

History and Development of Industrial/Organisational Psychology in the Canadian Forces Personnel Selection Branch: 1938–2009

Sarah K. McMillan, Sonya Stevens, and E. Kevin Kelloway
Saint Mary's University

The authors examined public and published archival documents and interviewed senior and retired Personnel Selection Officers, and influential Industrial/Organisational (I/O) psychologists in Canada to document the history of the Canadian Forces Personnel Selection Branch. The authors highlight the close working relationship between civilian and military I/O psychologists and suggest that they have been mutually influential in shaping the practise of I/O psychology in Canada.

Keywords: Industrial/Organizational Psychology, Canadian Forces Personnel Selection Officers, critical history, interdisciplinary collaboration

Almost every account of the development of Industrial/Organisational (I/O) psychology in the United States emphasises the formative influence of the military and military requirements particularly during the World Wars (e.g., Salas, DeRoine, & Gade, 2007). For example, the development of selection instruments during World War I (e.g., Yoakum & Yerkes, 1920) is cited as the catalyst that brought I/O psychology “out of the closet of academia” (Katzell & Austin, 1992, p. 805) and into the workplace. Similarly, accounts of the development of I/O psychology in the United Kingdom highlight the demands of the military during wartime, as a formative influence (e.g., Warr, 2007). In contrast, histories of the development of I/O psychology in Canada largely ignore the role of the military (e.g., Latham & Sue-Chan, 1998) or explicitly deny any such influence. Warr (2007, p. 94), for example, suggests that “[c]ontrary to patterns in other countries. World War II . . . did not provide a strong impetus to I-O psychology” in Canada. We suggest that this is a substantial understatement of the relationship between military and I/O psychology. In particular, although not very accessible to the civilian reader, partial histories

of the Personnel Selection Branch of the Canadian Forces present a dramatically different account (e.g., Anderson, 1992; Eggenberger, 1992; Lamerson, 1995; Northey, 1992; Pinch, 1992; Prociuk, 2001). Our objective in this article was to expand upon these histories and provide a comprehensive account of the relationship between I/O psychology and the Personnel Selection Branch of the Canadian Forces. In doing so, we take the position that such a history is of value in and of itself as documenting the development of one of the largest employers of I/O psychologists in Canada (S. Eyres, personal communication, November 30, 2007). However, we also go beyond this view to suggest that the practise of I/O psychology both shaped, and was influenced by, developments in the Canadian Forces. In doing so, we find evidence for a pattern of “spiraling influence” in which the personnel demands of the military shape the focus of I/O psychology at some points while at other points advances in I/O psychology led to enhanced personnel practises within the military. It is our hope that reflecting on the past relationship between the Canadian Forces and the profession of I/O psychology will help to foster an appreciation of the mutual benefits of this relationship and help us to understand how this association can be strengthened in the future.

We examined public archival documents and interviewed senior and retired Personnel Selection Officers and influential I/O psychologists in Canada. We provide a review of the chronological development of the CF Personnel Selection Branch from its official inception in 1938 to the present, noting the significant events that have contributed to its development during the last 70 years. We conclude by noting the overarching themes and commenting on the reciprocal relationship between the Personnel Selection Branch and the civilian I/O community and how this relationship can continue to be fostered in the future.

Role of the Personnel Selection Branch in the Canadian Forces

The Personnel Selection Branch serves both individual members of the Canadian Forces, as well as the organisation as a whole. At the level of the individual member, Personnel Selection Officers provide a host of interviewing and counselling services, teach

Sarah K. McMillan, Sonya Stevens, and E. Kevin Kelloway, Department of Psychology, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Sarah K. McMillan, Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis, National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa, ON K1A 0K2. E-mail: sarah.mcmillan@forces.gc.ca

behavioural sciences at Canada's Royal Military College in the Military Psychology and Leadership Department, and assist members in beginning a second career within or outside the military. At the institutional level, Personnel Selection Officers conduct research across a number of behavioural science domains, provide input to strategic human resource planning, develop human resource policies, and administer human resource programs. Accordingly, many Personnel Selection Officers today hold MSc and PhD degrees in Psychology.

