerability[25] in creating that safe psychological space[26] to share each other’s varying perspectives so that we can all better connect and grow in strength of character and move closer to a life of professionalism. Dr. Brené Brown’s foundational research on vulnerability and connection tells us that the two most powerful forms of connection are love and belonging. Belonging is described as the “… innate human desire to be part of something larger than us,”[27] which is something that all military professionals can relate to. Brown goes on to further explain that “… [c]onnection is why we are here. We are hardwired to connect

**Students on the Infantry Officer Development Period 1.2 Course (Infantry Mechanized Platoon Commander Course) receive a set of orders during the assessment phase of the course at the Infantry School Combat Training Center, 5th Canadian Division Support Base (5 CDSB) Gagetown, New Brunswick, November 26, 2021.**

Photo: Corporal Morgan LeBlanc, Canadian Armed Forces photo

with others, it's what gives purpose and meaning to our lives."[28] Many military professionals believe that sharing one's professional difficulties with their subordinates would erode their subordinates' confidence in their superior's leadership. Actually, it is the other way around. Having the courage to be authentic about one's challenges with others allows people to better connect with you, and Brown's deep research demonstrates this time and again. We connect with people's humanity, not their perfection.

Upward feedback is not innovative, but it is essential to develop better leadership. CAF doctrine identifies it as reverse mentorship.[29] Our challenge is that we have not developed a supportive culture that allows for the safe flow of that much-needed feedback, especially from our subordinates, for purely developmental purposes, even though we have made it clear in *Trusted to Serve* that is it entirely acceptable for a junior military professional to respectfully correct or provide feedback to a senior military professional. Similarly, our mentoring networks and frameworks that would facilitate such dialogue are not well established and resourced to do so. Not that such exchange of perspectives need be strictly facilitated by a formal mentoring program. Other organizations such as the Canada Revenue Agency have been successful in implementing a digital feedback system for purely character-related developmental purposes.[30]

There are many ways to connect with people and we do not necessarily need more institutional tools to do so. Rather, we must prioritize courage, humanity, vulnerability, and humility to better connect with the people in front of us in more meaningful ways that inspire trust. That trust will allow for a more permissive environment for the candid exchange of perspectives that will help everyone involved grow in strength of character and deepen their levels of professionalism. We are significantly short on personnel right now and everyone is pressed for time in achieving results. However, if we do not take the time to develop our subordinates more equitably and allow their feedback to shape our leadership character, we are missing an opportunity to accelerate experiential learning within the profession of arms that will generate higher levels of military effectiveness. Character can be developed, and becoming better every day is a true sign of military professionalism. Our people and our country deserve no less.

## Notes

1 Canada. Department of National Defence. *CAF Ethos: Trusted to Serve*. Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy (2022).

2 Concise Oxford Dictionary. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 238.

3 CAF Ethos: Trusted to Serve defines a virtue as a moral quality regarded as good or desirable in a person. A particular form of moral excellence. Virtues are conditioned, then become second nature through practical repetition. Virtues are harder to adjust perhaps than values.

4 Christopher Petersen, and Martin E. Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

5 Mary Crossan, Gerard Seijts, and Jefferey Gandz, *Developing Leadership Character* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 1-13.

6 David Brooks, *The Road to Character* (New York: Random House, 2015), xi.

7 CAF Ethos: Trusted to Serve defines a value as norms or standards of desirable behaviour that give direction to and set limits on individual and collective behaviour. For Canadian military professionals, conduct values include the civic, legal, ethical and military values embodied in the military ethos.

8 "Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony." ~ Mohandas Gandhi.

9 For examples, see Paul G. Stoltz, and Erik Weihenmayer, *The Adversity Advantage: Turning Everyday Struggles into Everyday Greatness* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009).

10 Adam Grant, *Hidden Potential: The Science of Achieving Greater Things* (New York: Viking, 2023), 20.

11 Ryan Holiday, *Ego is the Enemy* (New York: Portfolio/Penguin, 2016), 161.

12 Massimo Pigliucci, *The Quest for Character: What the Story of Socrates and Alcibiades Teaches Us About Our Search for Good Leaders*. (New York: Basic Books, 2022), 9.

13 Christopher Petersen et al., *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*, 221.

14 Mary Crossan et al., *Developing Leadership Character*, 11-13, 183-191, Mary Crossan, Gerard Seijts, and Bill Furlong, *The Character Compass: Transforming Leadership for the 21st Century*, (New York: Routledge, 2024), 69-93.

15 Christopher Petersen, et al., *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*.

16 Mary Crossan, et al., *Developing Leadership Character*, 10.

17 Mary Crossan, et al., *Developing Leadership Character*, 184.

18 Tascha Eurich, "Emotional Intelligence. What Self-Awareness Really Is (and How to Cultivate It). It's not just about introspection." *Harvard Business Review* (January/February 2018), https://hbr.org/2018/01/what-self-awareness-really-is-and-how-to-cultivate-it

19 Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow* (New York: Random House, 2011).

20 Tascha Eurich, "Emotional Intelligence. What Self-Awareness Really Is (and How to Cultivate It). It's not just about introspection."

21 With the exception of Multi-Rater Assessments (360° Assessments) for select groups, with the intent to expand their use. An expansion of the 360o model to encompass all leaders from MS/MCpl and up for developmental purposes would not be fiscally achievable. The CAF would have to work towards a more affordable, scalable and confidential upward-feedback mechanism to provide such a service for all CAF leaders.

22 Ryan Holiday, *Ego is the Enemy*, 105-106.

23 Carol S. Dweck, Mindset: *The new psychology of success* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2006), 50.

24 Angela Duckworth, *Grit: The power of passion and perseverance* (New York: Scribner/Simon & Schuster, 2016), 35.

25 Brené Brown, *Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts* (New York: Random House, 2018), 17-69.

26 Amy C. Edmondson, *The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth* (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, 2019).

27 Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent and Lead* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2012), 145.

28 Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly*, 8.

29 Lieutenant-Colonel Janine Knackstedt et al., *Mentoring Handbook*. (Government of Canada: Queen's Printers, 2007), 8.

30 Steve Virgin et al., Culture Change, Rapid Trust, and Character Based Leadership. MINDS Strategic Report (21 June 2023).


Member of the Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC) speaks during the Rehearsal of Concept (ROC) drill on April 3, 2020 in preparation to deploy Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) personnel under Operation LASER in response to COVID-19.

Photo: Master Corporal True-dee McCarthy, Canadian Forces Combat Camera

# GOFO Selection

**BY LIEUTENANT-COLONEL TRAVIS KELLEY**

*Lieutenant-Colonel Kelley joined the reserves in 2004 while finishing his BASc at the University of Waterloo. In 2006, he transferred to the regular force and finished basic training. He served as an engineer intelligence officer for the headquarters of Joint Task Force Kandahar for two years, of which 10 months were spent deployed to Afghanistan. Subsequently, in 2009, Captain Kelley was stationed in England to complete his master's degree in Geospatial Intelligence with the British Army. After serving as second in command of the Geospatial Information and Services Squadron of the Mapping and Charting Establishment, he deployed to Haiti with Op HAMLET to the Mission des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en Haiti (MINUSTAH) while posted to 5 RGC. He commanded the CF School of Military Mapping before moving on to the Army HQ as lead planner for Exercise ARDENT DEFENDER, where he planned and managed realistic, level 5 counter-IED training involving over 30 nations and all tiers of government from municipal to the UN. In 2019, he was awarded the Master of Defence Studies by RMC, returned to MCE as DCO, and then spent one year as the Executive Assistant to the Canadian Military Representative to NATO. He has just returned from that task, promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, to work as the Assistant Chief Military Engineer for the Canadian Armed Forces.*

**Diversity in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and particularly diversity among its senior leaders are critical topics today. There are many sources of diversity and today's topical issues are gender and race. However, in selecting its General and Flag Officers (GOFOs), the CAF lacks diversity in another area as well, and it is one over which it has much more control: the military experience of those selected to join the ranks of GOFOs. Because GOFOs are divorced from their entry trade when they are promoted to their first star, there is no simple way to measure what trades are represented in what proportion among the senior leadership. However, when carefully counted, it is clear that certain military trades are disproportionately represented among GOFOs compared to the number of subalterns they intake. Understanding which trades are overrepresented and what CAF doctrine says about grooming senior leaders allows comparison with allies, the private sector, and the civilian public sector. This sheds light on changes that might help to improve diversity among the CAF's GOFOs.**

Diversity of trade of origin matters for the same reasons as diversity of gender, race, or other factors. In particular, it brings two things: a larger pool of candidates and a broader perspective among incumbents. If talented and capable young people with the potential to become key leaders in the institution happened to have a passion for training and became personnel selection officers, they would have almost no chance of bringing those aptitudes to bear on behalf of the CAF; their candidacy for strategic leadership positions is erased by the lack of diversity in the GOFO corps in terms of trade of origin. Likewise, different backgrounds bring different perspectives to the institution's strategic problems and this applies to trade background as well as more fundamental background characteristics like race or gender.

## Representation of the Trades Among GOFOs

Most officers in the CAF intuit that certain trades are disproportionately represented among GOFOs. They see the many infantry, armoured, pilot, and naval warfare officers among GOFOs and conclude that being one of these "operator" trades greatly increases one's chance to join the most senior levels of the CAF. However, many members of the operator trades remark that they are more numerous than most trades and are therefore simply represented in proportion to the size of their trades. This is not the case.

In 2020, the author, as a student at the Canadian Forces College, completed a Defence Research Paper in which he enumerated GOFOs over sample years for the preceding decade. Comparing the trades of origin of GOFOs to the Chief of Military Personnel production figures[1] for 2019 provided an estimate of the proportion of subalterns from each trade who go on to become generals. While not a perfect estimate as the number of subalterns in a trade may have changed in the decades between recruitment of the current GOFOs and 2019, it provides a reasonable approximation. This approximation is supported by the fact that the conversion rates for colonels into GOFOs generally resembles those for subalterns. While there are some improvements possible in the method used, the sensitivity analysis conducted showed the results to be relatively insensitive to errors of the scale introduced by the method's weaknesses.

**A Canadian Armed Forces member of NATO enhanced Forward Presence Battle Group Latvia stands ready on a presence patrol in a Light Armoured Vehicle 6.0 during Operation FORTRESS in Viļāni, Latvia on September 19, 2023.**

Photo: Corporal Lynette Ai Dang, eFP BG Latvia Imagery Technician, Canadian Armed Forces Photo

> "An officer who wants to be a GOFO should join the armoured corps. In 2019 there were 7.5 generals with an armoured background for every 100 subalterns in that trade. There were 14 armoured GOFOs for 20 armoured colonels (equivalent to 70 GOFOs for every 100 colonels)."

An officer who wants to be a GOFO should join the armoured corps. In 2019 there were 7.5 generals with an armoured background for every 100 subalterns in that trade. There were 14 armoured GOFOs for 20 armoured colonels (equivalent to 70 GOFOs for every 100 colonels). The average for non-medical and non-chaplain trades (excluded because of their special status in CAF doctrine[2]) was 2.5 GOFOs per 100 subalterns and 40 GOFOs per 100 colonel/captain (Navy). These numbers fluctuate with the number of GOFOs in the CAF, which increased by over 20 between the 2016 and 2019 samples but remain proportionate in all the sampled years. Sampling every three years was chosen for a 9-year period based on the availability of data which was increasingly limited going further back in time. It is possible that longer-term cycles are in play and that further research is warranted, but for now, these trends provide a starting point to review the impact of trade on advancement as the CAF looks more closely at GOFO selection and advancement. See Figures 1 and 2 for a graphical presentation of these data.

**Figure 1: GOFO per 100 Subalterns**

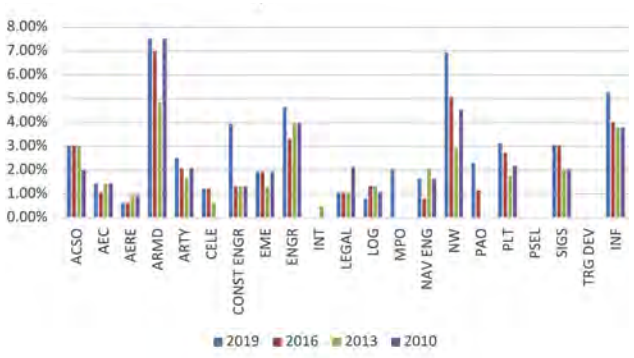
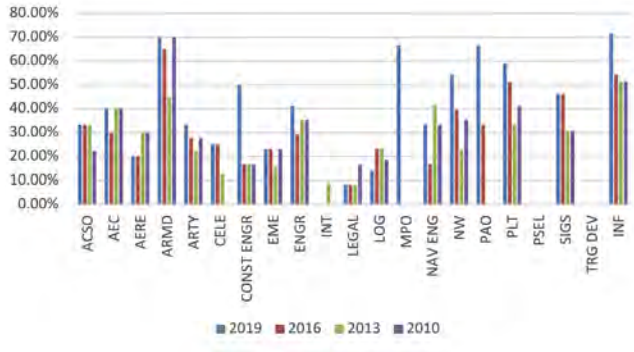



**Figure 2: GOFO per 100 Colonels**




Naval warfare officers and infantry officers were the next most likely subalterns to become GOFOs, and infantry officers had 71.5 colonels per 100 generals. These outcomes were consistent across the decade surveyed. Exceptionally, in 2019, Public Affairs Officers and Military Police Officers were tied for 3rd place in conversions from colonel/captain (Navy) to GOFO with 67 per 100; this is a function of the law of small numbers because there were 3 colonels/captains (Navy) and 2 GOFOs in that year but that was not repeated in other years surveyed. Both trades were near but below the CAF average for GOFOs per 100 subalterns. Pilots were also consistently likely to advance from colonel to general, but because of the very large number of subaltern pilots, they were around the CAF average for converting subalterns to GOFOs.

Even clearer than the winners are the losers. In the decade studied, no Personnel Selection or Training Development officer was made a GOFO. Between the two trades, there were 160 subalterns in 2019; the 186 subalterns in the armoured officer trade had 14 generals that year. This partly reflects the narrowing of the trade, with only 1 colonel/captain (Navy) each compared to the 20 colonels for the armoured corps. However, the Intelligence Corps, with 11 colonels/captains (Navy) also had no GOFOs in 2019 and only 1 in the decade studied. The logistics branch, with the most subalterns at 746 and the second most colonels/captains (Navy) at 43 had 6 GOFOs in 2019; in other words, less than half as many GOFOs created from more than twice as many colonels/captains (Navy) as the armoured corps.

## Canadian Doctrine on the Matter

Canadian doctrine is clear that this is not what is supposed to happen. The seminal doctrine for the training and development of officers is found in the Report of the Officer Development Board, commonly known as the Rowley Report, written by MGen Roger Rowley in 1969. Three key ideas from this document remain guiding principles for officer development today. First, the concept of development periods, which direct different skill development at different stages of the officer's career. Second, the emphasis on education over training, which dictates the approach to officer development at Canadian Forces College. Finally, it dictates a balanced approach to development with trade-specific, elemental, and joint requirements, as well as a balance between technical and human leadership for successful officer development.[3]

Rowley dictates an egalitarian approach to officer selection and development, which he traces to the Prussian Government of 1808: "The only title to an officer's commission shall be, in times of peace, education and professional knowledge … all individuals who possess these qualities are eligible for the highest military posts."[4] Rowley wrote in an era when technical mastery was emerging as a critical aptitude for warfighting and he showed foresight in identifying the need for officers versed in communication, logistics, acquisitions, and combat support. This led to his vision of the ideal general officer: someone with a general aptitude for the organization's function and specialized knowledge of key emerging technologies and problems.[5]

> “Rowley does not dismiss the importance of an officer’s background trade, although he specifies that it becomes decreasingly relevant as the officer progress through the ranks.”

Rowley does not dismiss the importance of an officer’s background trade, although he specifies that it becomes decreasingly relevant as the officer progress through the ranks. For example, he does not contend that the commander of the Air Force could just as easily be a combat engineer as a pilot. Further, he notes that certain highly specialized positions require very precise background experience, such as the Judge Advocate General, which calls for a legal background. Rather, his interpretation is a warning against over-specifying the background required to hold many senior positions.[6]

The question of which positions require what degree of specialization is a key issue of contention. While a professional background in medicine or law is a clear prerequisite for the Surgeon General or the Judge Advocate General, there is decreasing clarity about when a specialist versus a generalist is required as you go through the professions. Does the provost marshal need a police background? Does the commander of the CAF cyber force need a cyber background? Does the commander of Canadian Forces Intelligence Command need an intelligence background? Major Brent Robart argues for the specialty of cyber command in his paper, “Leadership Requirements in Emerging Domains of Operations.”[7] Rear Admiral Bishop argued that, since four of five intelligence chiefs among the five-eye intelligence partnership in 2019 did not have an intelligence-specific background, a specialist was not required to lead intelligence.[8] There is no clear consensus in the CAF for when a specialist background is needed for a GOFO, when an operator background is required, and when a generalist is most suited.

Rowley’s work was followed in 2008 by the CF Executive Development Program concept by LGen (Ret) Michael Jeffery.[9] Jeffery’s primary source was a series of interviews with contemporary GOFOs as well as some training and professional education specialists. His analysis to some extent reflects the view of the incumbent GOFOs that the current system is effective, but they recognize, as he does, that there is room for improvement. Jeffery’s primary concern, based on these interviews, is the lack of expertise. GOFOs in his study had the experience and knowledge to lead operationally, but they lacked contextual exposure to handle the “complexities of Ottawa.” He recommends exposure to an international and political/military interface as part of the preparation for advancing to the strategic level. While this would not be uniquely solved by recruiting from the supporting trades into the GOFO cadres, many of them are more exposed to the civilian components of DND and to partners than the operator trades.

Similarly, most of Jeffery’s other concerns about the 2008 GOFO corps could be interpreted to partly stem from the nature of the experience of the operator trade alumni, who typically hold primacy at the tactical levels and may therefore not develop the same skills for compromise and adaptation that are needed at the strategic level, when defence is only a component of the government’s security approach. He specifically notes that “the cultural bias within the CF is that our primary mission is operations, so every opportunity must be taken to be in operations.”[10] He goes on to acknowledge that the consequence is an operationally astute GOFO corps with strategic weak points. Although the details of Jeffery’s report focus on the design of professional development to address these concerns, the context setting shows the problems and successes of the current model and suggests the potential for diversification of trade to address some of his identified gaps.

The latest work on the topic, the Officer Developmental Periods 4/5: Project Strategic Leader report[11] from 2014, starts by confirming that the concerns raised by Jeffery remained relevant at that time, as did the fundamental theory articulated by Rowley. One of its key conclusions was that “what got us here is not going to get us there,” reaffirming the need to break out of the approach which has been inherited from the successes of the Second World War. It goes on to describe five interconnected “domains of employment” for GOFOs: machinery of government; socio-political milieu; domestic and international operations; the profession of arms; and the business of defence. It acknowledges that different GOFO positions needed different mixes of these aptitudes. These positions are divided into Force Employment; Force Generation; Force Development; National Security Professional; and Strategic Systems. Chief of Military Personnel is an example of Strategic Systems; National Security Professionals are the senior advisors, liaisons, and related roles for GOFOs. Looking at the five domains across the five roles, the conclusion is that all GOFOs need some ability in all domains and in all roles—a conclusion echoed ubiquitously that generals are ultimately generalists. However, it places the emphasis on Force Generation and Force Development, which favours the current model for training and employing operator trades. This conclusion indicates that support trades would need to retain a connection to CAF soldier and equipment basics in order to be effective GOFOs; full specialists would lack the required generalized aptitudes revealed in the study.

Overall, Canadian doctrine has not addressed military trade specifically, except for Rowley's rejection of it as a relevant criterion for advancement at the higher levels. However, subsequent reviews to Rowley's have found gaps in the operational focus of the strategic leadership, which may be partly due to the preference for operator trades and the specific military experience which accompanies them. Other nations have looked at the problem as well and reached similar conclusions.

## Allied Thought on the Matter

The process and criteria for selecting GOFOs are not a matter of academic research for most of Canada's allies. However, for the United States (US), and particularly the US Army, it is. Although the US Army is not an ideal model for the CAF due to its vastly different scale and culture, it can provide general insights into the leadership of soldiers and the management of large organizations.

Journalist Thomas Ricks analyzed the management of US Army generals from the Second World War to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in his comprehensive work "The Generals." Philosophically, the US Army sees generals as generalists, like the CAF, and independent of trade of origin, but in practice they are not. In the Second World War, 59% of US Army generals emerged from the infantry branch.[12] This was proportionate to the other combat arms, including artillery and engineering, but it was twice as many as would have been expected if the non-medical supporting arms (mainly logistics) had been represented proportionately.[13]

One of Ricks' key findings was that combat leadership experience produced successful generals in combat. This was consistently the case with division and higher commanders in the Second World War, where those with combat experience at the battalion and brigade levels were more successful at higher levels. However, it remained valid through Korea, Vietnam, and even up to General Petraeus in Iraq.[14] Petraeus was also cited as considering combat experience a key aptitude in selecting colonels for promotion. This may reflect the Project Strategic Leader report's finding of the importance of Force Generation and Force Development for all strategic positions.

**Military task force leaders from several NATO countries, including Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Latvia and the United States, attend an exercise planning brief in the Hohenfels Training Area, Germany on Exercise ALLIED SPIRIT VI during Operation REASSURANCE on March 18, 2017.**

Photo: MCpl Jennifer Kusche, Canadian Forces Combat Camera IS06-2017-0004-066

This perspective was echoed by a surprising source: Lieutenant-General Pagonis who commanded the logistics effort in support of the first Gulf War. He was an army logistician but credited his experience commanding an infantry platoon as a lieutenant in Cold War Germany, as well as his time supporting artillery in Vietnam, with his capability to support operations including leading logistics in the Gulf.[15] Pagonis' technical knowledge was essential to his role, but his generalist knowledge and combat experience enabled him to successfully link in with the perspectives and requirements of the operational and tactical commanders of that theatre.

Modern thinking in the US calls for the explicit recognition of a seemingly similar distinction. The Centre for New American Security, a US defence think tank, published a report entitled, "Building Better Generals."[16] The core proposition of this report was to explicitly stream US GOFOs into operational or enterprise roles. Division commanders, the commander of the Army or the Chair of the Joint Chiefs, among others, would be operational and these would draw from the operator trades primarily. The deputies, the support service commanders, and others would be in the enterprise stream. The argument is that such streaming from the rank of colonel and up would enable education to be tailored towards the chosen role and deepen experience since a GOFO would not need both operational and enterprise experience at each rank to be seen as ready to advance. This approach has not been endorsed officially by the Department of Defense, but similar ideas are common when discussing this problem in both Canada and the US.

In the Ministry of Defence (MOD) of the United Kingdom, thinking that mirrors Robart's is emerging. Captain Parker, Royal Engineer, developed a similar thesis about a Jack of All Trades and the leadership of different trades.[17] He follows Robart's logic that specialized domains, particularly those which are rapidly evolving, require specialist leaders to keep up, even though more stable domains benefit from generalist leaders. He notes that emotional intelligence is more important for strategic leadership than either technical or generalist experience, but given comparable candidates, specialists are needed in some strategic roles. Like the CAF, the MOD struggles to generate sufficiently specialized leaders, especially in technical fields. Parker recommends various ways of cross-pollinating the defence leadership with specialist leaders developed in the private and civilian public spheres.

## Civilian Perspectives and Experience

The questions of specialist and trade background are closely related but not identical. However, the civilian world has no concept of trade in the way that the military does, at least not at higher levels. Consequently, background and level of specialization are useful proxies. The study of both private and public employment models provides some insight.

In the private sector, research is focused on Chief Executive Officers (CEO), but not on the senior executives who support them. This may raise the question of its applicability to selecting GOFOs that are not the most senior. University of Windsor scholar Eahab Eslaid conducted a study similar to the author's Defence Research study but focused on CEOs rather than GOFOs. Elsaid classifies backgrounds into four categories: founder, output, throughput, and peripheral.[18] He defines an output background as related to the external links of the organization, like marketing and sales. The throughput group are engineers and operations planners who manage the core business of the firm. The peripheral group includes accountants and lawyers who provide specialized support. Founders are a unique category of CEOs who originally established the corporation and have special personal and emotional ties to it; their unique connection to the firm has no parallel in modern western militaries.

The throughput group corresponds closely to the operator trades who conduct the core business of controlled application of violence. The specialist groups are similar to the CAF's specialized trades who bring vital but non-core skills to enable throughput. In the CAF, the output function is not filled by trades but by individuals from the operator or support groups who are temporarily assigned to output-oriented tasks like recruitment or policy. This is an important link to Jeffery's perspective that officers should be exposed to exterior organizations, as part of their more junior development, to prepare them for later employment at the strategic level.[19] Given this correspondence between Elsaid's research and the military question of the impact of trade on GOFO selection, his results are worth reviewing.

Elsaid's most profound discovery was that companies consistently hire CEOs with similar background to their predecessors when things are going well. Engineers are replaced by engineers, lawyers by lawyers, etc. This is not the case when things go poorly; often the CEO is replaced by someone with a different background, usually a specialist with accounting expertise when finances are an issue or a lawyer when legal problems are the key concern. This finding implies that the CAF may be led by operator trades because they were the right choice in the Second World War, which is why similar leaders were selected and encouraged to replace them.

Elsaid's research does show some reasons why operators might be the best choice for leading the CAF, but only generally. He found that companies focused on throughput activities like research and development tend to prefer CEOs with throughput backgrounds. If the Department of National Defence (DND) is the nexus for administration, support, finance, and management, it may be logical to view the CAF as the operational arm of DND and therefore having operators as its leaders might make a great deal of sense when the influence of the civilian aspects of the Department is factored in.

"In the private sector, research is focused on Chief Executive Officers (CEO), but not on the senior executives who support them. This may raise the question of its applicability to selecting GOFOs that are not the most senior."

Research into the recruitment of senior public sector executives provides less understanding of why but important insights into how it is done. In Canada, public servant positions are tied to a list of experience, knowledge, and competency requirements. These requirements are subject to universal scrutiny, so individuals who want the positions can work towards meeting the requirements as much in advance as desired. Further, the requirements are subject to review and dispute in the long term, so a prerequisite of operator experience in a position can be argued against and established as necessary (or not) by open debate, rather than by the existing (operator dominated) power base. The importance of mentorship and grooming of senior leaders in preparation for assuming the most senior positions cannot be overlooked, but it can be included in the requirements.