World War II

The role for I/O psychologists in the military can be linked back to the late 1930s. Paralleling the U.S. experience, it was the threat of war that, arguably, led to the foundation of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) and the initiation of psychology as a field within Canada. In 1938, when psychologists were few, most Canadian psychologists were members of the American Psychological Association (APA). The threat of the Second World War sparked interest in, and the formation of, the CPA. Anderson (1992, p.11) noted that the original objectives of CPA were as follows:

- To identify and marshal the professional psychological resources in Canada;
- To coordinate the efforts of psychologists in order to demonstrate what psychologists could and should do for the war effort; and
- To negotiate with the government to see that in the event of war, these were, in fact, the things that they did.

In discussions with the government, the CPA was represented by the University of Toronto, Queens, and McGill in early meetings in 1939 (Ferguson, 1992). Canada's senior scientific body (the National Research Council) had approved projects suggested by a small number of psychologists and had in their possession a mandate to proceed with their respective Canadian Forces elemental selection systems (Anderson, 1992). The National Research Council created a War Committee (previously the Test Construction Committee), which was subsequently divided into two separate groups: (1) pilot selection for the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and (2) development of the "M" test which was used for selection and placement of both soldiers and officers in the Army. Discussions in April 1939 began with the premise that all three elements (Navy, Army, and Air Force) would use the proposed systems of testing and classification (Anderson, 1992). However, unlike the Canadian Forces of today and prior to the unification that took place in 1968, these military elements operated independently of one another and these organisations each took different paths.

The Directorate of Personnel Selection RCAF was formed in 1941 and was involved in developing rigorous pilot selection and training procedures. At the time, they were responsible for not only training their own pilots, but also for the training of pilots in most Commonwealth, as well as some European, countries (A. Okros, personal communication, December 10, 2007). The Army relied heavily on the "M" test for personnel selection. The "M" test was a derivative of the United States Army Beta Examination that was revised by Chester Kellogg and N. W. Morton of McGill University (Rowe, 2006). This test was originally labelled the McGill

University Revision but was subsequently renamed the "M" test to avoid any association to the University (Rowe, 2006).

Further to the initiatives started above, in 1940, the Minister of National Defence suggested to the CPA that a voluntary selection process be implemented. The President of the National Research Council then gave \$2,000 to the CPA to further its studies on intelligence and aptitude measurement in the Canadian Forces (Hitsman, 1946, p. 6). The CPA decided to assist with preparations for the Second World War, resulting in the first selection tests and screening procedures.

Post World War II

Following the Second World War, many of those who had supported the war efforts in I/O psychology brought their practical experience to growing organisations and to teaching at the university level (Lamerson, 1995). The CPA also continued to thrive and interestingly, the APA formed the Division of Industrial Psychology in 1945 (Lamerson, 1995). During this time, psychologists from the University of Toronto, who were also involved in the CPA, were involved in improving the selection and training of pilots from the RCAF. The professors from the University of Toronto continued their work with the RCAF well after the end of the Second World War until 1965 (A. Okros, personal communication, December 10, 2007). Preliminary meetings between the military and members of the CPA also focused on how to improve classification of Army personnel.

Although the Directorate of Personnel Selection Navy was formed in 1943, it was put on hiatus from 1946–1949, presumably because WWII ended. Subsequently, a personnel research section was begun at the Institute of Aviation Medicine in Toronto. In 1959, the Navy adopted the United States Navy Other Rank Classification System including a basic test of learning ability at the recruiting level in conjunction with a classification battery and an in-depth interview (Northey, 1992). This personnel research section continued operating until the establishment, in 1965, of the Canadian Forces Personnel Applied Research Unit (originally called the Personnel Standards Analysis Branch) in Toronto. Its mandate was to conduct research on applied military problems, such as pilot selection and training (similar to that initially conducted by faculty at the University of Toronto), for all elements of the Canadian Forces (Navy, Army and Air Force—note that the unification of these 3 elements into what is now known as the Canadian Forces had yet to take place). During this period, the focus was on basic "I" psychology; a lot of the work done at the research unit was based on Flanagan's approach to critical incidents (Flanagan, 1954) and other task-based job analyses; an approach that is still evident in the use of task-based job analysis to define training requirements within the Canadian Forces (A. Okros, personal communication, December 10, 2007).