A study of the effectiveness of this approach was conducted by Sakinah in Indonesia. Historically, Indonesia's hierarchical public service filled vacancies above the entry-level by promotion of a subordinate of the vacant position.[20] The study tracked outcomes of a pilot group that applied South Korean approaches to public service hiring, which were broadly similar to Canadian approaches: competency requirements were defined for each position, and all applicants were invited to compete for the position against those requirements. The study revealed a significant increase in employee mobility in the bureaucracy and expected longer-term results to show improved outcomes. The brief description Sakinah provides suggests that the Indonesian process is similar to the CAF hierarchical model, while the South Korean approach advocated resembles the Canadian Public Service approach, at least as it is set out formally.

## Review of Possible Courses of Action

The data are very clear that an individual's trade has a direct and significant impact on an individual's likelihood to become a GOFO. There are a variety of explanations that combine to explain why that is. Is the status quo a problem? If a change needs to be made, then three options are presented by this research: the Barno model which streams GOFOs into operational and support categories; the Pagonis model which emphasizes cross-training, especially for support trades; and the Public Service Model which defines the competencies required for all positions and allows everyone to compete to best satisfy these requirements.

Barno et al.'s idea of grouping US military generals into operational and support categories and assigning positions to each of them is a popular one. It is an intuitive approach to the problem based on the analogy to the practice used at lower ranks of grouping different specialties to different positions. This course of action should be avoided without extremely careful study. Among the senior officers interviewed regarding this research, this was the point raised most consistently by each of them: the CAF is small enough to manage each GOFO and each GOFO position individually; categorizing them ties the hands of our planners and administrators without promising any better results.[21] Representatives of support trades including logistics and intelligence, which might be among the most disadvantaged by the current system, agreed with GOFOs from operator backgrounds that this was the wrong way to approach the problem. This is further emphasized by the conclusions of Project Strategic Leader which notes five different fields of GOFO employment and nuances between positions in those fields.[22]

The approach proposed by Pagonis is better but can be challenging in cultural and practical terms. Practically speaking, given the number of extra-regimental duties required of CAF officers, if one platoon in every battalion were reserved for command by a support trade captain to gain experience as Pagonis did, there might not be enough infantry captains to fill the extra-regimental duties expected (as that would represent about a 10% decrease in infantry production). More importantly, without additional training, could that support trade officer meet the expectations of commanding officers and the troops under their command? Even additional training for the CAF's junior support trade officers seems impractical, and giving them easier jobs than their peers would negate the effectiveness of this proposed method.

The idea of promoting CAF advancement through applications rather than attrition, as the Public Service does, deserves to be investigated in greater detail than has been the case to date. It may make sense to spell out the required competencies for each position and then open them up to applications from any trade or even beyond the military. This certainly follows Parker's logic of opening the doors to expertise gained outside of uniform.[23] In other words, would someone who had been a reserve infantry company commander and was now a CEO of a major tech company be a better commander of CAF cyber forces than a recent mechanized brigade commander? Maybe. This approach requires a more detailed investigation.

"The idea of promoting CAF advancement through applications rather than attrition, as the Public Service does, deserves to be investigated in greater detail than has been the case to date."

Barring the idea of looking more closely into a competency-based and application-oriented public service model for advancement, what is left to the CAF is the status quo. The status quo is working. The CAF continues to succeed in operations and to support its personnel. General Gosselin makes the key point that the current practice of selecting GOFOs based on experience and suitability for the duties of a particular task is working.[24] However, it is logical that having the most potential candidates for those positions will produce a better average outcome. Preventing someone with leadership qualities, emotional intelligence, and overall aptitude from advancing to the most senior ranks because they were interested in signals, logistics, or another support trade is not an optimal way to ensure that the CAF has the best leaders available.

The status quo can be modified very slightly to significantly reduce the incidence of that undesirable outcome. The change required is slight, but it is deadlocked between two factors: the CAF culture does not trust support trades to lead operational issues, and the support trades lack the experience to lead operational issues. Each of these problems prevents the other from being solved; an interventionist approach is needed to break the deadlock.

## Recommendation

The CAF should review the merit of a competency-based and application-managed advancement process similar to that of the Public Service. There may be reasons why it may not be viable, but since none were discovered in this study it may warrant further exploration.

In the interim, the CAF can take specific action to improve the status quo without major upheaval in the personnel management approaches and philosophies that are currently proving effective. To enable the best candidates to be available for selection into GOFO ranks, the CAF must identify positions with an operational

command nature, but without specific requirements for particular operator trade training or experience, and then ensure that support trade personnel are given those jobs. Support trade managers must identify and select members of their trades to fill those positions; those selected must have the potential for leadership and advancement in generalist roles.

Once good leaders with support backgrounds are being developed into generalist leaders through this program, there will be evidence generated to show the effectiveness of support trade leaders in operational roles, thereby challenging the present culture which denies this possibility. Eroding the culture that precludes support specialists from leading operational issues will open new positions for leadership-capable support specialists whose successes will further erode the adverse culture and cyclically break the deadlock.

The soldiers of the CAF deserve the best possible GOFOs. The best system must not exclude those with the talent and aptitudes to be GOFOs from reaching that rank because they were denied the experience necessary to hone those talents. The current system does exactly this to those who begin their careers in support trades. Simple changes can break the cycle which perpetuates this situation.

**A member of the British Armed Forces listens for orders after looking through a window for enemy positions during a simulated attack in the Rocky Ford Urban Training Area, during Exercise MAPLE RESOLVE in Wainwright, Alberta on May 15, 2022.**

Photo: S1 Zach Barr, Canadian Armed Forces photo

## Notes

1 Canada. Department of National Defence. "Personnel Report." Accessed 6 July 2021, DWAN Only http://cmp-cpm.mil.ca/en/support/military-personnel/dpgr-index.page

2 Department of National Defence. B-GJ-005-309/FP-001. Targeting. (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2014).

3 Roger Rowley, The Report of the Officer Development Board, ed. Randall Wakelam and Howard Coombs. (Waterloo: LCMSDS Press, 2010).

4 *Ibid*., attributed only to "Prussian Government, 1808."

5 *Ibid*., 32.

6 *Ibid*., 126.

7 Brent Robart, "Leadership Requirements in Emerging Domains of Operations." (Joint Command and Staff Program Course Paper, Canadian Forces College 2019).

8 Rear-Admiral Scott Bishop, email conversation with author, 10 March 2020.

9 Lieutenant-General (Retired) Michael Jeffery, The CF Executive Development Program. (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2008).

10 *Ibid*., 14.

11 Canada. Department of National Defence. "Officer Developmental Period 4/5: Project Strategic Leader." (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2014).

12 Thomas E. Ricks, The Generals. (New York: The Penguin Press, 2012).

13 Department of Defense. The United States Army in World War II. (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, n.d.), combines data from 2-1 page 203 Table 3: "Growth of the Army by Branch" and 2-1 page 161 Table "Ground Forces in the Army, December 1941 – April 1945."

14 Ricks, The Generals ..., 438.

15 William G. Pagonis, Moving Mountains: Lessons in Leadership and Logistics from the Gulf War. (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1992).

16 David Barno, et al. Building Better Generals. (Washington: Centre for New American Security, 2013).

17 Luke Parker, "Should Jack be Allowed to Lead all Trades." (November 2021). Accessed 25 November 2021: https://wavellroom.com/2021/11/17/jack-of-all-trades-leaders-generalists-specialists/

18 Eahab Elsaid, Bradley Benson and Dan L. Worrell, "Successor CEO Functional and Educational Backgrounds: Influence of Predecessor Characteristics and Performance Antecedents." The Journal of Applied Business Research 32 no 4 (July/August 2016).

19 Jeffery, The CF Executive Development Program ..., 14.

20 Nada Sakinah, "Employees' Attitude toward the Implementation of Open Selection System for Senior Executive Service Positions." Bisnis & Birokrasi 24 no 1 (Jan 2017).

21 Major-General Hercule Gosselin, telephone conversation with author, 9 March 2020; Brigadier-General Carla Harding, email conversation with author, 18 March 2020; Major-General Sylvain Sirois, email conversation with author, 10 March 2020; Rear-Admiral Scott Bishop, email conversation with author, 10 March 2020; Brigadier-General (Retired) Robert Williams, email conversation with author, 8 March 2020; Colonel Hugh Ferguson, email conversation with author, 13 March 2020.

22 Canada. Department of National Defence. "Officer Development Period 4/5: Project Strategic Leader"..., 18.

23 Luke Parker, "Should Jack be Allowed to Lead all Trades." (November 2021).

24 Major-General Hercule Gosselin, telephone conversation with the author, 9 March 2020.


Sailors from Her Majesty's Canadian Ship Fredericton wave to the Italian Ship Aliso during Operation REASSURANCE on March 10, 2015.

Photo: Canadian Forces Combat Camera, DND IS09-2015-0012-071

# R.I.S.E. to Resilience: A Strategy for Leveraging Positive Emotions

**BY DR. LOBNA CHERIF, DR. VALERIE WOOD, AND LT STAN PARNELL**

> "Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy."
>
> – Thich Nhat Hanh in Creating True Peace

*Lobna Chérif, PhD, CAPP, CRT, PPCC, MBSP is the Founder and Director of the Resilience Plus program at the Royal Military College where she is an Associate Professor at the Department of Military Psychology and Leadership and where she also holds the Chair in Resilience. Dr. Chérif's current research focuses on character strengths, mindfulness, resilience, and accomplishment—and how to apply this understanding to improving well-being and performance.*

*Valerie Wood is a Research and Evaluation Specialist within the Canadian Forces Health Services Group. Her previous research has focused on the role of adult attachment in relationship conflict and spousal adjustment to military deployments, relationships and public health, and the well-being and resilience of military recruits and members.*

*Lt Stan Parnell is a Personnel Selection Officer at Personnel Development (PDev), Personnel Support Services (Ottawa-Gatineau). Lt Parnell has an interest in how practising positive psychology can contribute to the quality of life and mental resilience of CAF members.*

## Positive Emotions and Resilience

The stress imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic is a nearly unavoidable challenge, which highlights a need to address these stressors head-on. While several factors have been identified as significantly contributing to psychological resilience during the pandemic, the increased experience of positive emotions is one contributor that is less susceptible to the constraints of COVID-related restrictions, relative to others such as physical exercise (e.g., Sun et al., 2020). Indeed, the experience of positive emotions is associated with a resilient mindset (Israelashvili, 2021). Increasing the experience of positive emotions is effective for building resilience and buffering the impacts of stress, not just at a cognitive level but also at a neurobiological level (Hamilton-West, 2010). Emotional states that are of high intensity or arousal, and are high in their hedonic content (i.e., pleasure) are most relevant for resilience (Cabanac, 2002; Fredrickson, 1998; 2001; 2013). Specifically, the positive emotions of joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love have been found to dampen our reactivity to stress (Ong et al., 2006) and enhance our ability to cope with stressful life events (Tugade et al., 2004).

It was previously thought that positive emotions were useful in mitigating the effects of acute crises (see Fredrickson et al., 2003); however, more recent work on positive emotions during the COVID-19 pandemic indicates that they can also build resilience in more prolonged stressful situations. Thus, there is a need for more self-directed interventions that encourage the leveraging of positive emotions in our daily lives, to combat the stress of COVID-19, and bolster our resilience.

We have developed a tool for promoting positive emotions and thus boosting our resilience. R.I.S.E. is an acronym that stands for Recognize, Investigate, Savour, and Enhance and represents the four steps of a mindfulness-based practice for leveraging positive affectivity. Grounded in Buddhism, mindfulness is understood as increased awareness resulting from increased attention to the present moment and lack of judgment (e.g., Kabat-Zinn, 1994). In this context, non-judgment refers to being open and accepting of various thoughts, emotions, and sensations. A growing body of research overwhelmingly indicates the effectiveness of mindfulness practices in increasing the amount and degree of positive emotions that individuals feel on a day-to-day basis (e.g., Davidson et al., 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2001) and contributing to resilience and our physical and mental well-being (e.g., Keng et al., 2011).


**Soldiers from the Royal 22e Régiment wave to a patient as they leave the Henri-Bradet long-term care centre (CHSLD) in Montreal, Quebec during Operation LASER on June 19, 2020.**

Photo: Corporal Marc-André Leclerc

## How Positive Emotions Enhance Resilience

Other than simply *feeling good*, how does the experience of positive emotions enhance resilience? Positive emotions are thought to perform an adaptive cognitive function in *broadening* our thought-action repertoires or by expanding our list of possible thoughts and associated actions in a given situation. In contrast, negative emotions tend to narrow our mindsets (such as fight or flight in response to fear). For example, think of a child engaged in free play, which triggers the emotion of joy. Social play may help develop social-affective skills, rough-and-tumble play may develop physical skills, and object-related play may help develop cognitive skills. Indeed, through play and exploration, positive emotions broaden our abilities and thought processes, and builds resources like skills and neuro-connections, which in turn contributes to our good health and overall functioning (Folkman, 1997; Fredrickson, 2004). While the thought-action repertoire is a momentary tendency, the psychological resources that positive emotions help develop are long-lasting and can be recalled for

> “Indeed, positive emotions help us acquire resources that contribute to personal transformation as we become more creative, knowledgeable, and resilient.”

future use (Fredrickson, 2004). Indeed, positive emotions help us acquire resources that contribute to personal transformation as we become more creative, knowledgeable, and resilient (Fredrickson, 2004). Ultimately, this broaden-and-build theory suggests that positive emotions are antecedents of optimal functioning, and that they are not merely the emotional projection of optimal functioning.

## Positive Emotions and Resource Acquisition

The following are descriptions of the 10 most frequently experienced positive emotions, from the most frequent to the least frequent. Each has a trigger, thought-action repertoire, and physical or psychological resource that is developed (Fredrickson, 2013).

**Love** is triggered when another positive emotion is felt in the context of a safe relationship. Love strengthens social connections, leads to self-expansion, and builds resources such as social support, cohesion, and a sense of community.

**Joy** arises from unexpected good fortune, such as receiving good news or a pleasant surprise. Joy promotes playfulness and involvement in opportunities. Joy develops physical and psychological skills associated with the relevant activity (through play and participation).

**Gratitude** is triggered when we acknowledge that someone is the source of our good fortune. In other words, joy is the antecedent of gratitude. Gratitude creates an urge to reciprocate that kindness and develops skills including the generation of new ideas for expressing gratitude and kindness to others, the strengthening of social support, and other relationship indicators.

**Serenity** is experienced when we perceive our circumstances as satisfying and cherished. When serene, we are at ease and are comfortable in our current situation. Serenity creates the urge to savour the moment, helps to develop this capacity, and highlights our priorities.

**Interest** blossoms when something is perceived as both safe and novel. Something new, unique, or challenging, but not overwhelming, tends to pique our interest. Interest creates an urge to explore and learn, with knowledge gained from acting upon our interests and acquiring resources.

**Hope** is exceptional in that it, ironically, arises under negative circumstances. People experience hope when they are in dire straits yet envision the occurrence of a positive outcome. Hope encourages us to be innovative or creative when developing solutions to problems we face and helps develop optimism and resilience.

**Pride** results from taking at least partial credit for something that is socially valued. Pride encourages goal setting for even greater accomplishments in similar fields, develops skills that help us reach our goals, and contributes to achievement motivation.

**Amusement** is triggered when we observe a noticeable but non-serious mishap in a social context. For example, watching a friend walk into a glass door can bring us amusement if we perceive the blunder to be harmless. Amusement creates an urge to experience and share laughter and joy, which helps to build and strengthen social bonds.

**Inspiration** is experienced when we bear witness to human excellence such as observing a great act of self-sacrifice or being in awe of unimaginable skill. Inspiration motivates us to excel in response and facilitates personal growth.

**Awe** is triggered when we are overwhelmed by beauty, excellence, greatness, or power. For instance, we may feel in awe when witnessing role models that we deeply admire. Awe allows us to savour and appreciate the world around us and contributes to the development of new worldviews and consideration of differing perspectives.

## How Mindfulness Enhances Resilience

Mindfulness, resilience, and well-being are intimately connected (e.g., Pidgeon & Keye, 2014). Mindfulness is specifically thought to contribute to resilience through the mechanisms of self-control and emotion regulation (e.g., through reducing amygdala activity which decreases fear and anxiety; Loos et al., 2020). Mindfulness also enhances our physical health, by decreasing stress reactivity and helping to mitigate against the ill effects of burnout. Several studies have found that mindfulness practices are associated with reduced rates of burnout, making it a useful work-related resource to cultivate (Cohen-Katz et al., 2005). In addition to preventing burnout, mindfulness can be an effective resource for reducing emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and the loss of professional efficacy (Taylor & Millear, 2016). The utility of mindfulness in organizational settings is apparent; it helps reduce the employee’s susceptibility to burnout and enhances their well-being.

A growing interest in the use of mindfulness-based interventions likely stems from their effectiveness in helping individuals become less reactive to, and stronger in the face of, stressors (Spijkerman et al., 2016). A meta-analysis of 15 online mindfulness-based interventions found substantial positive impacts on depression, anxiety, and management of other stress-based

> “When you R.I.S.E., you are capitalizing on both the benefits of leveraging positive emotions and engaging in mindfulness-related practice. By being wholly attentive to our present experience, we can appreciate, savour, and prolong positive engagement with our physical and social worlds, and contribute to our subjective well-being.”

outcomes (Spijkerman et al., 2016). A further benefit of mindfulness is that these practices blend East Asian and North American cognitive behavioural practices (Hofmann & Gomez, 2017). This blending of cultural practices could potentially improve their universality and receptivity.

## R.I.S.E. to Resilience

**R:** Recognize your positive emotions. Pay careful attention to what is happening in the present moment. Take a step back, pause, and observe the situation more holistically (the bigger picture).

**I:** Investigate your inner experience. Explore your positive thoughts and sensations with curiosity and openness. “I think I am feeling ____. What is it about this person’s behaviour/this experience that makes me so ____? Why is this so important to me?”

**S:** Savour and appreciate the positive emotions and current situation. Stay in this experience for at least 30 seconds without getting distracted by something else. Research shows that savouring is linked with greater subjective well-being (Smith & Bryant, 2017). Specifically, some documented benefits of developing and using an increased savouring ability include greater perceived emotional control (Bryant, 2003), reduced depression and anxiety (e.g., Borelli et al., 2015), increased disclosure of positive events to one’s partner, and improved relationship quality (Pagania et al., 2015).

**E:** Enhance your felt experience of these positive emotions. Bryant and Veroff (2007) distinguish specific strategies for enhancing positive emotions during positive events, including memory building (intentionally creating a memory for that event by taking a mental picture), sharing with others (including others in the experience allows the positive emotions to be reciprocated, which allows others to benefit from it), sensory-perceptual sharpening (exploring that event in more perceptual detail), absorption (promotes the sensation of slowing down), and counting blessings (increasing felt gratitude). In addition, it is important to avoid killjoy thinking which includes efforts to downplay or devaluate the positive experience.

## Why You Should R.I.S.E

Positive emotions play a critical role in broadening our minds and building our resources. They promote creativity, social connections, personal resources, and resilience. As we enter the COVID-19 post-pandemic era, the experience of positive emotions can be an effective mechanism for nurturing resilience. The experience of positive emotions is positively linked with a resilient mindset, even in periods of prolonged stress like that experienced during the pandemic. Resilience is also strengthened by mindfulness practices that reduce the reactivity of our amygdala and develop our stress management.

When you R.I.S.E., you are capitalizing on both the benefits of leveraging positive emotions and engaging in mindfulness-related practice. By being wholly attentive to our present experience, we can appreciate, savour, and prolong positive engagement with our physical and social worlds, and contribute to our subjective well-being. We also gain plenty of opportunities to broaden our skills and experiences, and build key resources needed when times get tough in the future. We encourage you to R.I.S.E. to the challenge and cultivate positive emotions in your personal and professional lives.

**Crewmembers aboard HMCS WHITEHORSE participate in a yoga class during Operation CARIBBE on April 2, 2020.**

Photo: Canadian Armed Forces photo

## Notes


J. L. Borelli, H. F. Rasmussen, M. L. Burkhart, and D. A. Sbarra, "Relational Savoring in Long-Distance Romantic Relationships," *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 32, no. 8 (2015): 1083–1108.

F. Bryant, "Savoring Beliefs Inventory (SBI): A Scale for Measuring Beliefs About Savoring," *Journal of Mental Health* 12, no. 2 (2003): 175–196.

F. Bryant and J. Veroff, *Savoring: A New Model of Positive Experience* (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates, 2007).

M. Cabanac, "What is Emotion?" *Behavioural Processes* 60, no. 2 (2002): 69–83.

J. Cohen-Katz et al., "The Effects of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction on Nurse Stress and Burnout, Part II: A Quantitative and Qualitative Study," *Holistic Nursing Practice* 19, no. 1 (2005): 26–35.

R. J. Davidson et al., "Alterations in Brain and Immune Function Produced by Mindfulness Meditation," *Psychosomatic Medicine* 65, no. 4 (2003): 564–570.

S. Folkman, "Positive Psychological States and Coping with Severe Stress," *Social Science & Medicine* 45, no. 8 (1997): 1207–1221.

B. L. Fredrickson, "What Good are Positive Emotions?" *Review of General Psychology* 2, no. 3 (1998): 300–319.

B. L. Fredrickson, "The Role of Positive Emotions in Positive Psychology: The Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions," *American Psychologist* 56, no. 3 (2001): 218.

B. L. Fredrickson, "The Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*. Series B: Biological Sciences 359, no. 1449 (2004): 1367–1377.

B. L. Fredrickson, "Positive Emotions Broaden and Build," in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, vol. 47 (New York: Academic Press, 2013), 1–53.

B. L. Fredrickson et al., "What Good are Positive Emotions in Crisis? A Prospective Study of Resilience and Emotions Following the Terrorist Attacks on the United States on September 11th, 2001," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 84, no. 2 (2003): 365.

K. Hamilton-West, *Psychobiological Processes in Health and Illness* (London: Sage Publications, 2010).

S. G. Hofmann and A. F. Gómez, "Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Anxiety and Depression," *Psychiatric Clinics* 40, no. 4 (2017): 739–749.

J. Israelashvili, "More Positive Emotions During the COVID-19 Pandemic Are Associated with Better Resilience, Especially for Those Experiencing More Negative Emotions," *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (2021): 1635.

J. Kabat-Zinn, "Catalyzing Movement Towards a More Contemplative/Sacred-Appreciating/Non-Dualistic Society," in *Meeting of the Working Group* (1994).

S. L. Keng, M. J. Smoski, and C. J. Robins, "Effects of Mindfulness on Psychological Health: A Review of Empirical Studies," *Clinical Psychology Review* 31, no. 6 (2011): 1041–1056.

E. Loos et al., "Reducing Amygdala Activity and Phobic Fear Through Cognitive Top-Down Regulation," *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 32, no. 6 (2020): 1117–1129.

A. D. Ong et al., "Psychological Resilience, Positive Emotions, and Successful Adaptation to Stress in Later Life," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 91, no. 4 (2006): 730.

A. F. Pagani et al., "When Good Things Happen: Explicit Capitalization Attempts of Positive Events Promote Intimate Partners' Daily Well-Being," *Family Science* 6 (2015): 19–128.

A. M. Pidgeon and M. Keye, "Relationship Between Resilience, Mindfulness, and Psychological Well-Being in University Students," *International Journal of Liberal Arts and Social Science* 2, no. 5 (2014): 27–32.

R. M. Ryan and E. L. Deci, "On Happiness and Human Potentials: A Review of Research on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being," *Annual Review of Psychology* 52, no. 1 (2001): 141–166.

J. L. Smith and F. B. Bryant, "Savoring and Well-Being: Mapping the Cognitive-Emotional Terrain of the Happy Mind," in *The Happy Mind: Cognitive Contributions to Well-Being*, ed. Michael D. Robinson and Michael Eid (Cham: Springer, 2017), 139–156.

M. P. J. Spijkerman, W. T. M. Pots, and E. T. Bohlmeijer, "Effectiveness of Online Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Improving Mental Health: A Review and Meta-Analysis of Randomised Controlled Trials," *Clinical Psychology Review* 45 (2016): 102–114.

N. Sun et al., "A Qualitative Study on the Psychological Experience of Caregivers of COVID-19 Patients," *American Journal of Infection Control* 48, no. 6 (2020): 592–598.

N. Z. Taylor and P. M. R. Millear, "The Contribution of Mindfulness to Predicting Burnout in the Workplace," *Personality and Individual Differences* 89 (2016): 123–128.

M. M. Tugade, B. L. Fredrickson, and L. Feldman Barrett, "Psychological Resilience and Positive Emotional Granularity: Examining the Benefits of Positive Emotions on Coping and Health," *Journal of Personality* 72, no. 6 (2004): 1161–1190.

Commander Canadian Army and Defence Team Champion for Indigenous People, attaches the Survivor's Flag, during a ceremony commemorating the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation held at Carling Campus in Ottawa, Ontario on September 29, 2022.

Photo: Sailor First Class Anne-Marie Brisson, Directorate Army Public Affairs, Canadian Army

# The CAF as an Employer of Choice for Indigenous and Visible Minority Canadians

**BY MAJOR FELIX ODARTEY-WELLINGTON**

*Major Felix Odartey-Wellington PhD is the Senior Reserve Public Affairs Officer at 5th Canadian Division Headquarters, Halifax. He is also an Associate Professor of Communication at Cape Breton University, Sydney, Nova Scotia. Major Odartey-Wellington is currently a student in the Joint Command and Staff Programme at the Canadian Forces College, Toronto.*

## Introduction

The extent to which Canadian society and institutions reflect and include Indigenous and visible minority[1] demographics is topical.[2] With the adoption of multiculturalism in Canada as manifested by policy objectives in the *Multiculturalism Act*,[3] there is an imperative that state institutions would embrace diversity and inclusivity.[4] This is made more pressing with the contemporary salience of employment equity and diversity issues, as well as by demographic shifts resulting from immigration.[5] The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), for example, launched a *Diversity Strategy* in 2016[6] and Operation GENERATION in 2018, to, among other things, make its workforce more diverse and inclusive.[7] *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* espouses that "the Canadian Armed Forces must reflect the diversity of the country we defend. We need a military that looks like Canada."[8] It also states that, "The Canadian Armed Forces is committed to demonstrating

leadership in reflecting Canadian ideals of diversity, respect and inclusion."[9] The most recent *Canadian Armed Forces Ethos: Trusted to Serve* also communicates CAF aspirations for inclusivity.[10] While the CAF has embraced multiculturalism,[11] and "has a rich history with respect to diversity,"[12] studies and recent events contest this image[13]. In 2022, the Minister of National Defence (MND) Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination issued a report identifying systemic racism in the CAF.[14] As well, recruitment and retention of Indigenous and visible minority Canadians remains a challenge, even while overall recruiting is challenged.[15] The *Diversity Strategy* speaks of an aspiration to position the CAF as "an Employer of Choice"[16] for all Canadians. A thought-provoking essay in the *Canadian Military Journal* asks: "Can the Canadian Forces Reflect Canadian Society?"[17] Writing as a visible minority immigrant who has had a positive experience serving in the CAF since 2010, my paper addresses this question with respect to Indigenous and visible minority Canadians. Drawing on legitimacy theory,[18] leadership theory,[19] and Erving Goffman's concept of total institutions,[20] it is suggested here that the CAF has the potential to position itself as an employer of choice for Indigenous and visible minority Canadians.