Interesting to note, the Army was not always supportive of applied military research and the work of Personnel Selection Officers. Notwithstanding the successful development of the "M" test, the Army did not fully support this instrument; although, the demands from overseas during this time (1941) significantly changed their perspective. Even with the documented successes of Personnel Selection Officers in the Second World War, the Army's resistance to accepting the work conducted by the personnel research unit continued well into the Korean War when the then

Minister of Defence was frustrated by what he perceived as unacceptably slow processing for the number of available applicants (Lamerson, 2002). Subsequently, contrary to advice, 10 000 men were enrolled in very short order (all applicants had to be enrolled and posted within one day of their application) and within one year 3,500 or 35% were either awaiting discharge or had deserted (Anderson, 1992).

Prior to the establishment of Canadian Forces Personnel Applied Research Unit in 1965, William Northey was given the task of determining the similarities and differences between the Personnel Selection Systems of the Navy, Army, and Air Force (Northey, 1992). In 1968, the Liberal government under Prime Minister Lester Pearson and Defence Minister Paul Hellyer directed and implemented the integration and unification of the three services (Army, Navy, and Air Force), whereas the Air Force, Navy, and Army had functioned as three independent entities, integration/unification placed them together into a single force with a single command structure. Concurrently, the Command Personnel Selection Officer function was introduced (serving to provide consistency and guidance within each element), as was the concept of Personnel Selection Units (combining what we now refer to as Canadian Forces Recruiting Centers whose function is external selection and Base Personnel Selection Officers whose main functions are conversely internal selection).

During this time, the field of personnel applied research was expanded. Paralleling the growth of similar topics in civilian I/O psychology (Katzell & Austin, 1992), additional importance was placed on attrition, retention, job satisfaction, motivation, and other organisational and social processes. In addition, relevant programs, such as the Second Career Assistance Network (1978; D. McDougall, personal communication, November 28, 2007) were developed to assist members in their transition to their civilian lives following their military careers (T. Christopher, personal communication, December 11, 2007). Furthermore, Canada's Military Colleges (Royal Military College in Kingston, ON; Royal Roads Military College in Victoria, BC; and Collège militaire royale de St Jean, QC) established military leadership and management programs beginning in the late 1960s that were modelled after the programs run at the American Military Academies, namely the United States Naval Academy, the United States Military Academy, and the United States Air Force Academy. The Military Leadership and Management departments at Canada's military colleges were staffed initially by Personnel Selection Officers, in some cases without any graduate degrees. Eventually, senior officers, possessing masters or doctoral degrees, worked alongside civilian professors to teach the military university students (who would later become the Canadian Forces' senior leadership) about topics including but not limited to leadership, sociology, stress management, combat psychology, and human resource management.

As of the early 1970s, the Personnel Selection Branch had not yet achieved formal status within the Canadian Forces. In 1974, Personnel Selection Officers were removed from recruiting centres leaving positions only at the military colleges, the research unit, and the Base Personnel Selection Offices. The role of the Personnel Selection Branch was seriously being questioned at this point by Canadian Forces' senior leaders; more often than not, these officers were operational military commanders whose introduction to psychology was often limited to their exposure to the Military

Leadership and Management departments at the military colleges if they had been educated therein (as of 2004, approximately 20% of the officer corps were educated through the military college system). In spite of the uncertainty facing the future of the Personnel Selection Branch, the Royal Military College became the training institution for both basic and advanced Personnel Selection Officer courses (which were offered in addition to the formal advanced academic training provided) and the focus of the Personnel Selection Branch became more operational and applied than before and entered into areas of mixed gender near-combat units, and design of field studies by Personnel Selection Officers embedded into operations (e.g., peacekeeping, field exercises) to supply field commanders information about team cohesion during times of extreme stress (Eggenberger, 1992), a relatively new concept in the 1970s (Rampton, 1978, as cited in Prociuk, 1984).