## Background and Theoretical Context

In 1971, Canada adopted multiculturalism as an official policy (subsequently codified into law in 1985[21]), the first country in the world to do so.[22] As public policy, multiculturalism has ramifications for the ordering of Canadian society and its institutions. To the extent that the former must be imaginable as a diverse and inclusive nation community, the latter must reflect diversity and inclusion in employment and leadership practices.[23]

Parliament's Standing Committee on National Defence was sufficiently concerned about diversity in the CAF to initiate a study on the subject in 2018.[24] Recognizing diversity in the CAF to be less than adequate ***vis-à-vis*** institutional targets, the resultant report argues for diversity on normative grounds: it is the right thing to do within the context of Canadian policy, law, and values. It also makes an argument on pragmatic grounds: a diverse military brings "strategic advantage"[25] and is a "force enabler."[26] While the report is multifaceted, the focus of this paper is narrower: Indigenous and visible minority Canadians.

In May 2022, the Office of the Ombudsman for the Department of National Defence (DND) and CAF reported that despite institutional efforts, "The Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces have deeply embedded barriers to employment equity representation goals, recruitment, career advancement, retention, and culture, which are all intertwined."[27] Madame Louise Arbour made similar observations in the external review of the DND and CAF in 2022.[28]

Academic research recognizes the CAF's lack of diversity and institutional attempts to address this.[29] Tammy George's 2016 doctoral thesis[30] notes the same shortfalls with regard to visible minorities that the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) highlighted when he declared an unprecedented personnel crisis in 2022.[31] George's research suggests institutional inability to recruit and retain Indigenous and visible minority Canadians because of the systemic racism flowing from the nation's origins that impacts Canadian society and its institutions.[32] This is consistent with the MND Advisory Panel's observations.[33]

In addition to articles authored by academics and CAF leaders in the *Canadian Military Journal,* highlighting the value of diversity and proposing diversity strategies,[34] and studies conducted for the DND's research institution, Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC),[35] the subject of diversity in the CAF has animated research in the Joint Command Staff Program, which develops CAF senior leadership. For example, Major Chris MacDonald proposes recognizing that visible minority demographics are not homogenous when designing recruitment strategies, involving visible minority communities in recruitment, using social media to connect with these demographics, and increasing visible minority representation in institutional leadership.[36] Major Patrick Horsman proposes opening recruitment to eligible permanent residents awaiting citizenship, with appropriate caveats to manage risk.[37] For Major Daniel Gregoire, "Changing policies, educating personnel on diversity, inclusion, and applying gender-based analysis methods contribute to changing the military culture to a culture more attractive to a diverse Canada."[38] Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Rediger's work, which focuses on the female experience within the CAF, explores how the CAF can become an employer of choice (EOC) for employment equity groups.[39] Defining an EOC as "an organization that employees consciously aspire to work for, given more than one option, and one that they would recommend to others … an organization that is also able to retain its employees long-term,"[40] Rediger argues that "the CAF needs to fundamentally change its organizational culture and its members' attitudes towards diversity and social change in order to attract, retain and

> "The CAF needs to fundamentally change its organizational culture and its members' attitudes towards diversity and social change in order to attract, retain and support a diverse workforce that serves Canadian interests."

support a diverse workforce that serves Canadian interests."[41] And the CAF clearly wants to be an EOC, as evidenced not only by policy aspirations and institutional initiatives, but also by the academic and market research it routinely commissions to understand recruitment audience dynamics.[42]

The ideas presented in the relevant reports, policies, and research publications are best understood using legitimacy theory. Mark Suchman defines legitimacy as "a general perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions."[43] Hence, legitimation is a process by which an organization positions its culture within the societal normative framework to justify its existence or operations. According to Suchman, institutional self-interest is in the realm of pragmatic legitimacy. Public perception of institutional adherence to the social normative system is in the realm of moral legitimacy.

Pragmatic and moral legitimacy account for self-interest-driven legitimation and legitimation informed by "the right thing to do,"[44] respectively. This understanding captures the rationalizations given for diversity in the CAF. For example, Trusted to Serve, says: "As a national institution that needs to be credible and trustworthy, the CAF must be representative of the diversity of people, history and traditions of Canada."[45] Similarly, "Inclusion within an equitable professional culture is essential to creating a sense of belonging and cohesion. Within the CAF, inclusion makes our military teams stronger."[46] Also, the Diversity Strategy states that:

> *Maximizing the potential of a diverse workforce is not only a social imperative, but is also an operational advantage which was reinforced by our recent overseas experiences where diversity made significant contributions to CAF operations.*[47]

The reports, policies, and literature suggest that culture change within the CAF is needed to facilitate legitimation. While definitions of culture are diverse across academic disciplines and professions, for the purposes of this paper, culture can be defined as "the learned beliefs, values, rules, norms, symbols, and traditions that are common to a group of people"[48] and "… the set of artefacts, values and assumptions that emerge from interactions of organizational members."[49] This translates into "the way things are done around here"[50] through institutional socialization. For example, what are the worldviews, perspectives, and lenses mainstreamed within the CAF? Are the organizational environment and practices welcoming and supportive of Indigenous and visible minority Canadians, given Canada's (and the CAF's) historical origins?

The CAF defines leadership as, "The process of directly or indirectly influencing others, by means of formal authority or personal attributes, to act in accordance with one's intent or a shared purpose."[51] The goal is achieving "situational favourability."[52] In this case, within a contemporary multicultural context, how can the CAF achieve situational favourability to attract and retain Indigenous and visible minority members?[53] Within CAF doctrine, transformational leadership, defined as "a pattern of leader influence intended to alter the characteristics of individuals, organizations, or societies in a fairly dramatic or substantial way,"[54] is "rooted in the value systems of the Canadian military ethos and may refer either to the transformation of people or to organizational transformation."[55] Further:

> *Transformational leadership may be exercised by a talented individual with a compelling idea and the skill to communicate it to others, or by a leadership team united by conviction in its transformational aims … the professional socialization of new CAF members into the military ethos and its values represents the institutionalized transformation of people… Similarly, the adoption of CAF-wide practices that enable organizational learning and promote continuous improvement represents institutionalized transformation of the organization.*[56]

It is useful to understand the CAF as what Erving Goffman calls a "total institution"[57] or a unique organization bracketed outside the mainstream, and in which member conduct is regulated, all with the aim of achieving common organizational goals. This is not a novel conceptualization.[58] The CAF as an institution is relatively bracketed out of the mainstream, and member cognition/worldview is shaped to uniquely reflect institutional values. Members develop capabilities and perspectives that they would not have had but for their complete immersion within the total institution. The total institution is conducive to transformational leadership in this regard; it provides the incubation to keep members focused, and thus a "captive audience" for transformational leadership influence. It also possesses unique symbolic and cultural levers through which member behaviour and worldview are shaped.[59] Divergences from appropriate behaviour can be quickly identified and corrected, or, when necessary, sources of negative influence can be expelled. The military total institution exists to engender public spiritedness, discipline, unlimited liability, courage, integrity, and other warrior attributes in the civilian recruit, and to sustain those attributes. Leadership inspires the cohesion and esprit de corps necessary for the military total institution to channel these warrior attributes for "militant mission"[60] success, whether in traditional warfighting or in any other endeavour it undertakes. Similarly, through transformational leadership, an inclusive culture conducive to Indigenous and visible minority members can be fostered within the total institution in ways that would not be feasible in the mainstream.[61] Therefore, though the total institution has been linked to problems of inappropriate behaviour and exclusion within the Canadian military, it is also recognized that this is not always the case[62] and, as is argued in

this paper, the positive attributes of the total institution can be harnessed for culture change through leadership.

## Points for Consideration

As mentioned in the introduction, the CAF has the potential to be the employer of choice for Indigenous and visible minority members. Suggestions are proposed below, all consistent with *Trusted to Serve*.[63]

### 1. Transformational Leadership for Culture Change

> *The CAF identifies leadership as critical for "the implementation of the strategy and the overall diversity climate within their organizations."[64] Thus, "active engagement of CAF leadership to accomplish culture change in favour of a diverse CAF that is representative of Canada's population is paramount."[65] The CAF has been a learning organization,[66] taking steps to increase Indigenous recruitment. However, as the MND Advisory Panel heard from Indigenous members: … Defence Team efforts seem concentrated on influencing individual Indigenous People to consider a career in the Canadian Armed Forces without subsequently offering them a culture that welcomes their unique perspectives or respects their traditions. Once these Indigenous recruits enter the military, ongoing initiatives to maintain or integrate Indigenous culture as advertised in the summer programs are not prevalent.[67]*

Similarly, the CAF has expanded its outreach towards visible minorities, but:

> *Black people are not adequately represented at the senior leadership level. Their representation at mid-management level, such as director or senior officer, is also lower than that of other visible minority groups. The absence of Black representation and the failure of the organization to make meaningful strides in this regard at the leadership level have eroded trust in the DND/CAF among Black Defence Team members.[68]*

In other words, more work needs to be done. The way forward, therefore, requires institutional acknowledgement of cultural deficiencies and culture change through transformational leadership (both arguably reflected in ongoing institutional initiatives[69]). While Goffman conceptualizes the total institution as a modernist disciplinary enterprise, it could be seen as a space where multicultural normative values can be nurtured, and where leaders socialize organizational members in a manner not feasible outside this disciplinary space. Leadership will have to continue addressing latent systems, structures, and (sub) cultures that reproduce a status quo that works against attracting and retaining Indigenous and visible minority members. In this regard,

"The way forward, therefore, requires institutional acknowledgement of cultural deficiencies and culture change through transformational leadership (both arguably reflected in ongoing institutional initiatives)."

the MND Advisory Panel report is a useful source of direction because it consolidates previous studies as well as work done by Defence Advisory Groups (DAGs), such as the Defence Indigenous Advisory Group, the Defence Women's Advisory Organization, the Defence Visible Minorities Advisory Group, the Defence Advisory Group for Persons with Disabilities, the Defence Team Pride Advisory Organization, and Defence Team Black Employee Network. The Panel bemoans the fact that previous findings are merely gathering dust. However, transformational leadership has the potential to harness norms grounded in the institutional ethos[70] to shape member behaviour within the institution. This recalls that "dignity of all persons" is the highest principle in the pantheon of the CAF's ethical regime which speaks to "diversity, equity and inclusion."[71] The total institutional cultural, administrative, and disciplinary levers give leadership unique capabilities to shape the organizational space by denying cultural terrain to, or disrupting/interdicting, elements such as White supremacy groups that challenge an inclusive environment.[72]

It is important that members understand the need for change, and not merely pay lip service just for the sake of political correctness. As has been argued in reaction to the MND Advisory Panel's report, "Historically, responses to racism and discrimination in the CAF have been superficial and reactionary in nature, for example, focusing on providing courses or modules, with a lack of buy-in and continued internal resistance."[73] The socialization process within a total institution must be understood as negotiated rather than being strictly top-down. Grassroot adoption is necessary because passive or active member resistance are always possible within the total institution.[74] As Rediger notes, given the size of the CAF, its dispersed nature, and its deep traditions, member friction resulting from culture change must be anticipated and pre-empted through communication and education; "instant obedience and uniformity"[75] are not guaranteed. Thus, transformational leadership requires role modelling,

constant feedback, and measurable culture change.[76] As Alan Okros observes,[77] it is not unusual for dominant institutional elements to define benchmarks for success when "accommodating" minorities. Thus, feedback from Indigenous and visible minority members on their institutional experiences is important if they are to have agency in the diversity and inclusion process.[78] It is in this spirit that Brian Selmeski's study proposes a path of negotiation between leadership and Indigenous communities on cultural elements that will make them "feel like full members of the profession"[79] while ensuring institutional viability is maintained. Naturally, as a profession of arms, "individual values and beliefs must align with CAF values and be balanced against the constraints of operational effectiveness and the principle of universality of service."[80] In this regard, Rediger observes:

> *Balancing diversity and culture change initiatives with the critical needs of the organization is a delicate process. Critical needs should not be confused with established practices, procedures, culture and traditions. The needs of an organization for operational readiness, or critical capabilities need to be identified, validated and screened for bias in order to really understand what the CAF needs to be successful rather than what it has used to be successful in the past.*[81]

A classic illustration of the transformational leadership referenced in this section is the initiative taken by the commanding officer of the Princess Louise Fusiliers in Halifax, Nova Scotia, to launch the Diversity Soldier Experience Program (DSEP) in 2020.[82] This program creates internal awareness about societal diversity as well as historical Indigenous, racialized, and gendered realities. This not only ensures that the unit is able to engage in community outreach to obtain recruits, but also eliminates potential sources of othering that might militate against meaningful participation by Indigenous and visible minority members once they join.

**His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) Vancouver participates in a re-enactment of the Incheon Landing Operation and a Fleet Review with Republic of Korea Navy Ships and United States Ship (USS) America on September 15, 2023 in Incheon, South Korea.**

Photo: Corporal Alisa Strelley, Canadian Armed Forces Photo

> "Thus, transformational leadership requires role modelling, constant feedback, and measurable culture change."

Indigenous and visible minority members must be integrated into CAF leadership by means of a succession plan. This will help signal inclusivity at the highest levels, help ensure that diverse realities are reflected in decision-making, and reduce unconscious bias and privilege.[83]

In addition, the CAF's diversity and inclusion space has a multiplicity of groups. These produce discourses, that, in the "Sense" operational function,[84] will need to be consolidated and communicated for action by leadership and sharing as best practices among groups. This requires dedicated vehicles within higher headquarters to manage this function. And where changes are not possible, leadership must be able to communicate this candidly.

## 2. Public Communication

The CAF sets out the following diversity strategic communication objective:

> *To remain relevant in an increasingly changing Canadian society, the CAF must strive to effectively communicate how it values and promotes diversity not only to build the reputation as an employer of choice, but to foster deeper more respectful relationships with all of Canada.*[85]

Drawing on EOC literature, Rediger suggests that:

> *Awareness of initiatives, cultures, values and work content is key in becoming an EOC, as a choice can only be made if the information is available, communicated and accessible. It is about attracting people but also about selling the organization. However, the messages need to be authentic and backed up by honest testimonials.*[86]

As previously mentioned, the CAF is a learning organization and has evolved institutional norms and practices to be more supportive of Indigenous and visible minority members. For example, the CAF has established the following programs for Indigenous recruitment:[87]

- Indigenous Leadership Opportunities Year;
- Canadian Forces Indigenous Entry Program; and,
- Summer training programs such as
  - Bold Eagle;
  - Raven;
  - Black Bear;
  - Carcajou; and,
  - Grey Wolf.

Research suggests that these programs resonate with Indigenous communities as gateways for entry into the CAF[88] and thus must be sustained. The CAF also employs diverse members in recruitment, "and has addressed concerns that minorities sometimes have regarding the military."[89] However, without an informed, active, strategic public communication of opportunities for service in the CAF, Indigenous and visible minority Canadians would not be attracted to join.[90] It has been said that, "the under-representation of visible minorities may in part reflect the fact that in some countries of origin (e.g., in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and South America—increasingly the countries of origin of immigrants to Canada) the military is not seen as a career of choice or the defender of a nation, but as a machine of oppression."[91] This may discount the agency exercised by immigrants who make a conscious choice to make Canada their home based on the distinction between Canada and their native countries. Certainly, there is evidence that some immigrants conflate the CAF with militaries in their countries of origin and this might be a barrier to recruitment.[92] But, as Christian Leuprecht puts it, "immigrants to Canada readily distinguish between armed forces in their home country and the CAF."[93] Yet, the issue of community awareness of CAF career options is a live one, as Justin Wright and Felix Fonséca found in their 2016 focus group studies among CAF members from immigrant communities.[94] Indeed, Ipsos Reid surveys of visible minority demographics for the CAF in 2011, 2012, and 2014, corroborated by Wright and Fonséca's research, indicate nuanced attitudes towards employment in the CAF, informed by pragmatic concerns and comparisons with other professional opportunities, similar to attitudes found within the general public.[95] The 2012 Ipsos Reid survey found that:

> *Compared to general public youth respondents, Asian and Arab-Canadian youth were more likely to see joining the Canadian Forces "as a good way to help others" (78% v. 69%), as a way to gain "experience that is valuable experience outside of the military" (72% v. 64%), and "as a good way to serve the country" (72% v. 58%).*[96]

Similarly, 82% of parents within the immigrant demographic surveyed indicated that, "joining the Canadian Forces is a good way to serve the country," with a comparable percentage agreeing that "joining the Canadian Forces is a good way to help others."[97] It is also observed that "legitimacy, integration, membership, and formal citizenship status"[98] are benefits that visible minority Canadians who choose to serve derive. Military service is a means for Indigenous and visible minorities, especially new Canadians, to assert their agency, identity, citizenship, and sense of belonging in society.[99] All three Ipsos Reid surveys, however, indicate limited familiarity with the CAF among visible minority communities.[100] Anecdotally, most new Canadians I speak to as a visible minority immigrant are astonished to find out that they are welcome in the CAF. New Canadians might be oblivious to the fact that barriers to service in their countries of origin (e.g., age, gender, sexual orientation) do not exist in Canada. Therefore, public communications focusing on new Canadians across multiple media platforms is important. The choice of channels must be strategic, as should the choice of messaging. Messaging and imagery must highlight professional opportunities in the CAF, some of which might not be as accessible in the civilian space.[101] For example, it is noted that:

> *… recent immigrants to Canada face high rates of both underemployment and unemployment. Statistics Canada reported that between 1991 and 2006, "the proportion of immigrants with a university degree in jobs with low educational requirements (such as clerks, truck drivers, salespersons, cashiers, and taxi drivers) increased." Even after being in Canada for fifteen years, "immigrants with a university degree are still more likely than the native-born to be in low-skilled jobs."*[102]

However, visible minority new Canadians who, interested in a military career, enter the CAF and complete their training are guaranteed fulfilling positions. Whether serving in the Regular Force or as a Reservist, they are eligible for financial support to complete post-secondary education and skills training, and to obtain valuable career training and experience that they can leverage in the mainstream economy. Thus, the practice of conducting recruiting outreach during citizenship ceremonies in urban areas[103] must be sustained and expanded to non-urban areas as well. Indigenous and visible minority members must also have a role in recruiting and instructing to provide candid perspectives to prospective or new recruits.[104]

It is important that the historical military service of Indigenous and visible minority Canadians is woven into the institutional narrative. The recent recognition of the efforts of Indigenous Peoples like Tommy Prince[105] and Black soldiers in the

"Whether serving in the Regular Force or as a Reservist, they are eligible for financial support to complete post-secondary education and skills training, and to obtain valuable career training and experience that they can leverage in the mainstream economy."

No. 2 Construction Battalion,[106] in the face of institutional prejudice and rejection during the First World War, are examples of that kind of inclusive narrative. Such narratives would build trust with audiences in demonstrating that the organization acknowledges its wrongs, and values/reflects people like them. For example, Felix Fonséca and Jason Dunn's study found that many Indigenous members joined because of family histories tied to CAF service.[107] But the narratives are also "culture embedding mechanisms"[108] for institutional members. This is important as leaders are expected to socialize and reinforce the institutional ethos,[109] e.g., by being "good teachers of unit and CAF heritage and history"[110] to "create the conditions that will foster acceptance and internalization of the ethos."[111]

Based on audience research, leadership can direct recruiting advertisements with rhetorical/semiotic appeals directly focusing on immigrant communities and in media that cater to these communities.[112] It is also important that CAF leadership build dialogic relationships with relevant community representatives, such as Indigenous and immigrant community stakeholder group leadership. These representatives are gatekeepers or "influencers"[113] who can provide access to their communities once they understand what the CAF has to offer. They can articulate community concerns with regard to the CAF and advise on shaping the CAF workplace into a more inclusive one. This should be the kind of respectful, dialogic relationship that Selmeski suggests[114] and which has been enacted in programs such as the DSEP. The preceding points are consistent with the "targeted attraction and recruitment" strategy for underrepresented groups in the CAF's Employment Equity Plan[115] and suggestions made by respondents to the Ipsos Reid surveys.[116] Feedback gathered from the 2012 survey (and reflected in the 2011 and 2014 surveys) is noteworthy:

> *... personal involvement of Canadian Armed Forces members—at cultural events, in the mosque, in community centres and in schools—could go a long way towards addressing their communities' lack of familiarity with the Forces and in making the CAF a real, rather than remote or abstract, career option. Putting members of their community who wear the CAF uniform at the front and centre of efforts in their communities would help to alleviate some of the conflicted feelings they have about military service in Canada. It would also impress upon them that the CAF is serious about becoming diverse and can truly include them, while enabling them to retain their cultural identities and values.*[117]

In addition, with regard to engagement approaches, respondents recommended:

> *involving members from their ethnic community in recruitment efforts, showcasing former CAF members from within their community who had gone on to become successful outside the CAF, and involving Asian and Arab-Canadians who are highly ranked members of the Canadian Forces.*[118]

Interviewees in the 2014 survey stressed, "the importance of going beyond the 'tokenism' in which visible minorities simply appear in advertisements and brochures, towards a more personal engagement."[119]

## Conclusion

The CAF can certainly reflect Canadian society within its ranks, and is making efforts at achieving this. Drawing on legitimacy theory, leadership theory, and Goffman's concept of total institutions, the argument is advanced that the CAF can be made an employer of choice for Indigenous and visible minorities through 1) transformational leadership for enduring culture change, and 2) robust public communication of what the CAF has to offer Indigenous and visible minority communities.

While this could be seen as an attempt to instrumentalize certain demographics, it is important to recognize that the CAF is a societal resource or "an important national program"[120] that must be equally and equitably available as a service opportunity. Without appropriate communications strategies, Indigenous and visible minorities would be oblivious to this opportunity. As well, ensuring that the CAF is welcoming of these demographics is already part of the institutional ethos.

However, a diverse CAF is not necessarily an inclusive CAF[121] one in which diversity is not merely approached to meet regulatory imperatives but rather, one in which members have relative agency to participate meaningfully. This is consistent with the CAF's aspiration for "an inclusive environment where everyone feels empowered to contribute their full potential in the execution of their military duties."[122] It is also consistent with the CAF's understanding that, "Inclusion means producing a work environment in which all employees have a sense of belonging, are valued for their unique capabilities, are encouraged to be their authentic selves and are supported in achieving their full potential."[123] Thus, transformational leadership must start with culture change that mainstreams multiculturalism as a non-negotiable value and eschews ethnocentrism. In this regard, transformational leadership must be conscious of the fact that while overt racism and discrimination may be untenable in contemporary times and "may have all but disappeared" in the CAF,[124] inferential or subliminal racism exists,[125] especially when rendered as institutional "common sense."[126]

## Notes

1 The *Employment Equity Act* (S.C. 1995, c. 44) defines *visible minorities* as "persons, other than Aboriginal [Indigenous] peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour."

2 Tammy George, "Troubling Diversity and Inclusion: Racialized Women's Experiences in the Canadian Armed Forces," *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice* 41, no. 2 (December 21, 2020): 42.

3 See, Preamble and Section 3 of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, R.S.C., 1985 c. 24 (4th Supp.).

4 *Ibid*.

5 Phyllis Browne, *Visible Minority Recruitment and the Canadian Armed Forces*, DRDC Scientific Report (Ottawa: DRDC, 2018).

6 Department of National Defence, *Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy* (Ottawa: DND, 2016).

7 Standing Committee on National Defence, *Improving Diversity and Inclusion in the Canadian Armed Forces: Report of the Standing Committee on National Defence* (Ottawa: Parliament of Canada, June 2019).

8 Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa: DND, 2017), 21.

9 *Ibid*, 23.

10 Department of National Defence, A-PA-005-000/AP-138, *Trusted to Serve: The Canadian Armed Forces Ethos* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2022).

11 Donna Winslow, Phyllis Browne, and Angela Febbraro, "Diversity in the Canadian Forces," In *Cultural Diversity in the Armed Forces: An International Comparison* (Florence, United States: Taylor & Francis Group, 2007).

12 Chantal Fraser, "Diversity Recruiting: It's Time to Tip the Balance," *Canadian Military Journal* 13, no. 4 (Autumn 2013): 25-35, 25.

13 Trevor Knight, "Systemic Racism in the Canadian Armed Forces" (ALP Paper, Osside Institute, December 2021). https://www.cmrsj-rmcsj.forces.gc.ca/io-oi/pub/2021/pub_2021-1-eng.asp.

14 Department of National Defence, *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination: Final Report* (Ottawa: DND, January 2022).

15 See, e.g., Ashley Burke, "Canadian Military Reports Sagging Recruitment as NATO Ramps up Deployment in Eastern Europe," *CBC*, 23 March 2022, https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canadian-armed-forces-staff-shortfall-1.6395131.

16 DND, *Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy,* 10.

17 Hans Jung, "Can the Canadian Forces Reflect Canadian Society?" *Canadian Military Journal* (Autumn 2007): 28.

18 Mark C. Suchman, "Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches," *Academy of Management Review* 20, no. 3 (July 1995): 571.

19 Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2019).

20 Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2017).

21 *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*.

22 Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Christina Gabriel, *Selling Diversity: Immigration Multiculturalism, Employment Equity, and Globalization* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

23 See, e.g., *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, Sections 3(1)(c); 3(2)(a); and, 3(2)(b).

24 Standing Committee on National Defence, *Improving Diversity*.

25 *Ibid*, 8.

26 *Ibid*, 12.

27 Office of the Ombudsman, *Employment Equity and Diversity in the Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces – Report to the Minister of National Defence* (Ottawa, ON: DND, May 2022), 6.

28 The Honourable Louise Arbour, *Report of the Independent Comprehensive Review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces* (Ottawa, ON: DND, May 20, 2022).