With the establishment of firm positions for Personnel Selection Officers at the colleges and the research unit came the requirement for sponsored Post Graduate Training at the Masters and Doctoral levels (K. Wenek, personal communication, December 14, 2007). Accordingly, the Canadian Forces began sponsoring up to five Personnel Selection Officers per year to attend university full-time to earn their Master's degree or Doctoral degree at a civilian university (toward the early 1980s, emphasis was placed on advanced education in I/O psychology, although other postgraduate plans were sometimes accepted, including Masters degrees in Education and Sociology; A. Okros, personal communication, March 10, 2008). Historically, Personnel Selection Officers have earned advanced degrees at Saint Mary's University, University of Waterloo, University of Guelph, University of Western Ontario, and the University of Calgary, although some have also chosen to earn their degrees at other Canadian institutions or even internationally where funding and opportunities were available.

During this timeframe, the mandate of the Personnel Applied Research Unit was to address personnel issues related to the operational requirements of the Canadian Forces (Prociuk, 1984). While the scope of its mandate began with human measurement research, the researchers began to address a broader range of Canadian Forces issues related to personnel (e.g., attrition, performance evaluation). Parallel to these activities came a shift in focus on validity, reliability, and test construction studies that aimed to provide adequate selection while meeting the spirit of Canadian law following the human rights movement in the mid-1980s. The emphasis, according to Lamerson (1995) shifted from Industrial to Organisational (e.g., organisational dynamics).

In the early 1980s, an Auditor General's report that concluded that there was no means for effectively communicating research conducted by Personnel Selection Officers to other Canadian Forces personnel and policymakers (confirming what those in the Branch already knew), paralleling what I/O psychologists often refer to as the Scientist-Practitioner gap. This report provided the leverage needed to take action to rectify this situation. As a result, the Research Analysis Resource Centre was created. The increased communication of results, facilitated by the Centre, worked to enhance the credibility of the Branch. Also, during this time discussions about attaining a regular operational role for Personnel Selection Officers were initiated although there was no movement in this arena until much later (Rampton, 1992). Other significant events at this time included the approval of the Branch status in

1981; accordingly, the formal inauguration of the Personnel Selection Branch took place on September 17, 1982. In addition, the M-test, which had previously been used for selection, was replaced with the General Classification Test and the Canadian Forces Classification Battery.

Human Rights Movement

In the 1980s, two events had extraordinary impact on the research and priorities of the Canadian Forces. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) and the Canadian Human Rights Act (1985) brought to the forefront employee issues related to gender, homosexuality, and the quality of working life (e.g., attrition and retention, motivation and morale, and performance evaluations; Rampton, 1992).

In the late 1980s, Colonel Franklin Pinch created a "Charter Task Force" and held a Human Rights Tribunal on the Employment of Women. The Charter led to research on topics such as homosexuality, gender, small group functioning, team dynamics, in-group/out-group, stress and operational effectiveness, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. For example, Rick Zuliani conducted a large-scale survey on homosexuality issues in the Canadian Forces for the Charter Task Force (Zuliani, 1986). He concluded that the introduction of known homosexuals into the Canadian Forces would decrease morale and cohesion within the service and negatively impact recruiting efforts. Pinch commissioned an independent review of Zuliani's findings by Dr. Connie Kristiansen of Carleton University (1989), who concluded that the results of this survey did not justify the non-entry of homosexual applicants.

The Service Women in Non-Traditional Environments and Roles trials were conducted (1979–1985) where women were given the opportunity to work in more operationally challenging roles that were previously closed to women. Lieutenant-Commander Rosemary Park was the key player in these trials and she was a passionate advocate of the right of women to work within the Canadian Forces. When the Human Rights Tribunal on the employment of women in combat roles (Gauthier, Houlden, Gauthier, & Brown vs. Canadian Armed Forces, 1989) was held, Park and two officers (Lieutenant-Colonel Sandy Cotton and Suzanne Simpson) were witnesses for the complainants. Zuliani and Pinch, amongst others, were witnesses for the Canadian Forces and argued against the entry of women into the combat or combat support roles in the Canadian Forces (Pinch, 1992). The widespread implications of this tribunal were evident in the opening statements by both the complainants and the defendants. The official report for Gauthier, Houlden, Gauthier, & Brown versus Canadian Armed Forces notes that . . .