29 See, e.g., Rupinder Mangat, Bessma Momani, and Alistair Edgar, "Unpacking Diversity and Inclusion," In *Strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces through Diversity and Inclusion*, edited by Alistair Edgar, Rupinder Mangat, and Bessma Momani, 3-18 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019).

30 Tammy George, "Be All You Can Be or Longing to Be: Racialized Soldiers, the Canadian Military Experience and the Im/Possibility of Belonging to the Nation" (doctoral thesis, University of Toronto, 2016).

31 Lee Berthiaume, "Military's Chief Orders Halt to Non-Essential Activities, Focus on Personnel Crisis," CTV News, 6 October 2022, https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/military-s-chief-orders-halt-to-non-essential-activities-focus-on-personnel-crisis-1.6099314.

32 George, "Be All You Can Be"; George, "Troubling Diversity and Inclusion," 42.

33 DND, *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel*.

34 See, e.g., Jung, "Can the Canadian Forces Reflect Canadian Society?"; Fraser, "Diversity Recruiting: It's Time to Tip the Balance," Grazia Scoppio, "Diversity Best Practices in Military Organizations in Canada, Australia, The United Kingdom, and the United States," *Canadian Military Journal* 9, no. 3 (2009): 17-30; Michelle Seaman, "Gender Inclusivity in the Canadian Armed Forces: The Role of the Chief Petty Officer Second Class/Master Warrant Officer," *Canadian Military Journal* 22, no. 2 (Spring 2022): 45-53; Guy Chapdelaine, "Working Towards Greater Diversity: A Blessing or a Curse? The Experience of the Canadian Military Chaplaincy," *Canadian Military Journal 15*, no. 1 (2014): 34-43; Necole Belanger, "'Inclusive Leadership' If We Build It Will They Come?," *Canadian Military Journal* 19, no. 1 (Winter 2019): 32-39; and, Lise Bourgon, "The CAF Path Towards Its 25.1% Employment Equity Objective: A Look Through the Lenses of Attraction and Recruitment," *Canadian Military Journal* 22, no. 1 (Winter 2021): 5-13.

35 See, e.g., Félix Fonséca and Jason Dunn, *Attracting and Recruiting Aboriginal Peoples*, DGMPRA Technical Memorandum (Ottawa ON.: DRDC/DGMPRA, 2012); Justin Wright and Felix Fonséca, *Perspectives of Visible Minority Members on Recruitment and Inclusion in the CAF*, DGMPRA Scientific Report (Ottawa ON.: DRDC, 2016).

36 Chris MacDonald, "Visible Minorities: Breaking Down the Numbers in Order to Build Them Up" (Service Paper, Canadian Forces College, 2019).

37 Patrick A. Horsman, 'Old Stock' Continues to Yield Poor Returns: Is it Time for the CAF to Invest in Global Talent Market? (Service Paper, Canadian Forces College, 2022).

38 Daniel Grégoire, "Diversity in the CAF: A Critical Review of the Past and Present" (Service Paper, Canadian Forces College, 2020), 58.

39 Leslie J. Rediger, "Culture Shift to Bridge the Gap: How the Canadian Armed Forces Can Become an Employer of Choice" (Master of Defence Studies Paper, Canadian Forces College, 2020-2021).

40 *Ibid*, 11.

41 *Ibid*, 104.

42 Browne, *Visible Minority Recruitment*.

43 Suchman, "Managing Legitimacy," 574.

44 *Ibid*, 579.

45 DND, *Trusted to Serve*, 28.

46 ***Ibid***.

47 DND, *Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy*, 1.

48 Northouse, *Leadership*, 428.

49 Joann Keyton, *Communication and Organizational Culture: A Key to Understanding Work Experiences* (Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE, 2005), 1.

50 Robert W. Walker, "A Professional Development Framework to Address Strategic Leadership in the Canadian Forces," In *Strategic Leadership Development: International Perspectives* (Kingston, ON.: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2007), 15.

51 DND, *Leadership*, 130.

52 *Ibid*, 109.

53 A caveat is important: this must not be driven by an aim to tokenize or instrumentalize diverse members. In other words, it must be driven not just by pragmatic legitimacy but also a moral legitimacy imperative.

54 Department of National Defence, *Leadership in the Canadian Armed Forces: Conceptual Foundations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2005), 67.

55 *Ibid*, 70.

56 *Ibid*.

57 Goffman, Asylums.

58 See, e.g., Carol Agocs, "Canadian Dilemma: Is There a Path from Systemic Racism Toward Employment Equity for Indigenous People in the Canadian Forces?" *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 19, no. 2 (2018): 273.

59 Karen Davis, "Cultural Foundations," In *Cultural Intelligence and Leadership: An Introduction for Canadian Forces Leaders* (Kingston, ON.: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2009), 43.

60 Goffman, *Asylums*, 120.

61 Arguably, to ensure meaningful member buy-in, this would need to be negotiated rather than imposed (within a strict, "tight culture" construct typical of the military). See a discussion on loose versus tight cultures as theorized in relation to the CAF here: Vanessa Brown and Alan Okros, "Dancing around Gender: Changing Identity in Canada's Post-Deschamps Military," In *Culture and the Soldier: Identities, Values, and Norms in Military Engagements*, edited by H. Christian Breede, 32-56 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019).

62 Marie Deschamps, *External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces* (Ottawa: DND, 2015), https://publications.gc.ca/site/archivee-archived.html?url=https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/mdn-dnd/D2-506-2015-eng.pdf.

63 DND, *Trusted to Serve*.

64 DND, *Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy*, 4.

65 Department of National Defence, *Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy-Action Plan* (Ottawa: DND, 2017), Foreword.

66 For a detailed account of evolution of the CAF's diversity policies, see Alan Okros, "Introspection on Diversity in the Canadian Armed Forces," In *Strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces through Diversity and Inclusion*, edited by Alistair Edgar, Rupinder Mangat, and Bessma Momani, 153-67 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019).

67 DND, *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel*, 31.

68 Ibid, 37.

69 See, Department of National Defence/Canadian Armed Forces, *CDS/DM Initiating Directive for Professional Conduct and Culture* (April 2021) https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/dm-cds-directives/cds-dm-initiating-directive-professional-conduct-culture.html. For ongoing DND/CAF conduct and culture change initiatives, activities, programs, services and events, see https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/conduct-and-culture.html.

70 DND, *Trusted to Serve*.

71 *Ibid*, 18.

72 DND, *Trusted to Serve*, 48.

73 Sandra Biskupski-Mujanovic, Maya Eichler, Tammy George, and Nancy Taber, "Responding to the Minister's Advisory Panel Report," *Transforming Military Cultures* (blog), September 8, 2022. https://www.msvu.ca/research-at-the-mount/centres-and-institutes/transforming-military-cultures-network/blogs.

74 Goffman, *Asylums*, 53.

75 Rediger, "Culture Shift to Bridge the Gap," 21.

76 Knight, "Systemic Racism."

77 Alan Okros, "Rethinking Diversity and Security," *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 47, no. 4 (November 1, 2009).

78 *Ibid*; Fonséca and Dunn, *Attracting and Recruiting Aboriginal Peoples*.

79 Brian Selmeski, *Aboriginal Soldiers: A Conceptual Framework*. Vol. 3 (Kingston, ON.: Royal Military College) 81, 2007.

80 DND, *Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy*, 2.

81 Rediger, "Culture Shift to Bridge the Gap," 16.

82 Ahmed Elkar and Michael Gray. "The Princess Louise Fusiliers: Diversity Soldier Experience Program (DSEP)." *Canadian Military Journal*, 22 no. 1 (Winter 2021) 49.

83 Belanger, " 'Inclusive Leadership'."

84 Department of National Defence, B-GL-300-001/FP-001, *Land Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2008), para 414.

85 DND, *Canadian Armed Forces* Diversity Strategy, 10.

86 Rediger, "Culture Shift to Bridge the Gap," 12.

87 DND, *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel*, 31.

88 Fonséca and Dunn, *Attracting and Recruiting Aboriginal Peoples*.

89 Standing Committee on National Defence, *Improving Diversity*, 25.

90 Fonséca and Dunn, *Attracting and Recruiting Aboriginal Peoples*; Wright and Fonséca, *Perspectives of Visible Minority Members*.

91 Winslow et al. "Diversity in the Canadian Forces," 36.

92 Wright and Fonséca, *Perspectives of Visible Minority Members*.

93 Christian Leuprecht, "The Demographics of Force Generation: Recruitment, Attrition, and Retention of Citizen Soldiers," in *Canadian Defence Policy in Theory and Practice*, ed. Thomas Juneau, Philippe Lagassé, and Srdjan Vucetic, 179-200 (Cham [Switzerland]: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 182.

94 Wright and Fonséca, *Perspectives of Visible Minority Members*.

95 Browne, *Visible Minority Recruitment*.

96 Ipsos Reid Corporation, *Visible Minorities Recruitment and the Canadian Forces: The Asian and Arab-Canadian Populations* (Ottawa: Ipsos Reid Corporation, November 2012), https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpsgc/por-ef/national_defence/2012/073-11/report.pdf, 54.

97 *Ibid*, 105.

98 Melissa Finn and Bessma Momani, "Canadian Muslim Youth and Military Service," In *Strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces through Diversity and Inclusion*, edited by Alistair Edgar, Rupinder Mangat, and Bessma Momani, 135-52 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 135.

99 Leuprecht, "The Demographics of Force Generation"; Grazia Scoppio, Nancy Otis, and Yan Yan, "The Military as a Path to Citizenship, Integration, and Identity: Visible Minorities and Immigrants' Perspectives about the Military in Canada," In *The Power of Diversity in the Armed Forces: International Perspectives on Immigrant Participation in the Military* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022); Wright and Fonséca, *Perspectives of Visible Minority Members*.

100 Browne, *Visible Minority Recruitment*.

101 Wright and Fonséca, *Perspectives of Visible Minority Members*.

102 Ontario Human Rights Commission, *Policy on Removing the "Canadian Experience" Barrier* (Toronto: Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013), 2.

103 Standing Committee on National Defence, *Improving Diversity*.

104 Wright and Fonséca, *Perspectives of Visible Minority Members; Fonséca and Dunn, Attracting and Recruiting Aboriginal Peoples*.

105 Standing Committee on National Defence, *Improving Diversity*, 37.

106 Felix Odartey-Wellington and Michelle Noseworthy. "Honouring the Black Battalion – The No. 2 Construction Battalion National Apology Event on July 9 in Truro," *Maple Leaf*, 28 June 2022.

107 Fonséca and Dunn, *Attracting and Recruiting Aboriginal Peoples*.

108 DND, *Leadership*, 116.

109 DND, *Trusted to Serve*.

110 DND, *Leadership*, 31.

111 *Ibid*.

112 Wright and Fonséca, *Perspectives of Visible Minority Members*, 22.

113 *Ibid*.

114 Selmeski, *Aboriginal Soldiers*.

115 Department of National Defence, *Canadian Armed Forces Employment Equity Plan 2021-2026* (Ottawa: DND, 2020) 14.

116 Ipsos Reid Corporation, *Visible Minorities Recruitment and the Canadian Forces: The Chinese-Canadian Population* (Ottawa: Ipsos Reid Corporation, March 2011); Ipsos Reid, *Visible Minorities Recruitment 2012*; Ipsos Reid Corporation, *Visible Minorities Recruitment and the Canadian Forces: The Black-, Filipino- and Latin American-Canadian Populations* (Ottawa: Ipsos Reid Corporation, October 2014).

117 Ipsos Reid, *Visible Minorities Recruitment 2012*, 35.

118 *Ibid*, 10.

119 Ipsos Reid, *Visible Minorities Recruitment 2014*, 38.

120 Standing Committee on National Defence, *Improving Diversity*, 29.

121 Alan Okros, "Introspection on Diversity."

122 DND, *Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy*, 2.

123 DND, *Canadian Armed Forces Employment Equity Plan 2021-2026*, 11.

124 Belanger, "Inclusive Leadership," 34.

125 *Ibid*.

126 Felix Odartey-Wellington, "Erasing Race in the Canadian Media: The Case of Suaad Hagi Mohamud," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 36, no. 3 (September 13, 2011): 398.


Veterans, civilians and over 350 military personnel participate in a Remembrance Day ceremony at the Citadelle in Québec, Québec, November 11, 2016.

Photo: Cpl Nathan Moulton, Valcartier Imaging VL02-2016-0088-006

# Assessing VAC's research and its influence on income replacement policy for disabled Reserve Force Veterans

**BY MAJOR-GENERAL (RETIRED) J. G. MILNE, MSM, CD, BSC, MA**

*Jay served 38 years in the Canadian Armed Forces as a Regular Force Signal Officer, then as an Armoured Officer in the Primary Reserve. He has commanded at the troop, squadron, unit, and brigade levels, and has served in different capacities in NDHQ. As a Brigadier General, he was the Deputy Commander of Land Force Central Area, Deputy Commander of the Land Force Doctrine and Training System, and the Director General of Reserves and Cadets. Upon promotion to Major General, he led the DND/CAF Defence Renewal Team before his final assignment as a special advisor to the Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs Canada. Operationally, he has deployed with NATO to Germany and Norway, with the United Nations in Cyprus, and in Afghanistan embedded in the Afghan Army Headquarters. He released from the CAF in 2018*

*While a part-time Reservist, Jay led a 20-year career as an engineer, program manager, and director at a Canadian defence company, managing two programs worth over a billion Canadian dollars. Jay holds a BSc in Honours Mathematics and Physics as well as an MA in Security and Defence Management and Policy, and has completed various junior and senior programs with the CAF, US Marine Corps, and US Army.*

**The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) consists of the Regular Force (Regulars), Reserve Force (Reservists), and Special Force components. Reservists enroll in one of four subcomponents to perform duty[1] through three classes of service as shown in Figure 1.[2] Compared to Regulars, Reservists typically have lower military pay and a variable frequency of military employment, relying to different degrees on civilian earnings.[3]**

Figure 1: Summary of Res F subcomponents and classes of service

| | Primary Reserve (P Res) | Canadian Rangers (Rangers) | Cadet Organizations Administration and Traning Service (COATS) | Supplementary Reserve (Supp Res) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Duty and training as may be required of them | Duty and training as may be required but not annual training | Supervision, administration, and training of cadets | Not required to perform any military duty |
| **Class A service** | Part-time service | Part-time service | Part-time service | |
| **Class B service** | Long-or short-term full-time temporary training or administrative service | Long- or short-term full-time temporary training or administrative service | Long- or short-term full-time temporary training or administrative service | |
| **Class C service** | Full-time service on a military operation | Full-time service on a military operation | | |

When service-related injuries prevent Reservists from civilian and military employment, they may seek financial compensation through four government programs[4]: CAF Reserve Force Compensation benefits[5]; CAF Long Term Disability (LTD) insurance[6]; Government Employees Compensation Act benefits[7]; and VAC's Income Replacement Benefit (IRB).[8] Each program has unique eligibility requirements, admissible injuries, duty circumstances, and scales of benefits. This article focuses on the IRB for eligible Veterans with service-related disabilities while enrolled in VAC's medical, psychosocial, and vocational rehabilitation program.

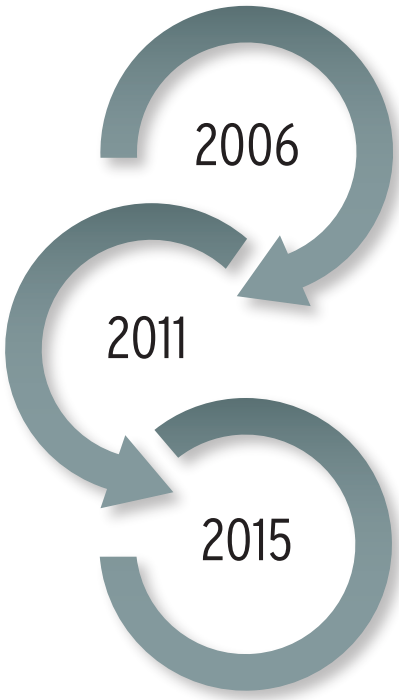
Originally named the Earnings Loss Benefit (ELB) in the 2005 Canadian Forces Members and Veterans Re-establishment and Compensation Act (CFMVRCA), sometimes called the New Veterans Charter, the benefit was renamed the IRB with changes introduced through the 2019 Veterans Well-bring Act (VWA). The government's objective for the IRB is to provide Veterans, "replacement income to relieve financial pressures … to successfully complete rehabilitation."[9] Rehabilitation may take months or years and, if unachievable, the IRB will be provided for life.

VAC determines the benefit using an "imputed income" formula defined in the Veterans Well-being Regulations (VWR).[10] While VAC's website notes the IRB ensures "Veterans' total income will be at least 90 percent of their gross pre-release military salary," this is not the case for disabled Reserve Veterans.[11]

Comprising 47% of CAF Veterans[12] and 17% of IRB recipients,[13] the imputed income for Reserve Veterans is defined as their military pay backdated to the "event that resulted in the … health problem." First defined in 2006, subsequent changes are summarized in Figure 2. Despite Reservists relying to different degrees on civilian earnings, the imputed income is based solely on their military salary at the time of the injury, even if it is of a previous pay rate or rank. In 2015, a minimum amount payable for all Veterans was introduced, and in all versions, the benefit is adjusted annually for inflation. Noting that this method of IRB calculation can result in unfair outcomes for Reserve Veterans, in

"While VAC's website notes the IRB ensures "Veterans' total income will be at least 90 percent of their gross pre-release military salary," this is not the case for disabled Reserve Veterans."

Figure 2: Summary of VWR Res F Veteran imputed income definitions




**Imputed income is military salary at...**

› (Regular)... release from the Regular Force
› (Reservist Class C)... completion of the Class C when originally injured
› (Reservist Class B over 180 days)... time of release
› (Reservist Class A & B)... deemed monthly salary $2,000

**Imputed income is military salary at time of...**

› (Regular)... no change
› (Reservist Class C)... no change
› (Reservist Class B over 180 days)... completion of the Class B when originally injured
› (Reservist Class A or B)... deemed monthly salary $2,700

**Imputed income is military salary at time of...**

› (Regular)... no change
› (Reservist Class C)... no change
› (Reservist Class A or B)... completion of the Class A or B when orignally injured

2020 the Veterans Ombudsman cautioned of an "unconscious bias in favour of Regular Force Service as compared to Reserve Force Service;[14] this echoed a similar 2013 Ombudsman's report.[15]

As the official newspaper of the Government of Canada, the Canada Gazette publishes new and proposed government regulations.[16] Prior to the 2006 regulations and for each amendment, it announced that modern disability management studies, research on successful transition, committees, organizations, and evaluations on gaps and improvements were used to develop the ELB.[17] As the Gazette claimed changes were made "in response to... VAC's own research,"[18] this article reviews VAC's research between 1992 and 2018 in order to determine how findings have been used to define "imputed income" for disabled Reserve Veterans.

## METHODOLOGY

To examine the extent of VAC's research related to income replacement for disabled Reserve Veterans, this article uses a four-stage methodological framework to identify relevant VAC publications. Publications are compared to legislation, regulations, and the corresponding Canada Gazette editions providing VWR background. It should be noted that the CFMVRCA and regulations were renamed the VWA and VWR in 2019, at which time the IRB replaced the ELB and other benefits. This article will use IRB to describe IRB or ELB.

### Stage 1. Identifying the research question

This review examines the extent to which VAC research has informed the IRB imputed income to meet the government's objective of relieving *financial pressures* for the study population of Reserve Veterans. Not defined in legislation or VAC's policies, financial pressures in this article are defined as "threats to the Veteran's *financial well-being*," where ***financial well-being*** is defined by Skomorovsky et al. as the "state where one can fulfill current and ongoing financial obligations, have a sense of financial security, and is able to make choices that allow enjoyment of life."[19] As the IRB supports disabled Veterans undergoing military to civilian transition, this article uses the CAF's definition of transition, that is, "the period of reintegration from military to civilian life and the corresponding process of change that a serving member/Veteran and their family undertake when their service is completed."[20]

### Stage 2. Identifying relevant studies and documents

VAC's *Annotated Bibliography of VAC Research Directorate Publications for 1992-2018 (Annotated Bibliography)*[21] lists "*all* of the English reports"[22] and presents 161 publications which provide "sound scientific evidence" informing VAC policies, programs, and

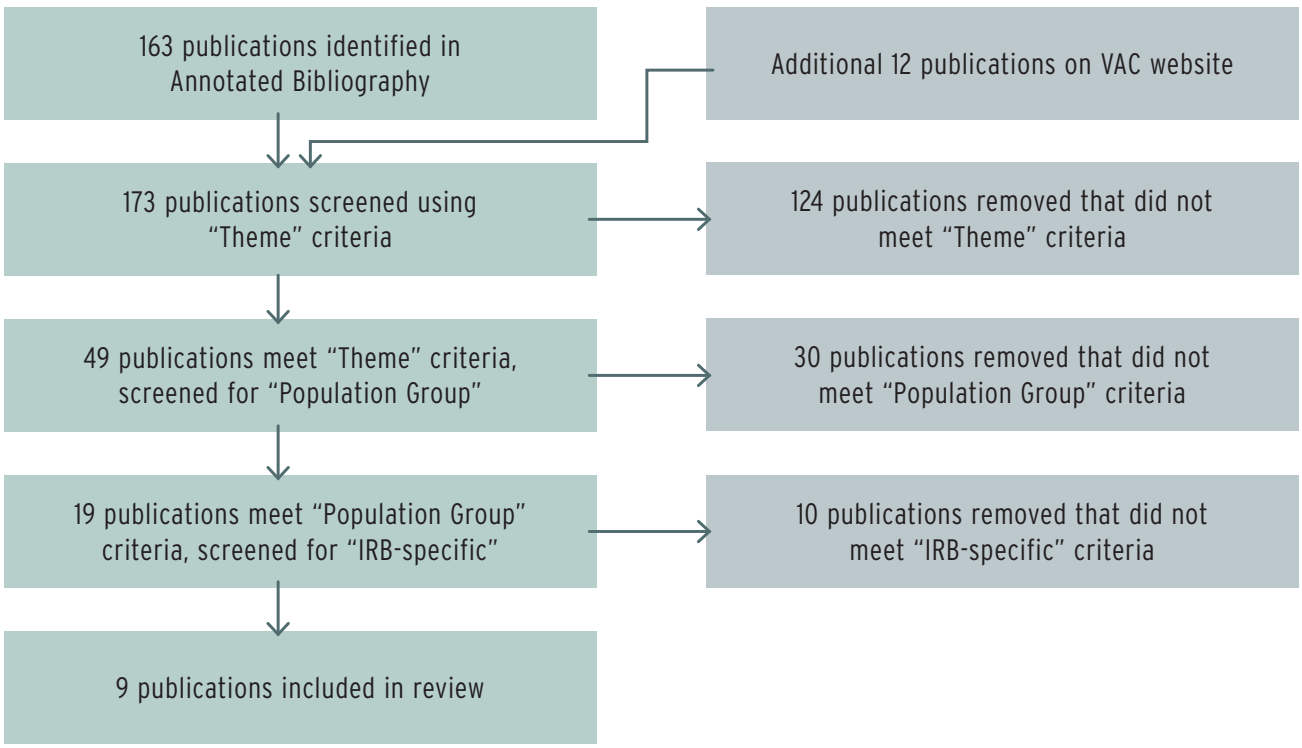
services; twelve additional research publications were retrieved from the VAC Research Directorate website.[23] Of these, 123 were available in full or as abstracts at websites of the VAC Research Directorate, Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research, the Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health, and the Veterans and Families Research Hub. For the remaining publications, the *Annotated Bibliography* provided 50-word citations. Current and past versions of the CFMVRCA, VWA, and VWR were available at the Department of Justice website and the Canada Gazette was retrieved from www.canadagazette.gc.ca.

The VAC-CAF Advisory Council's 2004 report, *The Origins and Evolution of Veterans Benefits in Canada 1914-2004*,[24] with forward by Peter Neary, helps frame the introduction of the 2005 CFMVRCA. In addition to VAC research publications, L. Williams and J. Anderson's, *The unique financial situation of a Primary Reservist: Satisfaction with compensation and benefits and its impact on retention,*[25] presents a picture of the Reservist's mix of civilian and military earnings, while the Auditor General of Canada's *2016 report on the Canadian Army Reserve*[26] helps to understand physical risks inherent in Reserve service.

## Stage 3. Study selection

The 173 publications were reviewed using the theme of "Transition," including topics such as military to civilian transition, post-release rehabilitation, compensation, pre- and post-release financial health, and life after service; Figure 3 illustrates that 49 publications met the "Transition" theme. "Population Group," was assessed to determine research related to Reserve Veterans or all Veterans, resulting in 19 publications meeting "Transition" and "Population" criteria. These were reviewed for IRB-specific criteria, such as financial well-being, employment, and income issues, with nine meeting the full scoping criteria; eight concerned all Veterans and one exclusively studied Reserve Veterans.

**Figure 3: Process to select relevant VAC research publications**



## Stage 4. Collating, summarizing, and reporting the results

The selected publications are listed in Table 1. Each was reviewed in detail and the findings are discussed in the Results section.

**Table 1: Selected VAC research publications**

| TITLE | AUTHORS | DATE |
|---|---|---|
| CAF clients of VAC: Risk factors for post-release socioeconomic well-being | Marshall and Matteo | 2004 |
| The origins and evolution of Veterans benefits in Canada 1914-2004 | VAC-CAF Advisory Council | 2004 |
| Work-related experience and financial security of VAC clients | Marshall et al. (1) | 2005 |
| Post-military experiences of VAC clients: the need for military release readiness | Marshall et al. (2) | 2005 |
| Pre- and post-release income: Life After Service Studies | MacLean et al. | 2014 |
| 2013 synthesis of Life After Service Studies | Van Til, et al. | 2014 |
| Income adequacy and employment outcomes of the New Veterans Charter | MacLean, et al. | 2014 |
| Veterans of the Reserve Force: Life After Service Studies 2013 | Van Til, et al. | 2016 |
| Income recovery after participation in the rehabilitation program | MacLean and Poirier | 2016 |
| Spring 2016 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada Report 5 Canadian Army Reserve – National Defence | Auditor General of Canada | 2016 |
| Veterans' identities and well-being in transition to civilian life | Thompson et al. | 2017 |
| The unique financial situation of a Primary Reservist: satisfaction with compensation and benefits and its impact on retention | Williams and Anderson | 2020 |


**Reservists of 14 Military Police Platoon, 12 Military Police Platoon and regular force members of 1 Military Police Regiment conduct a C8 rifle range at 3rd Canadian Division Forces Base Edmonton Detachment Wainwright, March 9, 2021.**

Photo: Corporal Djalma Vuong-De Ramos, Canadian Armed Forces photo

## RESULTS

### *Categorizing, grouping, and measuring Reserve service*

Reserve data is grouped five ways for the nine selected publications, as shown in Figure 4. In contrast, Regular Veterans are normally analyzed as a homogenous population. Publications from the Life After Service Studies (LASS) are highlighted by an asterisk (*) and will be discussed separately.