In their opening statements counsel for the parties acknowledged, beyond the ambit of the specific complaints, the importance of the hearings for the discussion and resolution of an issue of general societal concern and broad public policy. That issue is, should women generally be permitted to train for and enter into occupations and to perform roles which are combat related, occupations and roles now closed to them; would the operational effectiveness of the CAF be adversely affected by the introduction of women into such occupations and roles; and, can this assessment appropriately be made by professional military judgement. It was these larger issues that counsel and the witnesses addressed. It is these larger issues, which are the subject of this decision, as well as the resolution of the specific complaints.

Despite the arguments of Pinch and Zuliani (Pinch, 1992) as witnesses for the Canadian Forces, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal deemed that "full integration" was to be realised throughout the Canadian Forces with the exception of those occupations that are executed on submarines (Gauthier, Houlden, Gauthier, & Brown vs. Canadian Armed Forces, 1989, p. 64, 67). Living conditions in the Oberon class submarines were considered harsh at best and were so crowded that women were excluded from sailing in them because of privacy issues. This decision was reconsidered in 2001 when the Navy was examining the new Victoria Class submarines (A. Okros, personal communication, March 10, 2008), following a report by the Command Personnel Selection Officer for the Navy Lieutenant Commander Lynn Bradley (1999) as no more reasonable grounds for restricting women from submarine service were deemed to exist. This verdict set a precedent for nontraditional employment of women in Canada and undoubtedly challenged the beliefs of other Canadian organisations.

During his tenure, Pinch encouraged internal training for members of the Personnel Selection Branch and when the Branch Career Model was approved in the mid-1980s, Pinch was able to obtain approval from National Defence Headquarters for five master's level starts (or scholarships) every year and one PhD start every two years (K. Wenek, personal communication, February 29, 2008). Shortly after Colonel Pinch became Personnel Selection Branch Head, an Applied Military Psychology Program, both a BA (1986) and BSc (1989) were instituted at Royal Roads Military College (1986–1995; personal communication, Dr. Bob St. John, January 14, 2008), a Psychology Minor was instituted at the now defunct Collège Militaire Royal (1989–1995), and psychological research within the Canadian Forces flourished. While the programs were designed for the general service officer as opposed to personnel specialists, some present Personnel Selection Officers benefitted from these course offerings.

As a sociologist, Pinch recognised the importance of psychology and worked closely with Canadian I/O schools (A. Okros, personal communication, March 10, 2008); he was also instrumental in establishing Section 19 (*Psychology in the Military*) of the CPA (K. Wenek, personal communication, December 14, 2007; Pinch, 1992). The goals of this section are to increase public understanding of how the military uses psychology, foster interest in military related research, and support ethical practises in military psychology (<http://www.cpa.ca/sections/psychologyinthemilitary/>). This section was originally chaired by Pinch, but has since been chaired by Prociuk and Lamerson amongst other senior military Personnel Selection Officers.

"Review, reorganization, and reduction—were defining the zeitgeist, or temper of the times" during Colonel Terry Prociuk's tenure as Branch Advisor (Prociuk, 2001, p. 1). The Cold War led many to believe that Canada would most likely take a reduced military role in the future (A. Okros, personal communication, March 10, 2008). Accordingly, the early 1990s marked the implementation of annual "Force Reduction Plans" (when the Canadian Forces "laid-off" over 10 000 people), which had several implications for the Personnel Selection Branch.

First, the Personnel Selection Branch was responsible for the provision of Second Career Assistance Network services for personnel who were leaving the forces. Second, the Branch was itself susceptible to cutbacks. For the most part, severe cuts to the

Branch were avoided prior to 1995, but the incessant threat of downsizing resulted in a culture fraught with defensiveness and the constant need to justify the contributions of the Branch to overall Canadian Forces effectiveness.

Of note, it was announced in 1994 that Royal Roads Military College would close the following year as a military institution before becoming what is now Royal Roads University; Collège militaire royale de St Jean would become Fort St Jean (now a preparatory CEGEP for Royal Military College of Canada staffed by civilian academics) at the same time, leaving the senior college, Canada's Royal Military College or RMC in Kingston as the sole military university. The Applied Military Psychology program was initially lost, but a Minor was instituted at Royal Military College in 1998 under the guidance of Lieutenant-Colonel Peter Bradley (RMC Military Psychology & Leadership Department Head, 1997–2004) and Dr. Robert St. John (RRMC Military Psychology Department Head, 1991–1995; RMC Associate Professor Military Psychology and Leadership Department, 1995–2008), The Royal Military College reinstated an Applied Military Psychology degree in 2005 (personal communication, Dr. Bob St. John, January 14, 2008).

More changes occurred for the Personnel Selection Branch in the mid-1990s that saw several cuts including cutting approximately 20 Personnel Selection Officer positions (just over 20% of the total Personnel Selection Branch) and downgrading the Branch Advisor position from a Colonel to a Lieutenant Colonel/Commander rank (A. Okros, personal communication, December 10, 2007; Prociuk, 2001). This latter decision played a large part in Prociuk's decision to retire in 1995 (Prociuk, 2001). These changes in the Branch provoked real concern about the Branch's viability. They also served as a sign to senior Personnel Selection Officers that there was an urgent need to justify the important role of Personnel Selection Branch to senior officers in the fulfilling broader Canadian Forces goals. Not all changes were detrimental to the Branch, however. For example, in 1991 Prociuk negotiated an exchange position which was established between Canadian Forces Personnel Applied Research Unit and the Australian Army 1st Psychological Research Unit in Canberra (because of Australian Defence budget cuts, this exchange was stopped in 2004; D. O'Keefe, personal communication, January 5, 2008). This Commonwealth alliance resulted in advances in research such as the institution of consulting services for operational commanders.

In 1995, Lieutenant-Colonel Claude Hamel left his position as the Commanding Officer at the research unit and took over Colonel Prociuk's position as Branch Advisor (note the lower rank after Colonel Prociuk's retirement). Hamel was faced with a mandate from Canadian Forces' senior leadership to downsize the Branch and there was a serious threat of more cuts thereby jeopardizing the future of I/O psychology in the Canadian military. During Hamel's short tenure he worked assiduously with then Commander Alan Okros (who had taken over as Commanding Officer at the research unit) to develop what they had termed the "Branch Rescue Plan" (A. Okros, personal communication, December 10, 2007). Together Hamel and Okros unveiled a creative business case for the Personnel Selection Branch and managed to keep almost all Personnel Selection Officer positions (A. Okros, personal communication, December 10, 2007).

When the Personnel Applied Research Unit closed on October 12, 1995, then Commander Alan Okros took over for Hamel as

Branch Advisor. Okros continued to carry on their joint objective of securing a valued and long-term position for the Branch in the Canadian Forces. Okros made (and continued to make through his associate Professor position in the Military Psychology and Leadership Department at the Royal Military College; he is now on faculty at Canadian Forces College in Toronto) many contributions to the Personnel Selection Branch including fostering a focus on relevant applied and theoretical research, facilitating the application of research, and communicating the importance of Personnel Selection Officers' services to all levels within the military. Okros was able to convince the senior leadership of the Canadian Forces of the value of Personnel Selection Officers, and was able to form relationships and links with civilian academia to lend credibility to the research being conducted alongside senior Personnel Selection Officers. The relationships that Okros fostered with civilian academia not only served to educate civilians about the role of I/O psychology within the Canadian Forces, but allowed Personnel Selection Officers to transition more smoothly to civilian universities to pursue advanced training.