**Figure 4: Reserve groupings for selected VAC research publications**

| RESERVE SERVICE GROUPING FOR ANALYSIS | VAC RESEARCH PUBLICATION TITLE |
|---|---|
| Five groups based on class of service | › Veterans of the Reserve Force: LASS* |
| Two groups based on class of service | › Pre- and Post-Release Income: LASS*<br>› 2013 Synthesis of LASS* |
| Reservists as a uniform block | › Work-related Experience and Financial Security of VAC Clients |
| Part- and Full-time Reservists | › Veterans' Identities and Well-being in Transition to Civilian Life |
| Refers to all of CAF | › CAF Clients of VAC: "Risk Factors" for Post-Release Socioeconomic Well-Being<br>› Post-military Experiences of VAC Clients: The Need for Military Release Readiness<br>› Income Adequacy and Employment Outcomes of the New Veterans (LASS)*<br>› Income Recovery after particiaption in the Rehabilitation Program (LASS)* |

## VAC research prior to the 2006 imputed income

Painting a "complex picture of … post-discharge work and income security," Marshall et al. (2), found "the need for finely tuned policy initiatives to enhance … economic security" for disabled Veterans.[27] Marshall et al. (1) determined that those releasedmedically are "in jeopardy of economic difficulties upon release due to early and unexpected discharge."[28]

To "place the case for renewal squarely on the public agenda," the VAC-CAF Advisory Council prepared a 163-page report in 2004 on the evolution of Veterans benefits in Canada. Recognizing contemporary CAF members and Veterans as a client group with complex needs, the report outlined recommendations for programs supporting military to civilian transition and ongoing care of those injured. It noted that in 1976 Primary Reservists became eligible for CAF LTD insurance if released due to injuries sustained during military operations; eligibility was expanded in the 1990s to include all service-related injuries. For Reservists disabled on part-time service, the benefit was 75% of $2,000 per month, regardless of military rank or actual lost income.

Two 1997 CAF studies, J.W. Stow's *A Study of the Treatment of Members Released from the CF on Medical Grounds*, and R.G. MacLellan's *Care of Injured Personnel and the Families Review: A Final Report*, were highlighted by the Advisory Group report. Interviewing exclusively Regular Veterans, Stow made 15 recommendations concerning administration of medically released personnel and improving access to and relevance of post-release benefits, arguing for "a source of income to bridge the gap between one career and the next."[29] MacLellan confirmed this and included Reservists in the following investigation. Outlining problems gaining access to medical care, MacLennan noted that "obtaining appropriate compensation for lost civilian income was also a major concern" of Reservists.[30]

Promising financial pressures would be minimized by the IRB "to enhance the opportunity for successful rehabilitation," the 2006 Canada Gazette announced the benefit will "mirror" the existing CAF LTD insurance program.[31] While disabled Regular Veterans would receive 75% of their salary at release regardless of when the injury occurred, the benefit for similarly disabled Reserve Veterans injured on part-time service would be 75% of an imputed income of $2,000 per month. While the imputed income definitions reflected a "finely tuned policy," the 2006 IRB only addressed the "jeopardy of economic difficulties" for disabled Regular Veterans.

## VAC research supporting the 2011 release

Prior to 2011, VAC released nine research publications concerning the transition of Regular Veterans. The 2011 Gazette announcement mentions that "many (unnamed) studies" supported the IRB being based on 75% of the greater of Veterans' military salary at release (for Regular Veterans) or a new minimum pre-tax annual income of $40,000. The new minimum income was justified by quoting research by Statistics Canada and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)[32] defining a "low-income cut-off" wage at $37,000 annually; this research was not applied to disabled Reserve Veterans injured on part-time duty, whose benefit was 75% of the deemed monthly salary of $2,700, or $24,300 annually. Although the Gazette notes that "certain reservists" are at the highest risk of receiving insufficient "financial support

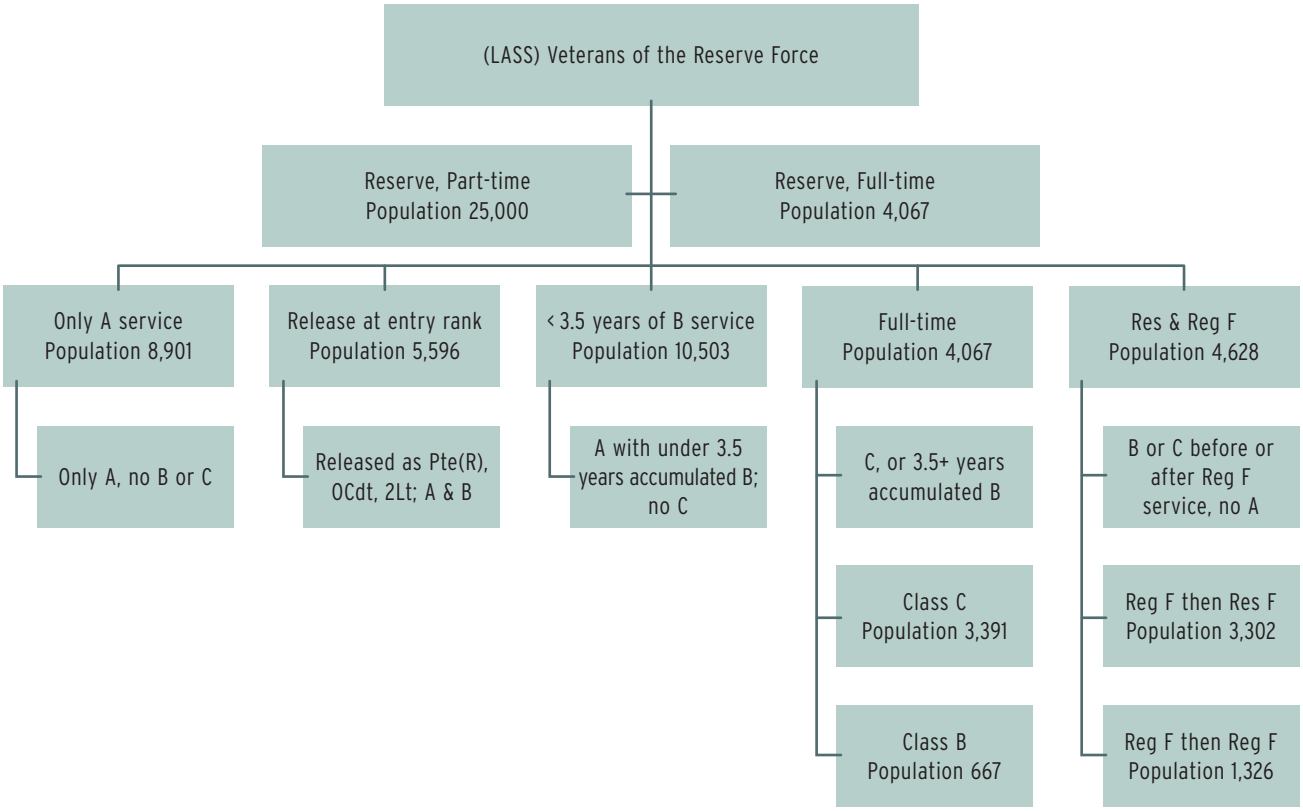
required to meet basic needs," the benefit for those injured on long-term full-time service was reduced from being 75% of the military salary at release to 75% of their salary when originally injured.

## The Life After Service Study (LASS) program and Reserve Veterans

To better understand the transition and health of Veterans, VAC, CAF, and Statistics Canada conducted the LASS program in 2010, 2013, and 2016.[33] Although Reserve Veterans comprise 47% of CAF Veterans, they were studied only in LASS 2013.[34] In 2010, Reservists were not included as "data was not available in time for the … start date,"[35] while no reason was given for 2016.[36] LASS was also conducted in 2019 for Regular Veterans only.

VAC's *Annotated Bibliography* lists 32 LASS publications. Five from LASS 2013 met this article's criteria, of which *Veterans of the Reserve Force*[37] is the sole publication focused on Reserve Veterans. It organizes Reserve Veteran data into five population groups based on "discriminating military characteristics," as shown in Figure 5. These are based on the classes of service illustrated in Figure 1. LASS 2013 methodology excluded the data of 8,900 Reserve Veterans with exclusively Class A (part-time) service due to "administrative data" deficiencies[38] and subsequently excluded the data of 5,600 Reservists released in their "entry rank."[39] The remaining data is a reasonable pool of Reserve Veterans with service characterized by administration, local training, formal courses, long-term employment, and operational deployments.

**Figure 5: Reserve groups in Veterans of the Reserve Force study**



### *Counting heads versus using full-time equivalents*

S. Tucker and A. Keefe's *2019 Report on work fatality and injury rates in Canada* recommends using full-time equivalents (FTE) in assessing workplace injury compensation systems to reflect, "the estimated total number of employees covered by a compensation board … as opposed to the total number of people employed in a jurisdiction."[40] The groups in Figure 5 represent "people employed in a jurisdiction" and not the full-time equivalents.

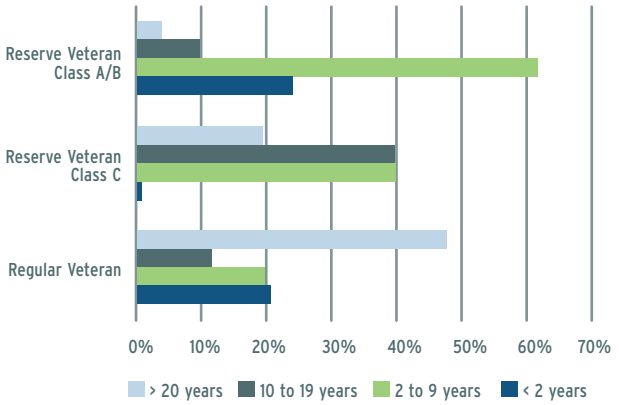
Table 2 summarizes characteristics, demographics, and transition data from LASS 2013. If Reservists from the "<3.5 years of B service" group work one evening per week (one half-day's duty) and certain weekends, and attend summer courses lasting several weeks, they will be on duty approximately 60 days a year. Regulars and full-time Reservists spend 220 days per year on duty when weekends, holidays, special leaves (e.g., statutory holidays, sick leave), and vacation time are excluded. While Table 2 measures "Length of service" in years enrolled, the annual paid days for the "<3.5 years of B service" group may be 25% to 33% of the duty year for full-time Reservists and Regulars. If compared using full-time equivalents, the 2% VAC client percentage for the "<3.5 years of B service" group would approach 6% to 8%.

**Table 2: Reserve Veteran military characteristic, demographic, and transition data**

| | Only A service | Release at entry rank | <3.5 years of B service | Full-time | Res & Reg F | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Primary Reservists** | 8,901 | 5,569 | 10,503 | 4,067 | 4,628 | 33,668 |
| % of total | 26% | 17% | 31% | 12% | 14% | 100% |
| **VAC Clients** | 53 | 56 | 210 | 691 | 1,527 | 2,538 |
| % of group | 0.6% | 1% | 2% | 17% | 33% | 8% |
| **Length of Service** | | | | | | |
| Less than 10 years | 8,723 | 5,458 | 8,717 | 1,423 | 1,574 | 25,895 |
| % of group | 98% | 98% | 83% | 35% | 34% | 77% |
| 10 to 19 years | 89 | 56 | 1260 | 1708 | 370 | 3,483 |
| % of group | 1% | 1% | 12% | 42% | 8% | 10% |
| 20+ years | 89 | 56 | 420 | 895 | 2,684 | 4,144 |
| % of group | 1% | 1% | 4% | 22% | 58% | 12% |
| **Age at Release** | | | | | | |
| Under 30 years old | 7,655 | 4,845 | 8,297 | 1,423 | 1,064 | 23,285 |
| % of group | 86% | 87% | 79% | 35% | 23% | 69% |
| 30+ years old | 1,246 | 724 | 2,206 | 2,644 | 3,564 | 10,383 |
| % of group | 14% | 13% | 21% | 65% | 77% | 31% |
| **Reason for Release** | | | | | | |
| Involuntary | 1,691 | 1,225 | 1,891 | 407 | 324 | 5,538 |
| % of group | 19% | 22% | 18% | 10% | 7% | 16% |
| Medical | 0 | 56 | 210 | 569 | 509 | 1,344 |
| % of group | 0% | 1% | 2% | 14% | 11% | 4% |
| Voluntary | 7,121 | 4,232 | 8,087 | 2,806 | 3,332 | 25,579 |
| % of group | 80% | 76% | 77% | 69% | 72% | 76% |
| Retirement Age | 0 | 0 | 210 | 244 | 463 | 917 |
| % of group | 0% | 0% | 2% | 6% | 10% | 3% |

Using LASS 2013 data, Figure 6 illustrates that close to 50% of Regulars served 20 or more years before release, 95% of Class A/B Reservists served less than 20 years, and over 80% of Reservists with Class C service served under 20 years. While it may appear that Reservists face less risk of injury than Regulars, VAC client percentages for Reserve Veterans are lower than Regular Veterans because they are on duty less frequently (60 days versus 220 days) over a shorter career (95% below 20 years versus 50% over 20 years). Indeed, the Auditor General of Canada's 2016 report found that the differences in training between Regulars and Primary Reservists "increase the risks of injury to soldiers when they train or deploy."[41]

**Figure 6: Comparing length of service of Regular and Reserve Veterans**




## Grouping Class C service

As shown in Figure 5 and Table 2, LASS 2013 publications group Reservists having "any Class C service" together with those having "more than 3.5 years of Class B service" with the rationale that these groups show similarities in "age of release" and "adjustment to civilian life."[42] Using information from *Veterans of the Reserve Force*, Table 3 presents these characteristics plus three others. Those with Class C service are more closely aligned with the "<3.5 years of Class B service" group in being from a combat arms occupation in the Army and, perhaps more importantly, in post-service employment. This is likely due to Class C service being performed for limited full-time periods by typically part-time Reservists, who then return to part-time service. Periods of Class C service range from a few weeks (e.g., flood response) to six to twelve months (e.g., deployment to Afghanistan), and, as the study notes, the average accumulated Class C service over a career is 0.9 years.[43]

**Table 3: Comparing characteristics of Reservists with Class C service**

| Characteristics | > 3.5-year Class B service | Class C service of any length | < 3.5-year Class B service |
|---|---|---|---|
| < 2 years service | 0% | 0% | 13% |
| > 20 years service | 32% | 20% | 4% |
| Easy adjustment to civilian life | 49%* | 61% | 76% |
| Combat arms | 19% | 45% | 62% |
| Army | 52% | 80% | 87% |
| Post-release employment rate | 65% | 80% | 84% |

** The LASS study advises that this number is unreliable due to small sample size.*

## Regular and Reserve service

The "Res & Reg F" group includes Veterans who served as Regulars then Reservists or vice versa. Of the former Regulars who became Reservists, 81% served over 20 years as Regulars before becoming Reservists. On average, they served 2.4 years on Class B service and 1.3 years on Class C service before their final release at an average age of 46 years. LASS 2013 does not advise on the length of their Reserve service, but given their average release age and length of Regular service beforehand, their time as Reservists was probably relatively short.

## Revised military characteristics

By moving Reserve Veterans with Class C service into the "<3.5-year Class B" group and removing the Veterans whose final release was from the Regular Force, the Table 2 information changes as shown in Table 4. With this, the "<3.5 years of B service" group's VAC client percentage becomes 5%. If this group predominantly performs 60 duty days annually over their career, with periods on Class C (total average 0.9 years) and Class B service (total average 0.5 years), the VAC client percentage in a full-time equivalent system would be 15% to 20%. With the adjustments of Class C service and former Regulars released as Reservists, Table 4 demonstrates that 87.5% of 32,342 Reservists are employed in a predominantly part-time model.

Table 4: Summary of Reserve Veteran characteristics after regrouping

| | Only A service | Release at entry rank | < 3.5 years of B service | Full-time | Reg released as Reservist | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Primary Reservists** | 8,901 | 5,569 | 13,894 | 676 | 3,302 | 32,342 |
| **% of Primary Reserve** | 28% | 17% | 43% | 2% | 10% | 100% |
| **VAC clients** | 53 | 56 | 717 | 169 | 1,090 | 2,085 |
| **% of group** | 1% | 1% | 5% | 25% | 33% | 6% |
| **Adjusted for full-time equivalents** | 4% | 4% | 15%-20% | 25% | 33% | |

Reservists released at the age of 30 and older are three times more likely to have Class C service and four times more likely to be a VAC client, as shown in Table 5. This older group tends to have higher pre-release civilian earnings, and, as VAC clients, are twice as likely to fall below the low-income measure.

Table 5: Reserve Veteran breakdown by release age

| Characteristics | Released 29 and younger (<29) | Released 30 and older (30+) |
|---|---|---|
| % Reserve Veterans | 75% | 25% |
| Served Class C | 10% | 33% |
| % VAC Clients | 20% | 80% |

### *Summary of LASS finding with adjustments*

A summary of existing LASS findings, with adjustments and comments, is provided in Figure 7. When viewed from a full-time equivalent perspective and regrouping the Class C service with the otherwise part-time group, the perspective that "few" Reserve Veterans become VAC clients is adjusted. Reservists who are over 30 years old at release come into focus as a small population with a higher risk of service-related injury that is more exposed to fall below the "low-income measure."


Reservists from Montreal Territorial Battalion Group participate in winter warfare training in Laval, Quebec during Exercise QUORUM NORDIQUE on January 23, 2016.

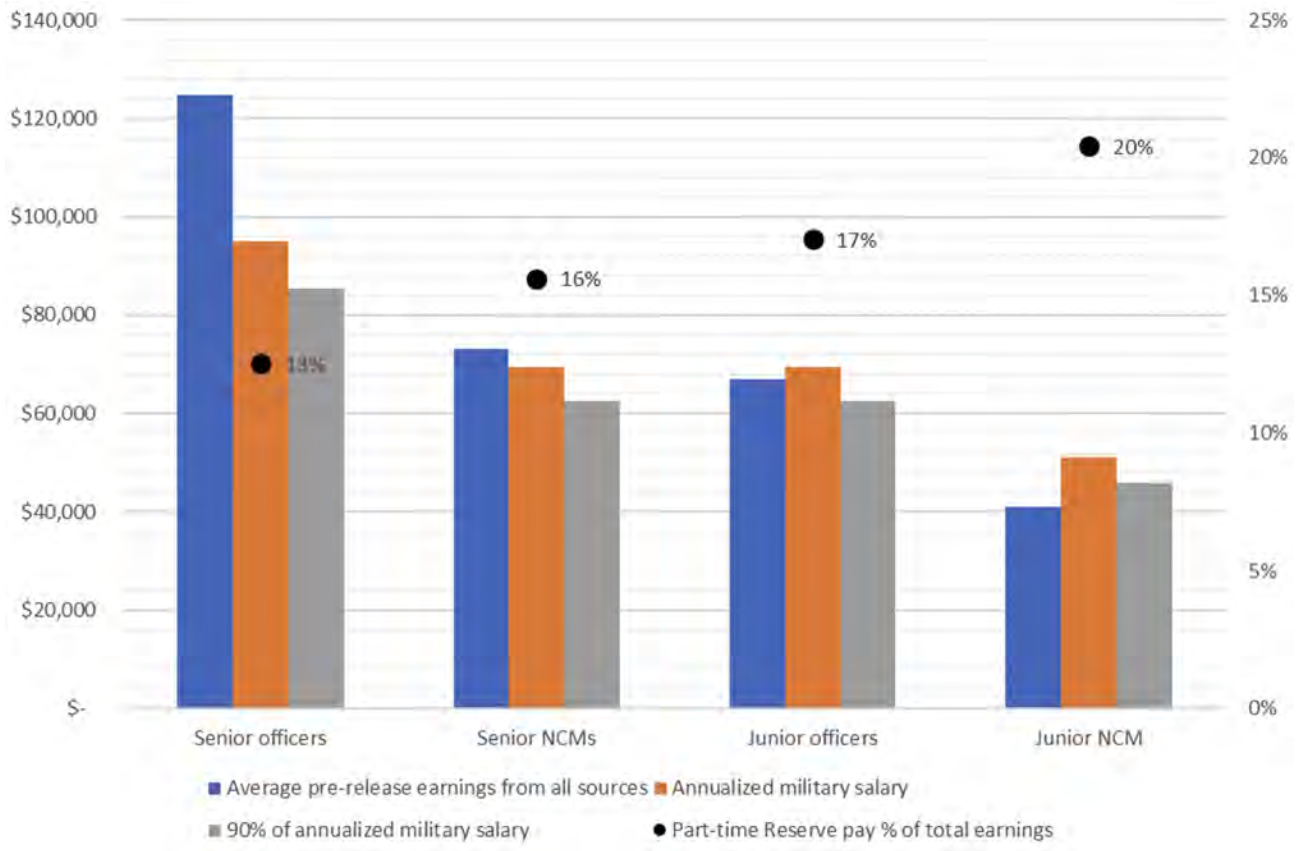
Photo: Cpl Myki Poirier-Joyal

Figure 7: Summary of Reserve Veteran findings from LASS 2013

| LASS Finding | Comment or Clarification |
|---|---|
| Few (2%) Reserve Veterans were VAC clients. | Approaches 20% when based on full-time equivalents and with Class C service assigned to the "< 3.5 years B service" group. |
| Clients are more likely than non-clients to be older at release. | 80% of Reserve clients were age 30 and above; four times higher than those 29 and under. |
| 40% of Reserve Veterans clients and 2% of non-clients were medially released. | Accurate as stated. |
| Officers make up less than 20% of clients. | Reserve senior officers and NCMs are three times more likely to be clients than Reserve junior officers and NCMs. |
| Reserve Veteran clients are more likely to have released medically or at retirement age. | 40% released medically, 33% voluntarily, and 17% at retirement age. |
| Reserve non-clients are more likely than clients to have household incomes below the Low-Income Measure (LIM). | Reserve clients aged 35-49 out-number non-clients 2:1 in being below LIM. |
| Most Reserve age groups' income increased post release, with the youngest showing the biggest increase. | Reserve clients' income decreased by 9% and non-clients grew by 38% (47% differential). |

Additional Reserve Veteran findings can be derived from LASS reports related to Reservist average pre-release total earnings, including civilian earnings, based on income tax information. Using LASS 2013 data[44] and an average 2014 daily Reservist pay rate for each rank group,[45] Figure 8 illustrates civilian and military earnings for part-time Res F Veterans.[46] As part-time Reservists progress in rank, the military portion of their total earnings decrease from 17% to 13% for officers and 20% to 16% for NCMs. With progress in rank, their yearly civilian income tends to exceed the annualized military salary which would be used to determine IRB if they were unable to work due to a service-related disability.

Figure 8: Reservist civilian and military earnings




## VAC research supporting the 2015 amendment

The Canada Gazette preceding the 2015 VWR amendment listed VAC's own research and evaluations, committees, organizations, and the Veterans Ombudsman as identifying areas for IRB improvement.[47] As shown in Figure 2, the 2015 VWR amendment changed the imputed income for Reserve Veterans injured on Class A or any Class B service from the deemed salary approach to be the imputed military salary at the time of the injury. While this was an improvement for part-time Reservists, the new method did not reflect the LASS 2013 findings.

In the context of the 2015 change, the Gazette claims the Veteran's Ombudsman recommended that Reserve Veterans injured on part-time service receive the same income support as those injured on "full-time" Reserve service. The Ombudsman report actually recommends using the "same salary level as that used to calculate the benefit for full-time Reserve Force and Regular Force Veterans."[48] Similarly, the Gazette advises that a "similar sentiment was echoed" by the parliamentary Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs; the Committee's report states that all disabled Veterans must "be entitled to the same benefits … whether they are former members of the Reserve Force or of the Regular Force."[49]

## VAC research supporting the 2019 VWR amendment

As outlined in *Veterans' Identities and Well-being in Transition to Civilian Life*, military-civilian transition is one of life's most intense transitions, bringing significant identity challenges that is further exacerbated by chronic health problems or being forced to leave.[50] Part-time Reservists have "hybrid identities" and need a "coherent personal narrative that integrates both lives to prevent identity crises." Facing identity reconstruction issues if they lose their civilian employment returning from military operations, they will also emerge with the loss of civilian employment due to a service-related disability. Many identities are simultaneously challenged for disabled Reserve Veterans, including their civilian earning potential, civilian profession, and ability to sustain financial well-being.

Changes made in the 2019 VWR reflected the creation of the IRB to replace five benefits, including ELB, and the increase of

the benefit to 90% of the imputed income. The definitions of the imputed income remained unchanged.

## Unique financial situation of a Primary Reservist

Released in 2020, William and Anderson's *The unique financial situation of a Primary Reservist: Satisfaction with compensation and benefits and its impact on retention* examines Reservist reliance on military income and its relationship with civilian earnings. It provides an understanding of potential financial pressures inherent in using an annualized military salary as the IRB's imputed income.[51] In response to the question, "How necessary is your income as a Reservist to your current household financial situation?" as many as one third of Reservists, predominantly Class A, see their military salary as completely, or fairly, unnecessary to their financial situation, or "without it my life wouldn't change at all." This cohort of Reservists are predominantly in the aged 30 years and older group, which makes up 80% of Reserve VAC clients. If disabled by a service-related injury, these Reservists would be most at risk of IRB not relieving financial pressures.

Calculating the IRB by using an imputed income backdated to time of the injury or the time of Regular Force release creates a different risk for longer-term full-time Reserve Veterans and the ex-Regulars whose final release is as a Reservist. Their benefit would be calculated using a potentially lower rank or salary, e.g., releasing as a Sergeant and receiving compensation based on a Corporal's salary from the time of the original injury. When the 33% whose military salary is unnecessary to their financial situation is combined with the 12% who release as full-time Reservists or ex-Regulars, close to one half of Reservists are at risk of receiving an IRB insufficient to relieve financial pressures.

## Evidence-based findings for Reserve Veteran IRB

Figure 9 illustrates the twelve major findings from the nine VAC research publications selected to reflect compensation and military-civilian transition of disabled Reserve Veterans; the findings show this article's adjustments. An income replacement benefit to relieve financial pressures of disabled Reserve Veterans and their families participating in the VAC rehabilitation program should address these evidence-based findings.