Supporting Canadian Forces' Operations in Theatre

Okros was also heavily involved in the movement to get Personnel Selection Officers deployed with combat or peacekeeping missions. This proved difficult given limited positions available to support/specialist occupations in peacekeeping and combat zones. Practically speaking, there is always great pressure to have more "bayonets" at the expense of support/specialists; Personnel Selection Officers had to compete for these positions with other specialist occupations (e.g., Public Affairs Officers, Legal Officers, Chaplains, Mental Health and Intelligence Officers; A. Okros, personal communication, March 10, 2008). However, Okros persuasively argued that Personnel Selection Officers would be able to provide information about the morale and the confidence in leaders, which would be vital to combat success.

Then Major Kelly Farley (now Dr. Farley and Chief Scientist of Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis which is a research organisation embedded within the Department of National Defence and staffed with civilian researchers and Personnel Selection Officers) was the first Personnel Selection Officer to be deployed to Bosnia in 1997 (Roto 0 Canadian Contingent Stabilisation Force) where he conducted research on combat effectiveness. Since then, 1–2 PSOs have deployed in tandem with the traditional foot soldiers on 6–9 month deployment rotations.

After taking over the lead of the Personnel Selection Branch from Capt(N) Okros, Colonel Lamerson worked to solidify the initiatives of her predecessor (Okros). Personnel Selection Officers were now employed more broadly than before, including roles outside of traditional Personnel Selection responsibilities; accordingly, she strove to ensure that selection officers uniformly exemplified professionalism and competence while carrying out their duties. In order to maintain the credibility and enhance the profile of the Branch, Lamerson encouraged Personnel Selection Officers to adhere to professional standards of Psychology and conduct themselves in accordance with the CPA's Code of Ethics (2000).

During this time, Personnel Selection Officers continued their active role, advising commanders in theatre, specifically in Afghanistan. Personnel Selection Officers were labelled as Operational Psychological Advisors when in theatre (affectionately

known as “OPAs”); their role was to advise command on the morale, cohesion, leadership, and combat stress levels of their respective units using the Human Dimensions of Operations survey (which measures such constructs as Confidence in Leadership, Cohesion, Communication, Strain, and Coping Mechanisms) as well as assist soldiers in third location decompressions (where soldiers returning from operations have a chance to regroup before returning to Canada). Because of military commander satisfaction with these positions, 3 new Army Brigade Personnel Selection Officer positions have been established (preference given to those with a Masters degree in I/O psychology) in spring 2008 allowing I/O psychologists to be embedded within their respective military units (C. Lamerson, personal communication, January 11, 2008). In the past, Personnel Selection Officers have been “parachuted in” to support units in theatre (presently this means extensive support of the Afghanistan mission), one of the downfalls of this approach was that it was difficult for them to gain credibility and rapport with the soldiers. Since the creation of these new positions, Personnel Selection Officers have been able to train alongside these operators in garrison and develop a more intimate understanding of the relevant issues, thereby providing superior advice and support, and producing operationally relevant research.

Another initiative that the Personnel Selection Branch undertook during Lamerson’s tenure was expanding their role to include organisational consulting in garrison (C. Lamerson, personal communication, January 11, 2008). In 2005, Personnel Selection Officers began to offer consulting services through the Unit Morale Profile survey, which measures similar constructs (e.g., Employee Engagement, Cohesions, Role Stressors, Commitment, Leadership, Communication) to the aforementioned Human Dimensions of Operations survey. Although the Army and the Air Force were receptive to this idea, the Navy resisted until 2006 when multiple surveys were administered within Maritime Forces Atlantic. This process is also gaining credibility internationally as demonstrated by the fact that one such survey was administered at the request of the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation comprising 26 countries) in late 2008. Steadily this consulting role has begun to include a prescriptive approach; providing information to commanders to facilitate informed decision making when addressing areas for improvement (e.g., stress management, job satisfaction, and perceptions of those in leadership roles).