**Canadian Army reservists from 4th Canadian Division medical units unload a simulated casualty from a CH-146 Griffon helicopter during Exercise STALWART GUARDIAN on August 21, 2015 at Garrison Petawawa, Ontario.**

Photo: 32 Canadian Brigade Group Public Affairs

**Figure 9: VAC research evidence-based findings for Reserve Veteran IRB**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Disabled Reserve Veterans have complex identity reconstruction challenges, compounded by loss of civilian employment and their financial compensation not considering lost civilian earnings and being based on a past rank. | When assessed using full-time equivalents, Reservists face the same risks as Regulars. | Reserve senior personnel are three times more likely to be VAC clients than junior personnel. |
| 80% of VAC Reserve clients released at age 30 and above; four times higher than those under 30. | Reservists releasing at age 30 and above are three times more likely to have Class C service than those releasing under age 30. | As part-time Reservists progress in military rank, the military salary ratio of their total earnings decreases. |
| Civilian earnings of Reserve junior personnel are generally less than or equivalent to an annualized military salary. | Civilian earnings of Reserve senior personnel are generally greater than an annualized military salary. | Reserve VAC clients aged 35-49 out-number non-clients 2:1 in being below the low income measure. |
| The gap in "post-release earnings change" between Reserve VAC clients and non-clients (47%) is almost twice the Regular VAC client and non-client gap (25%). | Reservists who are medically released after full-time service lose their full military salary. | 40% of Reserve VAC clients released medically, 33% voluntarily, and 17% at retirement age. |

## DISCUSSION

### *VAC research and IRB for Reserve Veterans*

Of the 173 VAC research publications released between 1992 and 2018, only one is dedicated to analyzing Reserve Veterans. This publication and eight others provide evidence-based findings which should inform compensation and military-civilian transition policies of Reservists with service-related disabilities.

Prior to the introduction of the New Veterans Charter, VAC research identified that those released medically face economic jeopardy and called for initiatives to enhance economic security. Further, the VAC-CAF Advisory Council reported that a major concern of injured Reservists was obtaining appropriate compensation for lost civilian income. Despite this, the 2006 method to calculate IRB "mirrored" the CAF LTD insurance. The 2011 method was unchanged for those injured on Class C service, reduced the benefit for those injured on longer-term Class B service, and offered a slight benefit increase for those injured on part-time service. No VAC research supported these changes, and HRSDC research supporting the new Regular Veteran minimum benefit was disregarded in the case of Reservists.

In 2015, the method to calculate IRB for Reservists was standardized and based on the individual's military salary at the time of the disabling injury. The justification provided in the Canada Gazette misstated recommendations made by the Veterans Ombudsman and the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. Despite claiming VAC's own research identified "areas for IRB improvement," the changed benefit did not reflect findings in the LASS 2013 publications.

### *Analyzing Reserve Veteran data*

Regular Force service is a single period beginning at enrollment and ending at release while Reservists conduct distinct periods of service, or classes, from enrollment until release. Therefore, the administration of Reservists provides a granularity of records that is not available for Regulars. While this granularity presents opportunities to examine various scenarios, it creates issues when comparing publications, e.g., the nine VAC research publications chosen for this article had five different Reserve groupings. Even the five LASS 2013 documents reviewed used three methods to group Reservists.

Grouping of Reservist data should be based on a development and employment model where Reservists generally perform part-time Class A service of local administration and training, interrupted by periods of full-time Class B service for training and full-time Class C service for military operations, all with a background of full-time civilian enterprise. This applies to 87.5% of Reservists (Table 4) with exceptions being Reservists fulfilling full-time long-term Class B service. When measuring injury and compensation rates, analysis of Reservists must be sensitive to full-time equivalents of "duty" when compared to Regulars, public servants, or other groups of Reservists.

The current imputed income definition is partially satisfactory

As currently defined, the IRB would meet its objective for 20% of Reserve VAC clients: those released at age 29 and younger. For the 80% released at age 30 and older, their financial pressures are less likely to be relieved as the IRB considers only the military salary backdated to the time of the injury with no consideration of actual earnings lost.

An evidence-based and equitable imputed income definition for disabled Reserve Veterans would reflect the findings from this article. A possible evidence-based imputed income definition which meets the government's objective for IRB would be: "Imputed income will be the greater of the highest of annual taxable earnings from all sources over the five years before their release, their annualized military salary at release, or the monthly minimum amount." This definition would apply equally to disabled Regular Veterans.

## CONCLUSION

The IRB for Reserve Veterans is not based on VAC's own research. Unlike the assurance Regulars and their families have, it would be coincidental if a Reserve Veteran's financial compensation for a service-related disability or death relieves their family's financial pressures and meets the government's stated objective of the IRB.

Sufficient evidence-based research exists to formulate the IRB for Reserve Veterans. However, care must be taken in future research in reflecting a more realistic grouping of Reserve data and in applying full-time equivalences where appropriate.

Total lost earnings of Reservists and the consequences to their family's standard of living must be considered, especially for those who serve Canada longer, have more days on duty, are more likely to have served in operations, and are more likely to be VAC clients. While Reservists may serve on a part-time basis, the consequences of a service-related disability can be full-time and lifelong.

## Notes

1 Government of Canada, National Defence Act (2019). Note also that the component named "Special Force" is not to be confused with the CAF "Special Operations Force" element or service.

2 Canadian Armed Forces, Queen's Regulations and Orders (QR&O) – Volume I Administration, Chapter 9, retrieved from https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/queens-regulations-orders/vol-1-administration.html (2018).

3 L. Williams and J. Anderson, "The unique financial situation of a Primary Reservist: Satisfaction with compensation and benefits and its impact on retention," in *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health* 5 (Suppl 1) (2020): pp. 101-110.

4 Canadian Armed Forces. My Transition Guide: Transitioning from Military to Civilian Life, retrieved from https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/transition-guide.html (2020).

5 Canadian Armed Forces. Compensation and Benefits Instruction – Chapter 210, retrieved from https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/compensation-benefits-instructions/chapter-210-misc-entitlements-grants.html (2018).

6 SISIP Financial Services, SISIP Financial Policies, retrieved from https://www.sisip.com/en/policies (2019).

7 Government of Canada, Government Employees Compensation Act (2017).

8 Veterans Affairs Canada, Income Replacement Benefit, retrieved from https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-vac/legislation-policies/policies/document/2829 (2019).

9 Government of Canada, Canada Gazette Part II. 152-18

10 Government of Canada, Veterans Well-being Act (2019).

11 Veterans Affairs Canada, Income Replacement Benefit, from https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-vac/legislation-policies/policies/document/2829 (2019).

12 Veterans Affairs Canada, Facts and Figures, retrieved from https://opencanada.blob.core.windows.net/opengovprod/resources/47867e9d-7d16-446f-9230-b8d76b1b7705/ff-dec-2019-ipp-version.pdf?sr=b&sp=r&sig=wIq30U3N01J%2BDJDBw3o9T3E3XSHXIzowuCYcfYg9IAU%3D&sv=2015-07-08&se=2021-06-07T03%3A05%3A30Z (2019).

13 Office of the Veterans Ombudsman, Report on Income Replacement Benefit Calculation for Reserve Force Veterans (2020).

14 Ibid

15 Office of the Veterans Ombudsman, Improving the New Veterans Charter - the Parliamentary Review (2013).

16 The Canada Gazette, https://www.gazette.gc.ca/accueil-home-eng.html, retrieved 02 August 2022.

17 Government of Canada, Part II Canada Gazette, 140-07.

18 Government of Canada, Part II Canada Gazette, 152-18.

19 A. Skomorovsky, C. Wan, and K. Watkins, "Introduction to the financial well-being of Canadian Armed Forces members and families" in *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health* 5 (2020): pp. 1-9.

20 Canadian Armed Forces. My Transition Guide: Transitioning from Military to Civilian Life (2020).

21 M. Tweel, J.M. Thompson, W. Lockhart, A. Ralling, J. Keough, M.B. MacLean, et al., "Annotated Bibliography of Veterans Affairs Canada Research Directorate Publications for 1992-2018: Research Evidence to Support the Well-Being of Veterans and their Families," from https://www.veterans.gc.ca/pdf/about-us/research-directorate/reports/Tweel-M-2019-Research-Directorate-Annotated-Bibliography.pdf (2019).

22 The Annotated Bibliography claims to contain all the research conducted by VAC Research Directorate between 1992 and 2018. This article takes this as given.

23 Veterans Affairs Canada, Research Directorate Reports and Papers, retrieved from https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-vac/research/research-directorate/publications/reports (2021).

24 Veterans Affairs Canada, VAC-CAF Advisory Council's report "The Origins and Evolution of Veterans Benefits in Canada 1914-2004," 2004, retrieved from https://www.veterans.gc.ca/public/pages/forces/nvc/reference.pdf, 10 February 2022.

25 L. Williams and J. Anderson (2020).

26 Office of the Auditor General of Canada, "Spring 2016 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada REPORT 5 Canadian Army Reserve – National Defence," retrieved from https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_201602_05_e_41249.html (2016).

27 V.W. Marshall, R. Matteo, D. Pedlar, "Post-military Experiences of Veterans Affairs Canada Clients: The Need for Military Release Readiness," Veterans Affairs Canada, Research Directorate Technical Report, retrieved from https://www.veterans.gc.ca/pdf/about-us/research-directorate/post-military-experience-vac-clients.pdf (2005).

28 V. W. Marshall, R. Matteo, D. Pedlar, "Work-related Experience and Financial Security of Veterans Affairs Canada Clients: Contrasting Medical and Non-medical Discharge," Veterans Affairs Canada, Research Directorate Technical Report, retrieved https://www.veterans.gc.ca/pdf/about-us/research-directorate/work-related-security-clients.pdf (2005).

29 Veterans Affairs Canada, VAC-CAF Advisory Council's report, 2004.

30 Ibid

31 Government of Canada. Part II Gazette du Canada. Gazette; 140-07.

32 Government of Canada. Part II Gazette du Canada. Gazette; 145-28

33 M. B. MacLean, L. Campbell, L. Van Til, A. Poirier, J. Sweet, K. McKinnon, D. Pedlar, et al., "Pre- and Post-Release Income: Life After Service Studies," Veterans Affairs Canada, Research Directorate Technical Report, retrieved from https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-vac/research/research-directorate/publications/reports/income-service-studies (2014).

34 Veterans Affairs Canada, Facts and Figures (2019).

35 M.B. MacLean, L. Van Til, J. Thompson, D. Pedlar, A. Poirier, J. Adams, et al., "Life after service study: Data collection methodology for the income study and the transition to civilian life survey," Veterans Affairs Canada, Research Directorate Technical Report, retrieved from https://cimvhr.ca/vac-reports/data/reports/MacLean%202010_LASS%20data%20collection%20methodology.pdf (2010).

36 M. B. Maclean, L. Van Til, A. Poirier, K. McKinnon, "Pre- and Post-Release Income of Regular Force Veterans: Life After Service Studies 2016," Veterans Affairs Canada, Research Directorate Technical Report, retrieved from https://cimvhr.ca/vac-reports/data/reports/MacLean-MB-2018-Pre-and-Post-release-Income-LASS-2016.pdf (2018).

37 L. VanTil, M.B. MacLean, A. Poirier, K. McKinnon, J. Keough, D. Pedlar, Veterans of the Reserve Force: Life After Service Studies 2013.

38 L. VanTil, A. Poirier, J. Sweet, K. McKinnon, M.B. MacLean, K. Sudom, Methodology: Life After Service Studies 2013

39 Ranks of Private (Recruit), Officer Cadet, Second Lieutenant, and Navy equivalents

40 S. Tucker, A. Keefe, "2019 Report on work fatality and injury rates in Canada," retrieved from https://www.uregina.ca/business/faculty-staff/faculty/file_download/2019-Report-on-Workplace-Fatalities-and-Injuries.pdf (2019).

41 Office of the Auditor General of Canada (2016).

42 L. VanTil, M.B. MacLean, A. Poirier, K. McKinnon, J. Keough, D. Pedlar, Veterans of the Reserve Force: Life After Service Studies 2013.

43 Office of the Auditor General of Canada (2016).

44 M. B. MacLean, L. Campbell, L. Van Til, A. Poirier, J. Sweet, K. McKinnon, D. Pedlar, et al., "Pre- and Post-Release Income Life After Service Studies," Figure 26 (2014).

45 Used senior Major, junior Captain, senior Warrant Officer, and senior Corporal

46 Canadian Armed Forces. Pay rates for non-commissioned members, retrieved from https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/pay-pension-benefits/pay/non-commissioned.html (2019).

47 Government of Canada. Part II Gazette du Canada. Gazette; 149-07.

48 Office of the Veterans Ombudsman, "Improving the New Veterans Charter the Parliamentary Review," retrieved from https://ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca/en/publications/reports-reviews/improving-new-veterans-charter (2013).

49 House of Commons Canada, Report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, "The New Veterans Charter: Moving Forward," June 2014

50 J. M. Thompson, W. Lockhart, M. B. Roach, H. Atuel, S. Bélanger, T. Black, et al., "Veterans' Identities and Well-being in Transition to Civilian Life - a Resource for Policy Analysts, Program Designers, Service Providers and Researchers," Veterans Affairs Canada, Research Directorate Technical Report, retrieved from https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-vac/research/research-directorate/publications/reports/identities-transition-civil-life (2017).

51 L. Williams and J. Anderson (2020)


Chief Petty Officer Second (CPO2) Class speaks with a member of the Republic of Korea Navy during the Multinational Mine Warfare Exercise 22 (MNMIWEX 22) in the vicinity of Pohang, Republic of Korea on October 9, 2022.

Photo: Master Corporal Matthieu Racette, Canadian Forces Combat Camera

# The Roles, Duties, and Recollections of Chief Petty Officers in the Royal Canadian Navy

**BY SAMANTHA OLSON**

*Samantha Olson is a first-year graduate student at Georgetown University pursuing an MA in Security Studies with a concentration in terrorism and substate violence. In 2023, she graduated with an Honours BA in History from the University of Victoria. Her research interests include United States Department of Defense directives, civil-military relations, anti-government terrorism, and radicalization/deradicalization.*

*The author would like to express her gratitude to Sylvain Jaquemot, Arnold Yates, and Mitch Wierenga for their indispensable contributions to this project and their willingness to share their experiences. She is also grateful for the support and guidance of Dr. David Zimmerman at the University of Victoria.*

**Much has been written about senior officers in the history of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN). Flag officers and captains have been the subjects of biographies and case studies, even receiving specific treatment in general histories of the RCN.[1] However, as any sailor will tell you, the smooth functioning of day-to-day naval operations depends on the leadership of petty officers. Despite their crucial role, Chief Petty Officers (CPOs), the highest non-commissioned rank in the RCN, have been mostly ignored in studies of the RCN and Canadian naval operations. The literature that focuses exclusively on CPOs is written for the internal use of the RCN; it emphasizes leadership efficacy and training protocols with the intention of future organizational improvement. While helpful in providing a general picture of the role and duties of CPOs, these sources do little to inform those not already familiar with naval operations and the chain of command. Furthermore, CPOs are evaluated only within the context of organizational hierarchy; their individual experience and expertise are lost in these narratives.**

Based largely on the oral histories of three Chief Petty Officers (narrators), this article aims to expand the understanding of the role of CPOs by highlighting the lived experiences narrated by the CPOs themselves. Indeed, as these interviews suggest, the roles and responsibilities set out on paper do not always correspond to the reality of the rank. Thus, this article is by no means a refutation of the existing literature's definition of the role of CPOs. Instead, this article is intended to supplement the existing literature, drawing attention to where the oral histories of this project's narrators confirm, contradict, and contribute to the generally accepted understanding of the role of CPOs in the organizational hierarchy of the RCN. Whereas the existing literature takes an organization-level approach to understanding the function of CPOs, this article emphasizes the individual. By allowing the insights revealed by the oral histories of these CPOs to delineate the definitional boundaries of the role of CPOs in the RCN, a more complete picture of the rank begins to emerge.

> "Indeed, as these interviews suggest, the roles and responsibilities set out on paper do not always correspond to the reality of the rank."

The available literature establishes a foundational definition of "CPO," highlighting their general responsibilities. In their article dedicated to exploring the role of CPOs, CWO Sherman Neil and CWO Richard Gillis provide a cogent summary of the role: CPOs are trusted advisors within leadership teams, co-stewards of the Profession of Arms (POA), and custodians of the Non-Commissioned Member (NCM) Corps.[2] CPOs, specifically Chief Petty Officers First Class (CPO1), are the highest-ranking NCMs in the RCN, having been promoted through the ranks based on their merit, technical skills, and leadership capabilities.[3] Due to their unique position and the breadth of their careers, CPOs can provide expert input to their superiors supported by decades of practical experience.[4] As such, they often develop unique advisory relationships with their commanding officers; they bridge the gap between senior officers and the NCM Corps.[5]

In recent years, the role of CPO has expanded to meet new security challenges, which is the focus of the most recent available literature. Understandably, much of this work emphasizes how the role of CPO has evolved at the organizational level. In addition to their tripartite definition of CPO, Neil and Gillis emphasize the need for CPOs to transform and adjust to operational complexity, balance institutional imperatives, foster organizational efficiency, and adapt to new security challenges.[6] CWO Necole Belanger examines the need for updated senior NCM training in her article, "The Accidental Strategic Chief Petty Officer/Chief Warrant Officer." She asserts that strategic CPOs, who operate beyond the tactical level and can adapt to meet future security challenges, are produced by accident rather than design.[7] Thus, Belanger's research focuses on examining leadership models that might produce CPOs who are prepared to engage in some of the strategizing previously reserved for officers. Belanger's approach requires an organization-level framework within which to situate existing and future CPO responsibilities as they pertain to the entire CAF. Again, in her 2021 article, "Deciphering the Roles of Chief Petty Officers/Chief Warrant Officers within Command Teams," Belanger suggests that further personal and professional development of CPOs through new career programs will help them play a more prominent role in advising their commanding officers on strategic and operational matters.[8] Similarly, CPO1 Alena Mondelli writes that the days of senior NCMs operating in "a predominantly technical role" are over.[9] Non-traditional warfare involving asymmetric operations has put senior NCMs in a position where they must be prepared to act autonomously as leaders.[10] Thus, the existing literature aims to flesh out the understanding of the CPO's role—and the boundaries of that role—of CPOs as it pertains to the overarching organization of the CAF. As such, this approach does not tend to evaluate CPOs in their own right. Given the transformation of the

> “ The author conducted interviews with three retired CPOs as a means of augmenting the aforementioned organization-level approach with individual recollections.”

CPO’s role in recent years from a largely tactical-operational role toward a strategic one, investigating how strategic CPOs ought to fit within the RCN’s organizational hierarchy is warranted. However, this research is incomplete without the experiences of individual CPOs.

The author conducted interviews with three retired CPOs as a means of augmenting the aforementioned organization-level approach with individual recollections. Spanning from 1962 to 2021, the collective service dates of raise some initial questions about the applicability of these interviews to current discussions of the transformation of the role of CPOs in the RCN. This article does not assert that the definition elaborated by the CPOs interviewed is entirely applicable to the present context. Rather, this article suggests that by engaging with individual CPOs, the definition of the role can be honed to reflect what is actually occurring on the ground with a greater degree of certainty. Thus, the purpose of these conversations was to elicit specific details on how the narrators remembered their careers in the RCN and then use these details to negotiate the lived experiences of CPOs with the expectations of the CPO’s role. As each narrator had a vastly different career path and operational specialty, the focus of these interviews was the responsibilities associated with the rank of CPO.

Chief Petty Officer First Class (CPO1) Ret’d Sylvain Jaquemot enlisted as a Naval Electronic Sensor Operator (NESOP) and served from 1987 to 2021. Jaquemot was appointed as Coxswain of HMCS Winnipeg and, as the senior-ranking Non-Commissioned Member, was part of its Command Team. In 2018, Jaquemot was appointed as Fleet Chief for the Pacific Fleet, serving as an advisor to Commander MARPAC. Chief Petty Officer Second Class (CPO2) Ret’d Arnold Yates joined the Sea Cadets at 12, the Naval Reserve at 16, and finally the RCN at 17, enlisting in the boatswain trade and serving from 1962 to 1989. Yates was posted to Royal Roads Military College as a drill instructor and was later posted to the Naden Fleet School to teach sailing. Retiring from the CAF in 1989, Yates then went on to work for Victoria Harbour Ferries for twenty-three years. CPO2 Ret’d Mitch Wierenga enlisted as a Radar Plotter and served from 1964 to 1997. As a Petty Officer First Class (PO1), Wierenga spent three years at the Canadian Forces Recruiting Centre in Calgary, Alberta, as a Military Career Counsellor. As a CPO2 at sea, Wierenga was a Combat Department and Training Chief; on shore duty, he was the Base Financial Counsellor at CFB Esquimalt. Wierenga retired in 1997 and currently resides in Victoria, BC.

At this juncture, it is worth elaborating on the distinction between CPO1 and CPO2 and its implications for defining the role of CPO. As outlined by DAOD 5031-8, the main difference between CPO1s and CPO2s is that CPO1s can operate at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels, while CPO2s operate mainly at the operational and tactical levels.[11] For example, CPO1s can be integrated into the Command Team Triad, composed of the Commander, Executive Officer, and Coxswain, to serve in a more strategic role. As the only CPO1 interviewed, Jaquemot was the only narrator able to provide insights on his formal role in the Command Team Triad. By contrast, CPO2s are specifically tasked with “unit and sub-unit level missions and activities” rather than serving as “organizational leaders.”[12] The existing literature tends to emphasize CPO1s as the default unit of analysis for examining the role of CPOs in the RCN more generally. However, as will be discussed later in this article, these roles are not always so clear-cut. CPO1s maintain their role as mentors to junior non-commissioned personnel when they are integrated into the Command Team Triad, just as CPO2s often take on some of the advisory responsibilities of CPO1s. Each narrator was asked the same series of questions about the role of CPOs without reference to their rank as either CPO1 or CPO2 (see Appendix A).

When comparing the existing literature with the oral histories of this project’s narrators, three main trends emerge:

1. The organization-level definition of CPO is sometimes confirmed by the narrators. The significance of promotion, the advisory role of CPOs for their commanding officers, and the importance of the CPO as a bridge between the NCM and officers are all reaffirmed by their experiences.
2. The oral histories sometimes contradict the available literature. Notably, they all define the role of CPO by emphasizing its managerial responsibilities, whereas the existing literature normally defines it largely by its advisory function. The training of new sailors and the role of the CPO in passing along naval customs and traditions are viewed quite differently by each; the existing literature portrays these functions as being innate.
3. The narratives contribute new information to the existing literature. The fine details of the day-to-day responsibilities of CPOs, the vast differences between sea and shore duty, the unique position of CPOs as an intermediary between civilians and military personnel, and their personal recollections deeply enrich the literature about CPOs.

## Confirmations of the Existing Literature on CPOs

A fundamental aspect of the attainment of the rank of CPO is that it is achieved exclusively through meritorious promotion. As Belanger notes, meritorious promotion guarantees a wealth of expertise and leadership skills.[13] Neil and Gillis remark that CPOs are developed over the course of their careers.[14] The CPOs have spent decades and occupied many positions, and all three are proud of having had a career in the navy. Yates addressed this point specifically, noting that he was proud to have done well and to have advanced fairly quickly through the ranks.[15] When asked about pivotal moments in his career, Jaquemot highlighted his advancement from Petty Officer Second Class (PO2) to Petty Officer First Class (PO1) as a moment that stood out. In his case, the advancement meant going from an Electronic Warfare Supervisor to the Section Head in charge of all above-water warfare devices. "I remember not being successful on my course at that point at the tactics phase," he said, "basically, I failed."[16] Armed with feedback, Jaquemot honed his skills as a PO1 and went on to become a CPO1. When describing his path from Ordinary Seaman to CPO2, Wierenga drew particular attention to the courses taken and requirements met before each rank advancement, giving a sense of how long the cultivation of a CPO takes.[17] In this narrative, it becomes clear that a CPO is characterized not only by the responsibilities and skills of their present rank but by the mastery of all preceding ranks as well. This wealth of experience makes CPOs indispensable to their commanding officers.

The breadth of organizational knowledge of CPOs situates them well to train junior officers and advise their commanding officers. Indeed, the existing literature pays overwhelming attention to the latter role. For Neil and Gillis, the primary responsibility of a CPO is to be a trusted member of the leadership team.[18] Belanger's call to update training is justified by how

**HMCS MONTREAL, its embarked CH-148 Cyclone helicopter, call sign Strider, and a CP-140 Aurora aircraft, call sign Demon 02, patrol the Mediterranean Sea to help build maritime situational awareness in associated support of NATO's Operation SEA GUARDIAN on April 11, 2022.**

Photo: Corporal Braden Trudeau, Canadian Armed Forces photo

> "The close relationship of CPOs to their commanding officers is indicative of a broader function of their role. CPOs often serve as the bridge between the NCM personnel and the officers, keeping both groups in touch with each other."

that would better equip CPOs to advise their superiors at the strategic and not just the tactical levels.[19] Jaquemot described the advisory role of the CPO as a sort of "sanity check" for those commanding officers who were directly involved with strategic planning but perhaps distant from the realities of sailors.[20] Feedback and dialogue about morale are crucial. However, Jaquemot also highlighted an element of the CPO/CO relationship that is neglected in the literature. As the senior-ranking NCM, a CPO1 might likewise seek out the advice of their CO, to whom they could more closely relate than lower-ranking NCMs. As the Chief Boatswain, Yates often assumed an advisory relationship with the Executive Officer (XO), who was sometimes a qualified junior officer with little work experience.[21] Yates offered practical leadership advice and helped acclimate the junior officers to their position. Likewise, Wierenga trained junior officers at sea as part of the Officer Candidate Training Plan. Here, junior commissioned officers were rotated throughout the ship to gain familiarity with various occupations. This training, headed by CPOs like Wierenga, gave officers practical work experience that informed their future leadership. Wierenga wryly noted that it was wise to be polite to these junior officers. Twenty years after their first encounter, Wierenga found that a junior officer he had "given the boot" was his new Captain.[22]

The close relationship of CPOs to their commanding officers is indicative of a broader function of their role. CPOs often serve as the bridge between the NCM personnel and the officers, keeping both groups in touch with each other. Jaquemot framed the fleet commander's attention as being focused on managing the fleet and the tempo of operations and training rather than "engaging with the center," the sailors themselves, like a CPO might.[23] In his role as CPO1, Jaquemot rectified communication breakdowns between the CO and the crew, ensuring the passage of reliable information on the status of operations in different sections on the ship to the CO, while also passing on the needs of the crew up the chain of command. Similarly, requests for compassionate

leave always went through CPO2 Wierenga; they were never made directly to divisional officers.[24] Wierenga also noted that CPOs were also crucial for gauging morale and passing that information on to the upper deck: "All the Chiefs would get together and discuss the mood of the ship … if you were out at sea and things weren't going right, or you'd been at sea for weeks and weeks, we'd go talk to him [the Captain] and say, 'The troops aren't happy.'"[25] In order to plan and make decisions for the organization, commanding officers also need reliable information about its internal condition; CPOs are the crucial line of communication that keeps operations running smoothly at sea through their ability to communicate up and down the chain of command.

## Contradictions

While the definition of "Chief Petty Officer" offered by each individual was slightly different, they all focused on the vast managerial responsibilities of the rank, an aspect deemphasized in the existing literature, which focuses on the advisory capacity of CPOs and their relationships with commissioned officers. Furthermore, the literature describes CPOs as leaders rather than managers when, in reality, they can be both simultaneously.

> "Furthermore, the literature describes CPOs as leaders rather than managers when, in reality, they can be both simultaneously."

Jaquemot noted that while PO1s have achieved the pinnacle of their training in a particular occupation, promotion to CPO2 and CPO1 brings them into the realm of management. He also noted, as Belanger and Mondelli suggest, that this rank signified a shift from purely tactical thought to the strategic level that is still characterized by managerial responsibilities.[26] Yates also drew attention to the expansive management duties of CPOs. When at sea as a CPO2, Yates was responsible for "virtually everything that was above the waterline," including cleanliness of the ship, demolitions, small arms security, life-saving gear, coordination of training exercises and fuelling, and general safety.[27] Promoted to CPO2 while on HMCS Kootenay, Wierenga was in charge of five different sections, each headed by the PO: Radar, Visual Communications, Radio Communications, Acoustics, and Naval Electronic Sensor (NESOP). None of the narrators defined the role of CPO as primarily an advisory position. One could conclude that it is the management capabilities of CPOs that make them such valued advisors to commissioned officers. Still, the literature largely bases the importance of CPOs on their usefulness to commissioned ranks. Indeed, the only references to the relationship between CPOs and the NCMs are in the context of CPOs providing a measure of organizational stability by socializing new non-commissioned sailors.[28]

To this end, none of the narrators independently mentioned their direct role in promoting military customs and traditions to NCMs, which is a key contrast to how Neil and Gillis define the CPO as a "custodian of the NCM corps."[29] While the socialization of new sailors might still be an essential function of CPOs, it did not seem to be a conscious one. When asked about mentorship, Jaquemot noted that while he was never part of a training establishment, he engaged in informal training, offering sailors tricks for moving around the ship and helping young sailors become more confident speaking with their superiors.[30] Wierenga suggested that the formal teaching of NCMs occurred at a level below CPO. "As a Chief, I would not have been a teacher; I would oversee the teachers," Wierenga said.[31] Wierenga also believed that most of the socialization of new sailors occurred prior to their interactions with him when he was a CPO2.[32] Yates, a former drill instructor, did not find that he played a large role in socializing new sailors to the culture and customs of the navy, largely because the cadets he trained at Royal Roads were not exclusively naval cadets.[33] It is also worth noting that Yates felt that his teaching role fell to junior commissioned officers and not other NCMs. All three confirmed that teaching was a large part of a CPO's job but contradicted what the literature claimed as a sort of standardized socialization of new sailors.

## Contributions

An accessible understanding of the roles and functions of CPOs is best cultivated by a comprehensive knowledge of their day-to-day responsibilities. While advising commissioned officers, sharing information up and down the chain of command, and training sailors—albeit in different capacities—are all fundamental duties of a CPO, this list does not reveal much about everyday responsibilities. Nor does the literature offer insights into what a CPO does on any given day. As a Fleet Chief, Jaquemot noted that on a typical day, he "had to be ready for the unknown."[34] Discipline, morale and welfare, equipment, clothing, new policies, and engagement with outside organizations all fell under his jurisdiction on an average day.[35] For CPO2 Yates, the first hour of every day at sea was dedicated to ensuring the cleanliness of the ship, a task that was supervised by the PO1s.[36] Overseeing thirty sailors who ranged from Ordinary Seamen to Petty Officers, Yates ensured that the daily operations of the ship were carried out smoothly. "The cleanliness, anything that had to happen, the exercises—if we happened to be involved working with other ships—towing exercises, I was responsible," he said. Wierenga oversaw five sections, each with twenty sailors. He ensured that

training was being carried out properly, assessed instructors, invigilated and graded exams, and established performance objectives.[37] Furthermore, the daily responsibilities of a CPO vary drastically depending on whether they are at sea or on shore duty. Indeed, when I first asked what a typical day might look like for a CPO, Yates responded, laughing: "Well, that depends. Are we at sea or on land?"[38]

The scope and aims of the available literature mean that it does not spend much time exploring the differences between sea duty and shore duty for CPOs, along with the corresponding implications. As Yates suggests, sea and shore duty are often vastly different. While sea duty has a varying schedule, shore duty is similar to going to a "nine-to-five" job.[39] While on shore duty, Wierenga, for example, served as the base financial counsellor but also served as the Combat Department and Training Chief while at sea. Few positions exist both at sea and on land, making this level of incongruence common.[40] Responsibilities for morale and welfare maintenance become even more critical at sea. "In order to have things work well in the ship, morale is very important. As a CPO, along with the senior officers, you would certainly be responsible for the morale of the ship's company," Yates said.[41] The unique challenges of sea duty can dramatically impact morale. Feelings of isolation when away from one's family and the stress of being at sea can quickly cause morale to plummet. Being able to monitor morale and strive to improve it is a critical part of the CPO's job. Jaquemot recalled one sailor who would always stop by to greet him in his office when he was Coxswain. When this particular sailor's mood changed during the beginning of their deployment, Jaquemot was able to hear the challenges he was having being away from his friends and family.[42] Jaquemot also planned events designed to boost morale, hosting videogame nights and card tournaments for the crew.[43] Similarly, Yates quipped that to boost morale, one just needed to give the men more beer.[44] He added that granting shore leave was also popular among the crew.[45] The duties and responsibilities of CPOs expand and, in some ways, become even more essential at sea.

While less trying than sea duty, all three individuals present shore duty as creating unique opportunities. One of the most surprising revelations from their narratives was the concept of the CPO—and in some cases the PO1—as an intermediary not only between the NCM Corps and officers but between the military personnel and civilians. While serving as a drill instructor at Royal Roads, PO1 Yates found himself acting as the liaison between the officer cadets and the civilian laundry service to ensure that uniforms were laundered according to military standards.[46] As base financial counsellor, Wierenga often assisted military spouses struggling with financial issues or unsympathetic landlords while their spouses were at sea.[47] Wierenga also had to intervene if sailors neglected to make pay assignments to their spouses. In this case, the paycheque would be delivered to the deployed sailor, leaving the spouse without money. Wierenga could authorize

**Chief Petty Officer 1st Class (CPO1), also Coxswain (Cox'n) of Motor Vessel (MV) Asterix, watches a Replenishment at Sea (RAS) in the East China Sea on November 5, 2023.**

Photo: Master Sailor (MS) Marilou Villeneuve-Last

short-term assistance for the spouse until the sailor made alternate arrangements.[48] Jaquemot explained how in his role as the Fleet Chief, his involvement with outside organizations included the Military Family Resource Centre, helping to extend support to military spouses and their children. Each of these instances reveals a fascinating aspect of CPO duties that has so far been neglected in the literature. Incorporating the CPO's involvement with civilians and civilian organizations into the available literature significantly expands the breadth of CPO responsibilities and roles. CPOs as intermediaries both within and outside of the military realm is an area worthy of further study.

The richness of these narratives is especially apparent in the recollections of their careers. While the literature does not consider the CPO as an individual, personal narratives offer a glimpse at how CPOs view themselves and their expansive careers. When asked if there was a story from their careers that they particularly enjoyed telling, all three narrators shared stories from long before they became CPOs. Without implicating anyone, Wierenga spoke to the pranks and playfulness of sailors; a sign "for sale" was painted on the hull of another crew's ship on more than one occasion, and in another case, the helm of a sea-ready ship was temporarily stolen.[49] Yates recounted his epic tot time dive (the Maritime Command was still issuing the two and a half ounces of rum known as "the tot") from HMCS Oriole to catch a humongous glass fishing float, which, unfortunately, the Captain kept for himself.[50] Jaquemot was especially proud of being selected to be part of the flag party during the fiftieth anniversary of the Second World War Commemorations in the Netherlands and Russia.[51] Each of these stories helps to supplement the literature on CPOs within the organizational hierarchy of the RCN by emphasizing the unique individual experiences of particular servicemembers.

## Conclusion

Oral history offers a wealth of possibilities for understanding the roles and responsibilities of Chief Petty Officers in the RCN. Previous organization-level approaches to understanding the role of CPOs have aimed to highlight the need for additional CPO leadership models, elucidate the relationship of CPOs to commissioned officers, and emphasize the increasing strategic responsibilities of CPOs. As such, this literature is well suited for the internal use of the RCN and for placing the CPO within an organizational hierarchy. However, it is incomplete without the recollections of individual CPOs to add colour, context, and important background to the position. By drawing attention to where the oral histories of three CPOs confirm, contradict, and expand on the existing literature, a fuller picture begins to emerge.

**A Chief Petty Officer 2nd Class (CPO2) completes his first CABA (Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus) Lite dive during a Naval Reserve National Dive Exercise at the Royal Canadian Navy's Cadet Training Center in Comox, British Columbia, January 27, 2022.**

Photo: Sailor 1st Class Valerie LeClair

Furthermore, the reality of CPOs often differs from how they are portrayed on paper. For example, all three CPOs emphasized managerial responsibilities over the socialization of junior sailors. Further, each had acted as an intermediary between military personnel and civilians at one time or another. Both of these instances seem to indicate that published studies must expand their understanding of how CPOs actually function within the RCN. Rooting an evaluation of the CPO's role in the specifics of the job rather than its location within the RCN's organizational hierarchy creates a better understanding of the role of CPOs, which can also be appreciated by civilians without organizational knowledge of the RCN. Fostering a broader understanding of the role of CPOs may also help encourage further literature on Petty Officers, a vastly understudied group.

Finally, this approach is also valuable for enhancing the organization-level literature. An individually oriented approach to understanding the responsibilities of CPOs—whether by conducting interviews, developing surveys, or finding other means for individual engagement—illuminates precisely how the experiences of CPOs are in accordance with or differ from expectations outlined by official orders and directives. Uncovering these confirmations and contradictions is crucial for developing effective leadership training programs that prepare NCMs to meet challenges in a rapidly evolving security environment. One especially noteworthy contribution to the organization-level literature is that each narrator referenced the PO1 rank as a pivotal moment in their development as a senior NCM prior to promotion into the chief spectrum. By identifying PO1 as a formative rank in the cultivation of both CPO2s and CPO1s, it is worth considering whether the development of strategic CPO1s might actually begin at the PO1 level rather than exclusively as a CPO2. Lastly, by supplementing the organization-level approach with the perspectives of individual CPOs, it is possible to define the boundaries of the role of CPOs in the RCN while also appreciating the rank as the final milestone in an illustrious naval career.

## Appendix A

### *Interview Questions*

**Background Questions:**

- Can you tell me about your childhood and where you grew up?
- Where did you go to school?
- What led you to consider a career in the navy?
- What was your final rank?
- Could you talk a little bit about your career path in the navy?
- What is a Chief Petty Officer?

**CPO Basics:**

- What were your duties or responsibilities as a CPO?
- How different are the duties of a Chief Petty Officer Second Class versus a Chief Petty Officer First Class?
- What would a typical day look like for you as a Chief Petty Officer?
- Did your duties as a CPO vary significantly depending on whether you were on sea duty or shore duty?

**CPO Specifics:**

- Some articles highlight the role of the CPO as a mentor. Did you often take on a mentorship role?
- How were you involved with the education or training of junior sailors?
- How were you involved with the education or training of recently commissioned officers?
- Describe your relationship with commissioned officers.
- One article from the *Canadian Military Journal* suggests that CPOs play a large part in socializing new sailors to navy culture. Do you find this to be the case?
- How are new sailors socialized?

**Recollections:**

- Is there a story from your naval career that you particularly enjoy telling?
- Is there anything about your time as a CPO you want to highlight? Notable events?
- What are some of your most memorable appointments or positions in the RCN?
- Is there anything else you would like to discuss?

---

**Notes**

1 See Michael Whitby, Richard Gimblett, and Peter Haydon, *The Admirals: Canada's Senior Naval Leadership in the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2006); Marc Milner, Canada's Navy: The First Century (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

2 Sherman Neil and Richard Gillis, "Expanding Horizons, Leading the Future: The Role of the Chief Petty Officer 1st Class (CPO1)/Chief Warrant Officer (CWO)," *Canadian Military Journal* 17, no. 4 (Fall 2017): 73, http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/Vol17/no4/PDF/CMJ174E.pdf.

3 *Ibid*.

4 Necole E. Belanger, "Deciphering the Roles of Chief Petty Officers/Chief Warrant Officers within Command Teams," *Canadian Military Journal* 21, no. 4 (Fall 2021): 44, http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/PDFs/CMJ214Ep41.pdf.

5 Neil and Gillis, "Expanding Horizons," 73.

6 *Ibid*., 72.

7 Necole E. Belanger, "The Accidental Strategic Chief Petty Officer/Chief Warrant Officer," *Canadian Military Journal* 16, no. 3 (Summer 2016): 66, http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vol16/no3/PDF/CMJ163E.pdf.

8 Belanger, "Deciphering the Roles," 47.

9 Alena Mondelli, "Non-Commissioned Members as Transformational Leaders: Socialization of a Corps," *Canadian Military Journal* 18, no. 4 (Fall 2018): 31, http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vol18/no4/page26-eng.asp.

10 *Ibid*., 27.

11 "DAOD 5031-8, Canadian Forces Professional Development," Government of Canada, last modified June 14, 2012, accessed December 20, 2023, https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/defence-administrative-orders-directives/5000-series/5031/5031-8-canadian-forces-professional-development.html#ncmpd.

12 *Ibid*.

13 Belanger, "Deciphering the Roles," 44.

14 Neil and Gillis, "Expanding Horizons," 73.

15 Arnold Yates, Zoom interview by Samantha Olson, Victoria, BC, February 24, 2022, 39:00.

16 Sylvain Jaquemot, Zoom interview by Samantha Olson, Victoria, BC, February 23, 2022, 49:45.

17 Mitch Wierenga, Zoom interview by Samantha Olson, Victoria, BC, March 2, 2022, 7:16.

18 Neil and Gillis, "Expanding Horizons," 73.

19 Belanger, "Deciphering the Roles," 47.

20 Sylvain Jaquemot, Zoom interview, 28:20.

21 Arnold Yates, Zoom interview, 21:40.

22 Mitch Wierenga, Zoom interview, 33:43.

23 Sylvain Jaquemot, Zoom interview, 25:50.

24 Mitch Wierenga, Zoom interview, 38:14.

25 Mitch Wierenga, Zoom interview, 38:40.

26 Sylvain Jaquemot, Zoom interview, 18:00.

27 Arnold Yates, Zoom interview, 9:30.

28 Neil and Gillis, "Expanding Horizons," 73.

29 *Ibid*.

30 Sylvain Jaquemot, Zoom interview, 34:25.

31 Mitch Wierenga, Zoom interview, 32:30.

32 *Ibid*., 42:20.

33 Arnold Yates, Zoom interview, 15:20.

34 Sylvain Jaquemot, Zoom interview, 21:20.

35 *Ibid*., 22:00.

36 Arnold Yates, Zoom interview, 10:25.

37 Mitch Wierenga, Zoom interview, 33:00.

38 Arnold Yates, Zoom interview, 10:00.

39 *Ibid*., 30:00.

40 Mitch Wierenga, Zoom interview, 30:40.

41 Arnold Yates, Zoom interview, 27:00.

42 Sylvain Jaquemot, Zoom interview, 57:11.

43 *Ibid*., 54:57.

44 Arnold Yates, Zoom interview, 27:38.

45 Arnold Yates, Zoom interview, 28:20.

46 Arnold Yates, Zoom interview, 24:40.

47 Mitch Wierenga, Zoom interview, 48:40

48 Mitch Wierenga, Zoom interview, 50:00.

49 Mitch Wierenga, Zoom interview, 46:08.

50 Arnold Yates, Zoom interview, 34:50.

51 Sylvain Jaquemot, Zoom interview, 41:36.

WWI – Trench warfare – Canadian troops stand ready to repel a German attack. One is using a periscope to safely see over the trench top.

Photo: Colin Waters / Alamy stock Photo

# Trench Raids and Patrols for Gathering Intelligence

## The 2nd Canadian Infantry Division in the Summer of 1916


**CAPT NICOLAS PROVENCHER, M. A.**

*Nicolas Provencher is a former infantryman in the Army Reserve. During his 6 years with the Voltigeurs de Québec, he completed a bachelor's degree in History and a Diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées en enseignement collégial (Diploma of specialized graduate studies in college teaching) from Université Laval. In 2016, he switched to the regular force as a Training Development Officer (TDO). He was transferred to 2 Wing Bagotville in 2017 and, in 2019, took up a TDO position with CANSOFCOM. In 2020, he completed a master's degree in War Studies at the Royal Military College in Kingston. He is currently posted at the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn, Estonia, as TDO and Canadian representative.*

**On the night of November 16-17, 1915, at the Petite Douve near Saint-Éloi in France, a group of soldiers from the 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade were preparing to carry out the very first Canadian raid.[1]**

At 2 a.m. on November 17, the attack was launched. Three teams of grenadiers took over the trenches, while a team of signallers took charge of the prisoners and established communications with headquarters. Meanwhile, another team set up a fire base to cover the attackers' retreat. The attack was a success. The Canadians withdrew and the prisoners were brought behind the lines without too much trouble. Such operations, which were in fact brief incursions into enemy trenches, were part of the everyday life of the men in the trenches.[2] Patrols were much more frequent and smaller scale than trench raids. They were usually led by small groups of scouts. Unlike raids, which focused on enemy trenches, patrols had "No Man's Land" as their playground. The primary aim was to gather information about the enemy and the terrain.

This study assesses the influence of trench raids and patrols on the conduct of war. We therefore seek to measure the importance of raids and patrols in the overall gathering of military intelligence. So why send out a patrol or order the men leading a raid to gather information when commanders had other options, such as aerial reconnaissance?

We will use the example of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division in the Ypres sector in the summer of 1916 to demonstrate that trench raids and patrols were essential for gathering intelligence and thus building and maintaining situational awareness. In a military context, good situational awareness is characterized by a precise and accurate perception of one's environment and of the elements key to the success of a mission, with the ability to quickly analyze them and then attempt to establish projections of the enemy's intentions. Level 1 is the gathering of local information. Key elements include the location of enemy (and friendly) troops, their strength, armament, and morale, as well as terrain characteristics. Level 2 involves both combining this information and interpreting it to understand the consequences of the enemy's actions. In short, all level 1 information is assembled like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle to form an overall picture of the environment. Following systematic analysis (level 2), this information becomes useful intelligence in the decision-making process. Level 3 involves using this intelligence to anticipate enemy action and make informed decisions about our own actions. Completion of level 3 represents the final stage in the process of acquiring situational awareness.

## THE ORIGIN OF TRENCH RAIDS

An examination of the war diaries of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division reveals the importance of trench raids and patrols in the soldiers' daily lives, with the terms *enterprises, minor operations, patrols* or *raids* recurring daily[3]. By their very nature, raids and patrols required the best soldiers, those with specific qualities such as courage and aggressiveness. But these operations were potentially very costly in terms of men and equipment. So why did they seem to be used so regularly? Two key concepts will help explain this: the "cult of the offensive" and the "live and let live system."

### *The Cult of the Offensive and the Live and Let Live System*

The cult of the offensive dominated Western military and strategic thinking in the 19th and 20th centuries.[4] In Germany, military theorists such as Alfred von Schlieffen, Helmuth Karl Bernhard von Molkte, and Friedrich von Bernhardi argued that offensive action was far more effective than defensive action.[5] French doctrine, based on the "offensive à outrance" approach, was along the same lines.[6] General Joseph Joffre insisted that no law other than that of the offensive should be tolerated. This perspective was in fact the result of a combination of three factors: concern about increasing firepower, distrust of working-class recruits, and faith in a structured, orderly, and above all decisive battlefield.[7] Logically, in a war between two European armies, victory would go to the first to attack.

During World War I, keeping troops on the alert between major offensives was a constant concern for staffs on both sides. When the Western front was at a standstill, a certain inertia set in, what Tony Ashworth calls "the live-and-let-live system."[8] It was in fact an unofficial and illicit truce in which both sides ceased fighting by mutual agreement. The aim was to reduce the risk of death and injury, and thus improve the relative comfort of the men living in the trenches. These truces may have lasted a few minutes, just long enough for lunch. The most common example is the unofficial truce of Christmas 1914, when opposing camps in various sectors gathered in "No Man's Land" to discuss and "celebrate."[9]

However, "live and let live" was a far more complex system than one might expect. According to Ashworth, it could manifest itself in three different ways: fraternization, inertia, and ritualization. The Christmas truce of 1914 is a good example of fraternization. This type of truce lasted from a few minutes to several months, depending on the sector. Inertia set in when both parties communicated indirectly with each other to avoid provocation or other aggressive action.[10] Ritualization was sometimes in the form of a pseudo-operation, as in the case of soft raids; instead of patrolling No Man's Land, some men would take refuge in a crater, only to return a few hours later.[11]

To curb this live-and-let-live phenomenon, the obligation to conduct trench raids was ordered in February 1915 by Field Marshal Sir John French, commander of the British Expeditionary Force.[12] His successor, General Sir Douglas Haig, who had also become aware of the inertia at the front, continued this policy,

but on a larger scale. By 1916, the hope of a decisive battle had been dashed, and the war of attrition began. Trench raids were part of this new overall strategy. Many, including Haig, were convinced that the war would be won by maintaining continuous pressure on the enemy. But to achieve this, it was essential to put an end to the major strategic problem of "live and let live" by implementing a policy of systematic raids.[13] Orders were issued, and pressure increased right down the chain of command. Depending on the sector, men from every Canadian battalion patrolled No Man's Land virtually every night.[14]

Tactically, patrolling No Man's Land offered several advantages. It is essential to understand that trench raids were part of an overall evolution in warfare, beginning with the application of British doctrine to which the Canadian Expeditionary Force was subject as part of an imperial force. This doctrine, which was ill-suited to the conflicts of the 20th century, was hardly ever called into question, but everything changed after the Battle of the Somme in 1916. After German machine guns and artillery had decimated whole waves of men, British military leaders were forced to admit that doctrinal changes were needed. Learning from the French and even the Germans, the use of supporting weapons and offensive tactics changed considerably, putting the emphasis on firing and movement. In anticipation of major offensives, men needed to familiarize themselves with these innovations to develop sufficient confidence in themselves and their equipment.[15] In the meantime, raids were able to fulfill this role, allowing them to test new weapons and tactics on a smaller scale.[16] As Tim Cook points out: "By raiding and patrolling, the Canadian experimented with new battle theories and tactics, while gaining experience in the planning and carrying out of operations. With so few large-scale engagements taking place, it was the trench patrol and raid that became the laboratory of battle."[17]

Also, as will be discussed in the next chapter, raids and patrols enabled soldiers to gather information on No Man's Land. Of course, the Allies and Germans were in constant battle. The geography of the terrain changed considerably from battle to battle, and even from day to day, due to the nature of the fighting. Patrolled by night and shelled by day, this stretch of land posed an extreme threat to the soldiers. Even when it seemed unoccupied, it was teeming with activity of all kinds. The various defensive structures were destroyed and rebuilt daily.[18] It's not surprising, then, that commanding officers ordered patrols on an almost daily basis. This search for information remained at the heart of commanders' concerns. Raids and patrols were therefore the tactics of choice for maintaining situational awareness.

It's important to mention that raids and patrols were just one way of gathering information about the enemy and the terrain. Aerial reconnaissance also played an important role as a means of gathering intelligence during World War I. It should be noted that Canada didn't have its own air force at the time, so the 20,000 or so Canadian airmen and mechanics served either in the Royal Flying Corps, the Royal Naval Air Service, or the Royal Air Force.

"Between November 1915 and January 1916, German pilots shot down an average of four British aircraft for every one they lost."

### *The limits of aerial reconnaissance*

As early as 1914, aerial reconnaissance was also an important means of gathering intelligence. However, reconnaissance missions became increasingly dangerous for the airmen, especially with the advent of Fokker aircraft, which could fire through their propellers. Between November 1915 and January 1916, German pilots shot down an average of four British aircraft for every one they lost.[19] Flying over the battlefields, sometimes at very low altitudes, the pilot and his observer became prime targets for machine guns. In this context, sending planes over No Man's Land instead of ground troops was not necessarily an economical use of resources. It is also important to mention the technical limitations of aerial observation. It was not until February 1915 that aircraft were equipped with cameras capable of taking moving pictures.[20] The technological evolution of cameras was so slow that even in 1916, during the Battle of the Somme, photographs could not be used as much as commanders wanted. Therefore, patrols were usually sent out to confirm observers' claims so that no doubts remained.[21] Also, the quality of the photographs simply prevented certain vital information from being distinguished, such as the depth of craters, the type of vegetation, the state of the barbed wire, and so on.[22]

In short, commanders could not rely entirely on aerial intelligence to build their situational awareness. The information provided by the airmen was certainly important and useful to the conduct of the war, but far too many variables such as technology and weather influenced the results. Much of the information needed to develop and maintain tactical situational awareness unfortunately eluded the airmen, leaving them with no choice but to send in reconnaissance. In fact, patrols and raids were essential complements to aerial observation. The men on the ground could not only confirm information gathered from the air, but also detect important details that the cameras of the time were unable to capture. In this technological and industrial warfare, human judgment remained essential for the analysis of certain information. The situation on the Saint-Éloi front in 1916, discussed in the next chapter, is a case in point.

## SPRING 1916: THE 2nd CANADIAN INFANTRY DIVISION ON THE FRONT

In January 1916, the 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions occupied the southern Ypres salient. Until April, the 2nd Division did not take part in any major battles. Its task was limited to harassing the Germans.[23] The situation changed, however, when the division was sent to the Saint-Éloi sector.

### *The 2nd Canadian Division at Saint-Éloi*

Between February 8 and 19, 1916, in anticipation of the Battle of Verdun, the Germans launched a diversionary offensive in the 5th British Corps sector. On February 14, they seized a wooded mound on the north bank of the Ypres-Comines canal. In response, General Plumer, commander of the British 2nd Army, to which the Canadian Expeditionary Force and the 5th Corps reported, ordered an attack on the Saint-Éloi salient, just over a kilometre to the southwest.[24] The Germans were well entrenched there and could effectively shell the British positions.[25] Unbeknownst to the Germans, British engineers had dug galleries and laid mines under the German trenches. The explosion took place at 4:15 a.m. on March 27, 1916, leaving seven large craters and several smaller ones. The assault was launched immediately afterwards.[26]

In less than half an hour, the British captured three craters, but it took a week to capture the last one. On April 3, the 3rd Division finally occupied the Saint-Éloi front, but it became increasingly clear that without reinforcements, they could neither advance nor hold their position.[27]

In fact, the Canadian Expeditionary Force was scheduled to take over on the night of April 6-7. However, as a German counter-attack was anticipated, the operation was brought forward to the night of April 3-4.[28] They were relieved under enemy artillery fire. British dead and wounded littered the ground, their exhausted brothers-in-arms trying their best to bring them back to the rear. The operation continued until the morning of April 5. On April 6, the dreaded counter-attack began. In just a few hours, the Germans regained possession of the territory lost between March 27 and April 3. In turn, the Canadians, now occupying the position, launched an attack to retake the craters. There was total confusion. Inexperienced soldiers had trouble navigating and finding their bearings. General Richard Turner and his staff had no idea what was happening at the front.[29] In fact, a string of inaccurate, even false, reports were sent to headquarters. On April 16, following aerial reconnaissance, General Alderson realized the scale of the catastrophe. He noticed that the Germans controlled most of the strongholds. The planned counter-attacks were cancelled and the fighting gradually ceased.[30]

### *The quest for situational awareness*

In preparation for relief on site, the transfer of information was crucial. Although the 3rd British Division's Relief Order No. 70 clearly stated that all relevant information, including topographic maps, photographs, and defence diagrams, was to be shared with the 2nd Division, there is no evidence that this passage of information was carried out effectively.[31] In fact, according to intelligence reports from the 2nd Canadian Division, situational awareness was very poor. General Turner, commander of the 2nd Canadian Division, attests to this in his account of events. "The men of the 3rd Division were very much exhausted. […] They had evidently suffered from shelling during the day, and they were too fatigued to be able to give much information to the relieving troops."[32] When Turner assumed command in Saint-Éloi, the information received by the chain of command about his new sector was sketchy.[33] All he could count on was some advice from the British 3rd Division commander, but nothing could improve his situational awareness.[34]

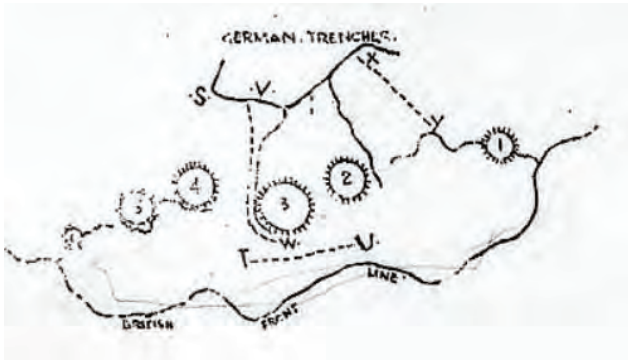
As soon as the relief was completed, the men of the 2nd Division were kept very busy. Until April 9, the priority was to consolidate the new line.[35] It was a colossal task. So much so that on April 8, two companies of the 2nd Pioneer Battalion were attached to the infantry battalions for three days and three nights.[36] On the night of April 6-7, a number of patrols were sent into No Man's Land. They returned with prisoners, but little useful information for the commanders. Level 1 situational awareness of the 2nd Division, newly arrived in the area, was almost non-existent. In

"In fact, according to intelligence reports from the 2nd Canadian Division, situational awareness was very poor. General Turner, commander of the 2nd Canadian Division, attests to this in his account of events. 'The men of the 3rd Division were very much exhausted. […] They had evidently suffered from shelling during the day, and they were too fatigued to be able to give much information to the relieving troops.'"

fact, the first few days' reports offered little useful information for building situational awareness. The information gathered and shared was very vague, imprecise or, worse still, false.[37] No observation posts could be set up, and the scouts were unable to reconnoitre No Man's Land due to German bombing raids.[38] Thus, during the day and night of April 8, a few patrols were sent into enemy trenches, but the results were the same. Lieutenant Nichols, a member of the 21st Battalion and commander of the patrol, reported: "The opinion of the patrol is that trench from 73 to 96 is well manned and that enemy are working hard on it."[39] This information was based solely on the sounds the soldiers could hear, as they were unable to get close enough to gather more precise information.

A look at other reports shows that the paucity of information gathered (level 1) had a considerable impact on the quality of the information disseminated, and consequently on level 2 situational awareness. Very few resources such as topographic maps were available. As shown in the document in Figure 1, those that were shared were rudimentary and contained little useful planning information. At the beginning of April 1916, Canadian situational awareness was limited and did not allow senior officers to anticipate German actions or even plan their own. In fact, the commanders had no overall view of the battlefield. The impact was disastrous, and the battle that followed and ended on April 16 was to make matters considerably worse.

**Figure 1: Sketch submitted following a patrol (April 13, 1916)**




Source: BAC, WD, "2nd Canadian Division, General Staff (1916/03/01-1916/04/30)." Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

General Plumer decided to take the risk of moving ahead of the changeover between his British and Canadian troops, despite the inexperience of the latter. As a result, after the changeover, the Canadians had to work extremely hard to consolidate their position and gather relevant information. Nevertheless, in those few weeks, important lessons were learned and the situation quickly improved.

"At tactical and operational levels, officers were primarily interested in German defences, including trenches, barbed wire networks, observation posts, machine-gun posts, and artillery positions. A section called Work Party in the weekly intelligence reports is of interest in this respect."

## RAIDS AND PATROLS TO RESTORE SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

On April 16, when the battle of Saint-Éloi was over, the men of the 2nd Division unfortunately couldn't catch their breath. They were disorganized and scattered. The officers had only fragmentary situational awareness. Consequently, considerable effort was put into consolidating positions. Once firmly established, the staff could finally plan offensive operations to harass the enemy and gather information on its positions. This process of consolidation and acquisition of situational awareness took place mainly in May and July 1916. During these few short weeks, Canadian soldiers were extremely active in the Saint-Éloi sector.

At tactical and operational levels, officers were primarily interested in German defences, including trenches, barbed wire networks, observation posts, machine-gun posts, and artillery positions.[40] A section called Work Party in the weekly intelligence reports is of interest in this respect. It records all enemy activity relating to work done at the position, including the type of construction undertaken and, if possible, the approximate number of men working on it. This enabled the Canadian command to know the location of new German strongholds, track their progress, and adjust to the new positions.[41] This information was usually first reported by aerial reconnaissance, and men were then dispatched to confirm the reports received. In fact, due to their distance from the target, the airmen were unable to identify certain elements with precision. Often, important additional information was brought back by the infantry. For example, on the night of July 26-27, men from the 18th Battalion (4th Brigade) raided enemy positions at Piccadilly Farm and noted that the barbed wire network they had previously observed was much denser than expected.

This information was extremely important in planning future operations. It could influence a number of variables, such as the duration of the operation and the allocation of personnel and equipment.[42]

Acquiring information was a tedious task, as enemy installations evolved while new ones appeared daily.[43] In fact, aerial and, above all, ground reconnaissance had to be carried out every day to provide commanders with the most up-to-date information possible. The identification of enemy obstacles and their progression enabled intelligence officers to annotate topographic maps to create level 2 situational awareness. The contribution of raids and patrols was considerable in this sense, because the command obtained information that was difficult to observe from the air.

### *Raids and patrols in Saint-Éloi in the summer of 1916*

The priority for the Canadians in May 1916 was to consolidate their position. Several work crews were sent ahead. The 5th Brigade alone did a considerable amount of work. On May 8, the 22nd and 26th Battalions dispatched 800 soldiers to No Man's Land. The next day, 650 men from the 24th and 26th Battalions were sent, and on May 10, the 24th and 22nd Battalions detached 325 men to carry out the same mission. Finally, on May 25, 775 soldiers from the 22nd, 25th, and 26th Battalions went to work. Their main task was to build barbed wire and drainage networks. The objective was to build as many defensive structures as possible, so that engineers could then make adjustments where necessary.[44]

By mid-June, the line was actually in better condition, enabling more effort to be put into gathering information and building situational awareness. From the night of June 30, the 22nd Battalion, occupying the right, and the 26th, covering the left, each prepared a raid on the enemy trenches. Their main objective was to identify the enemy unit by capturing prisoners or equipment.[45] For the 26th, the operation was a success. A ton of information was brought back to headquarters, including the following:

> *The trench was 6 foot deep and in excellent condition with bath mats and board fire steps. No dugouts were observed. A careful search was made for gas cylinders and mine shaft, but no indication of either were found. Several ammunition pouches, bolts and bayonets were brought back and these establish identification of the 124th and 125th Regiment, XIII Corps.*[46]

Following this patrol, the commanders had excellent clues as to the Germans' intentions. The equipment made it possible to identify the unit and gave information on their armament. In short, in nine minutes, the men had gathered useful information for the intelligence officers. By July 2, seven other patrols were covering the 5th Brigade's front line. The 22nd Battalion's mission was to inspect enemy barbed wire and locate occupied trenches. No enemy was seen or even heard. The barbed wire was in very good condition, and a ditch filled with water, barbed wire, and pieces of wood with sharp iron spikes was spotted.[47] In the early hours of the morning, the information was shared in the daily report.[48]

The men of the 2nd Division kept up this pace for the rest of July. It is difficult to assess the number of patrols deployed during this period, as war diaries often lack precision in this respect. Also, when it is stated that the entire front was patrolled, can we assume that the three Battalions occupying the Saint-Éloi line sent out at least one patrol? Therefore, the 5th Brigade, which covered this sector until July 14, sent out approximately thirty-two patrols.[49] On July 15, the 4th Brigade took over in the Saint-Éloi sector. There is no mention of patrols in the war diary, but this does not mean that none were out. Examination of the documents also reveals that between July 1 and 15, 1916, in the same sector, the 5th Brigade carried out three raids, two on July 1 and one on July 3. The 4th Brigade attacked on July 20, 26, and 29.[50]

On July 3, four unoccupied, concrete-fortified machine-gun positions were observed, along with a sniper post, an observation post, and a communication trench. The coordinates of these significant features were identified, enabling the officers to annotate them on their maps of the region.[51] The same was true on July 4, when a patrol from the 22nd Battalion visited a machine-gun position that had been identified the previous night. This time the patrol was able to confirm that it had been damaged by

> "On July 29, a raid was carried out by the 29th Battalion. Acquiring evidence of gas use was their objective. On their return, the men brought back precise information useful for maintaining situational awareness. According to the patrol, the enemy trenches were 8 feet deep and in splendid condition. Boxes of gas cylinders were indeed found at the scene, but no chemical weapons were spotted."

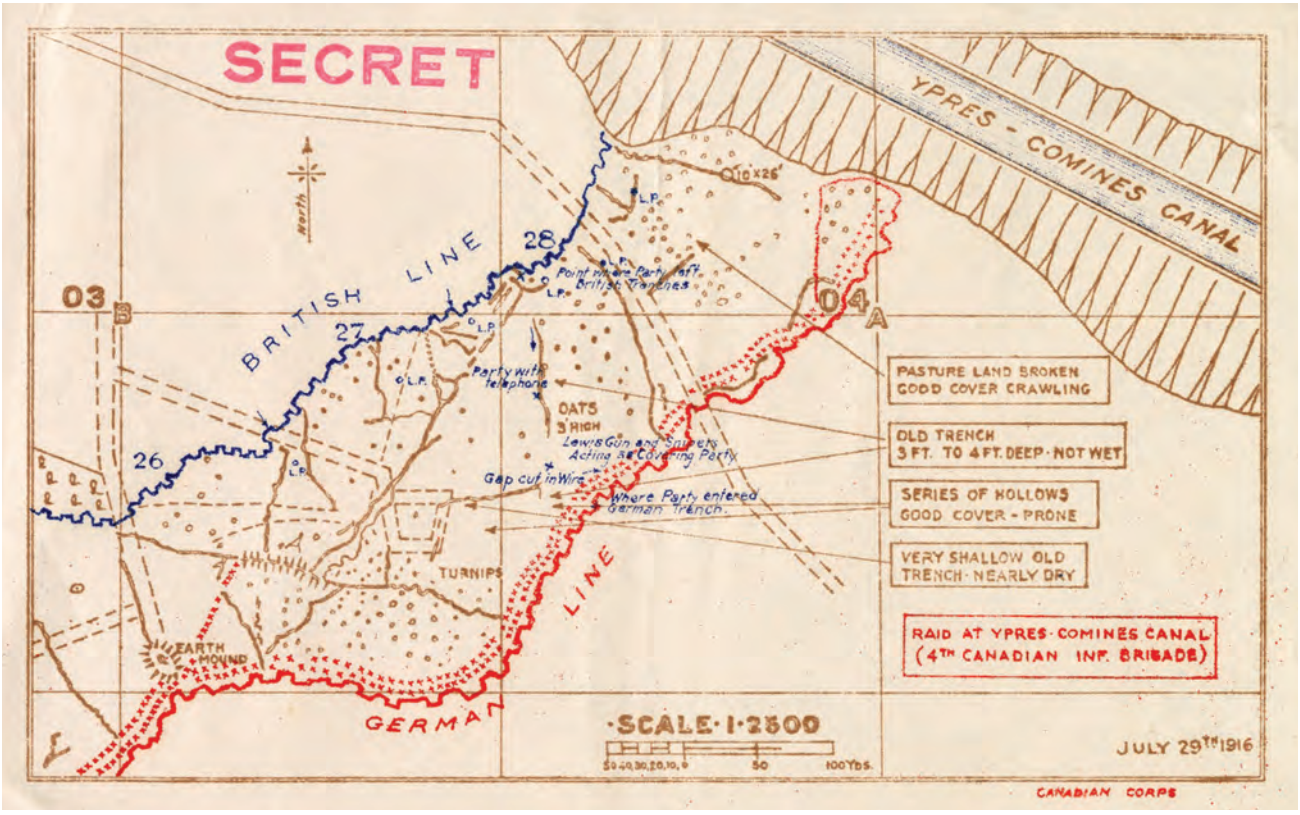
artillery fire. They reported that the enemy was extremely active, as several improvements had been made at another position. That same night, an 18th Battalion patrol attempted to destroy an observation post, but failed. They reported that the flanks of this post were very well defended.[52] Once again, the very precise information required to establish level 2 situational awareness was gathered. This appears in intelligence report no. 273, but more interestingly, the information gathered on July 3 and 4 could be combined with that gathered by the other battalions on July 1. Also, the intelligence report dated July 16 refers to report no. 285 (July 15), indicating that new information had to be added concerning several enemy groups that had been engaged the previous night. One patrol reported that each group was in fact made up of a minimum of twenty soldiers and was armed with machine guns.[53]

On July 29, a raid was carried out by the 29th Battalion. Acquiring evidence of gas use was their objective. On their return, the men brought back precise information useful for maintaining situational awareness. According to the patrol, the enemy trenches were 8 feet deep and in splendid condition. Boxes of gas cylinders were indeed found at the scene, but no chemical weapons were spotted.[54] For their part, the men of the 18th Battalion confirmed that they had covered an unoccupied 50-metre trench with no sign of chemical weapons. During the patrol, however, they heard what they confirmed to be a large group of enemy soldiers working on the support trenches.[55] Indeed, the enemy was identified and the presence of gas weapons confirmed in the 18th Battalion's sector, but much more information was gathered and reported to the chain of command for analysis and distribution.

The information gathered by different patrols in different areas was compiled and followed up. Gradually, the consolidation and sharing of intelligence created a more accurate picture of the overall operational situation. As a result, General Turner had much better level 2 situational awareness than when he arrived.

Gradually, 2nd Division headquarters had the information it needed to build up a credible picture of the operational situation on the Saint-Éloi front. This result, achieved through patrols and raids, now offered level 2 situational awareness, an asset that was non-existent in April and May. Topographic maps were a reliable reference and therefore essential in this respect for commanders. They were living documents, constantly being updated as patrols returned. When they had the time, the soldiers took the trouble to draw sketches to help clarify the information passed on to their superiors. In fact, many maps, such as the one in Figure 2, contained significant detail on the location and depth of rivers, lakes, or craters, the density of forests or vegetation in general, the condition of roads and railroads, etc. This information was essential for operations planning.[56]

**Figure 2: Map of the Saint-Éloi sector, 2nd Division, July 29, 1916**




Source: BAC, WD, "2nd Canadian Division, General Staff, 01-07-1916/31-07-1916." Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca

As the days and weeks went by, the maps became increasingly precise, like the one found in the 11th Brigade's war diary (Figure 3). The information contained in the diary was so precise that it would have been impossible to obtain it by aerial reconnaissance alone. A closer look at the map shown in Figure 2 (2nd Division) and Figure 3 (11th Brigade) reveals that this is the same map that was handed over when the relief was carried out. Indeed, on August 25, the 11th Brigade took over the Saint-Éloi sector as the 2nd Division set off for the Somme. Five days later, the Canadian Corps relieved Anzac's 1st Corps and moved into the Somme trenches.[57]

In conclusion, we can affirm that July was decisive for the 2nd Division. Soldiers and commanders had acquired combat experience that, while costly, was invaluable. In just a few weeks, they were able to regain the initiative. In fact, once the defensive positions had been consolidated, the soldiers embarked on a major intelligence-gathering exercise. Thanks to successful raids and patrols, situational awareness was improving day by day. The soldiers also worked extremely hard to maintain this situational awareness by confirming information previously gathered by other patrols. The war diaries and intelligence reports of July and August 1916 were also looking different from those of April and May.

**Figure 3: Map of the Saint-Éloi sector, 11th Brigade**


Source: BAC, WD, "War diaries-11th Canadian Infantry Brigade. 1916/08/01-1916/11/30." Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca

## CONCLUSION

The fighting in the Saint-Éloi sector was the baptism of fire for the soldiers of the 2nd Division. Because the relief operation had been carried out on too large a scale and without proper planning, the men arrived at Saint-Éloi with no information about the terrain or the enemy. Commanders found themselves technically blind, lacking sufficient intelligence to conduct operations with a good chance of subsequent success. If Canadian soldiers were to hold their position in the face of German counter-attacks, a long and arduous process of consolidation was necessary.

"The information gathered through photos often had to be confirmed by men in the field. In this sense, raids and patrols proved highly effective."

In July, the tide gradually turned. After consolidation, Canadian positions stabilized, allowing for a review of priorities. The battalions were able to organize and coordinate themselves for effective offensive operations. Soldiers could now start patrolling No Man's Land again, attacking enemy trenches and feeding headquarters with their findings. Every night, several teams went out on patrol, bringing back new elements and confirming others. Gradually, officers at all levels as well as the troops gained continuous and complete situational awareness, enabling the Canadian Expeditionary Force to take the initiative in the sector.

From 1916 onwards, the air force flew more and more often, carrying out a wide range of missions. During reconnaissance flights, pilots and observers, with their admittedly rudimentary cameras, were able to provide an overview that enabled intelligence officers to map the front. However, the air force could not acquire and maintain situational awareness on its own. In fact, photographs were only a starting point. The information gathered through photos often had to be confirmed by men in the field. In this sense, raids and patrols proved highly effective. Our study of the Saint-Éloi front between April and August 1916 shows that raids and patrols played a key role in acquiring and maintaining situational awareness. The information gathered by the men on the ground and in the air, once analyzed, became real military intelligence, supporting the decision-making process of commanders at all levels. Leaving the Saint-Éloi sector for the Somme, the 2nd Division relieved the 11th Infantry Brigade in the proper manner, leaving them with a high degree of situational awareness.[58]

## Notes

1 Bill Rawling, *Surviving Trench Warfare: Technology and the Canadian Corps, 1914-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015, originally published 1992), 59.

2 *Ibid*.

3 BAC, WD, "22nd Canadian Infantry Battalion (1914/10/22-1919/04/30)." Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca

4 Jean-Marc Marril, "L'offensive à outrance : une doctrine unanimement partagée par les grandes puissances militaires en 1914", *Revue historique des armées*, nº 274, 2014; Stephen Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War," 58.

5 *Ibid*., 59.

6 Azar Gat, *History of Military Thought from the Enlightenment to the Cold War* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001), 410.

7 Timothy Travers, *The Killing Ground, The British Army, the Western Front*, and the Emergence of Modern Warfare, 1900-1918 (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 54.

8 General Staff, BEF, "Notes on Infantry Officer on Trench Warfare," in British Manual for Trench Warfare (December 1916), 8.

9 Tony Ashworth, *Trench Warfare*, 1914-1918: The Live and Let Live System (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1980), 19.

10 *Ibid*., 38.

11 David Colin Garnett, "Butcher and Bolt: Canadian Trench Raiding During the Great War, 1915-1918" (Master's degree, Carleton University, 2011), 39

12 Major Christopher J. Guiz, *Specialized Assault Unit of the World War I Western Front*, 33.

13 Colin David Garnett, "Butcher and Bolt," 45.

14 Tim Cook, *Shock Troops, Canadians Fighting the Great War 1917-1918* (Toronto: Penguin, 2008), 55, 61.

15 Colin David Garnett, "Butcher and Bolt," 6

16 Bill Rawling, Surviving Trench Warfare, 57.

17 Tim Cook, Shock Troops, 55.

18 Tony Ashworth, *Trench Warfare*, 5.

19 Thomas G. Bradbeer, "The British Air Campaign During the Battle of the Somme April-November 1916: A Pyrrhic Victory" (Master's degree, Saint Mary's University, 1999), 62.

20 Dan R. Jenkins, "Winning Trench Warfare: Battlefield Intelligence in the Canadian Corps, 1914-1918," Doctorate, Carleton University, 1999, 74.

21 C.D.A. Barber, *Military Map reading and Intelligence Training* (Cleveland: Penton Press, 1917), 131-133.

22 Dan R. Jenkins, "Winning Trench Warfare," 71.

23 G. W. L. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1963), 146.

24 *Ibid*, 149.

25 Tim Cook, *At the Sharp End*, 323.

26 G. W. L. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force*, 150.

27 BAC, *Narrative of Events up to the Occupation of St-Eloi Position*, "2nd Canadian Division – General Staff (1916/03/01-1916/04/30)". Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

28 Tim Cook, "The Blind Leading the Blind: The Battle of the St. Eloi Craters," 3.

29 *Ibid*, 5.

30 G. W. L. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force*, 156.

31 BAC, *3rd Division Operation Order No. 70*, "2nd Canadian Division – General Staff (1916/03/01-1916/04/30)". Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

32 BAC, *Report on the 2nd Canadian Division's Operation at Saint-Éloi. April 3rd to April 16th 1916*, "2nd Canadian Division – General Staff (1916/03/01-1916/04/30)". Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

33 BAC, *Report on the 2nd Canadian Division's Operation at Saint-Éloi. April 3rd to April 16th 1916*, "2nd Canadian Division – General Staff (1916/03/01-1916/04/30)". Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

34 BAC, *Report on the 2nd Canadian Division's Operation at Saint-Éloi. April 3rd to April 16th 1916*, "2nd Canadian Division – General Staff (1916/03/01-1916/04/30)". Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

35 BAC, *Report on Operation of the 2nd Canadian Division After Arrival in the New Divisional Area, Saint-Éloi, from April 3rd to April 7th 1916*, "2nd Canadian Division – General Staff (1916/03/01-1916/04/30)". Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

36 BAC, WD, "2nd Canadian Division – General Staff (1916/03/01-1916/04/30)". Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

37 BAC, *Summary of Operations, 2nd Canadian Division from April 1st to April 7th*, "2nd Canadian Division – General Staff (1916/03/01-1916/04/30." Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

38 BAC, *Daily Intelligence Summary*, "2nd Canadian Division – General Staff (1916/03/01-1916/04/30)". Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

39 BAC, *Reconnaissance report, April 8th, 1916*, "2nd Canadian Division – General Staff (1916/03/01-1916/04/30)". Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

40 Dan R. Jenkins, "Winning Trench Warfare," 79.

41 Dan R. Jenkins, "The Other Side of the hill: Combat Intelligence in the Canadian Corps, 1914-1918," 7.

42 Dan R. Jenkins, "Winning Trench Warfare," 20.

43 *Ibid*., 20.

44 BAC, *Operation Order, Working Parties for night of 7th/8th May*, "5th Canadian Infantry Brigade 1916/05/01-1916/07/31." Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca

45 BAC, *Operation Order No. 7 by Major A.E.G. McKenzie, O. C. 26th Battalion*, "2nd Canadian Division, General Staff – Operation orders and instructions General Staff 1915/09/17-1916/08/28." Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

46 BAC, *Intelligence Summary, July 1st*, "2nd Canadian Division, General Staff, 01-07-1916 / 31-07-1916." Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

47 BAC, *Daily Intelligence Summary, July 2nd*, "2nd Canadian Division, General Staff, 01-07-1916 / 31-07-1916." Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

48 *Ibid*.

49 BAC, WD, "5th Canadian Infantry Brigade 1916/05/01-1916/07/31)." Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca;

50 BAC, WD, "4th Canadian Infantry Brigade 1916/07/01-1916/09/30)." Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

51 BAC, WD, "2nd Canadian Division, General Staff, 01-07-1916 / 31-07-1916." Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

52 BAC, WD, "2nd Canadian Division, General Staff, 01-07-1916 / 31-07-1916." Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

53 BAC, *Daily Intelligence Summary No. 286*, "2nd Canadian Division, General Staff, 01-07-1916 / 31-07-1916." Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

54 BAC, *Report on the Raiding Operation Carried out by the 19th Canadian Battalion, 29th July, 1916*, "4th Canadian Infantry Brigade 1916/07/01-1916/09/30)". Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

55 BAC, *Report on Raiding Enterprise by the 18th Canadian Battalion on the night 26/27 July, 1916*, "4th Canadian Infantry Brigade 1916/07/01-1916/09/30)". Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca

56 C.D.A. Barber, *Military Map reading and Intelligence Training*, 17.

57 G. W. L. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force*, 179.

58 BAC, WD, "War diaries–11th Canadian Infantry Brigade. 1916/08/01-1916/11/30." Available at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.