The fact that the majority of Personnel Selection Officers come from operational backgrounds (those who enrolled directly from the civilian sector must already be in possession of an approved advanced degree directly related to I/O psychology) may have contributed to the Navy’s eventual acceptance of the Personnel Selection Branch’s internal consulting role; taking the scientist/practitioner model a step further. Possessing skills from a military operational background allows Personnel Selection Officers to understand culture and internal operational procedures, and communicate more effectively with senior military leadership resulting in relevant support (e.g., research, policy, design of selection systems). When Personnel Selection Officers possess relevant operational backgrounds, the operational leadership is more receptive to their presence as specialist officers as well. While the Navy’s initial resistance to the administration of the Unit Morale Profile could be attributed to its conservative outlook steeped in customs and tradition; there were two former qualified Maritime

Surface Officers working in the Formation Personnel Selection Office (East Coast Navy) in 2007—then Lieutenant Commander Sarah McMillan (who became a Personnel Selection Officer in 1997) and then Lieutenant (Navy) Rob Francis (who became a Personnel Selection Officer in 2006)—who worked together to endorse the Unit Morale Profile within the East Coast Navy. It had been years since a former Maritime Surface Officer had worked as the Formation Personnel Selection Officer. It is fair to say that because of their operational Naval experience, they were able to effectively promote the idea of the Unit Morale Profile to many of the Ship’s Captains. Although this process was completely voluntary, several Captains sought out the Unit Morale Profile after hearing about this process from their colleagues; this process has since been sought after by Canada’s West Coast.

Uncertain Future

Similar to others, Lamerson noted that the senior Canadian Forces’ leadership was misinformed with regard to the broader application of the Personnel Selection Officer skills (i.e., the breadth of I/O psychology) and worked diligently to change these perceptions. She partially attributes this to the limiting label of the Branch itself (i.e., Personnel Selection), which can be misconstrued as the only role of the Branch. Lamerson aptly noted when discussing the role of Personnel Selection Officers that, “85% of what we do is educate people on what we could, would, should, and can’t do” (C. Lamerson, personal communication, January 11, 2008). Although, Lamerson also notes, this is not much different than the challenges that civilian human resources professionals and I/O psychologists face in their practises.

Colonel Eyres took over as Acting-Branch Advisor following the retirement of Colonel Lamerson in November of 2007; and retired from the Canadian Forces in April 2008. Major General Walter Semianiw’s (who is now Chief of Military Personnel) vision is to recruit, develop and sustain people for the Canadian Forces. Major General Semianiw has proposed the idea of merging the Personnel Selection Branch with another specialist Branch also consisting uniquely of officers: the Training and Development Branch as well as a component of the Logistics Branch, specifically, Human Resources (Major General W. Semianiw, Joint Command and Staff Course Serial # 34, Canadian Forces College, Toronto, ON, January 10, 2008). It is not known at the time this paper was written what the resultant Branch will look like, whether the merged Branch will be reduced in overall size, when this will take place or even what it will be called.

Overall Themes and Lessons Learned

In many respects, the history of the Personnel Selection Branch parallels that of the field of Industrial/Organisational Psychology. In North America, I/O psychology began with the experimental tradition of Munsterberg (Landy, 1993, 1997). The field initially focused on the traditional “industrial” issues associated with personnel psychology, was given renewed impetus by challenges arising from the Civil Rights movement, and eventually broadened its scope to include a broad array of organisational issues (for a discussion, see Katzell & Austin, 1992).

Similarly, although its beginnings were steeped in experimentalism, the Personnel Selection Branch’s evolution from the be-

ginning of the Second World War until the 1970s was marked by an increasing focus on what is now known as Industrial psychology. There has always been a large focus on more “industrial” issues such as selection and placement within the Branch. But the Charter of Human Rights evoked a movement to examine the employment of women and homosexuals in the military which lead to the exploration of more “organisational” psychology issues such as team cohesion, stress management, leadership. The broadening of the domain to include more “O” issues brought Personnel Selection Officers to the forefront (A. Okros, personal communication, December 10, 2007). As the Personnel Selection Branch evolves there has been “less emphasis on individual client services and a focus on systemic issues” (K. Wenek, personal communication, December, 14, 2007). For example, individuals associated with the Branch have been instrumental in developing leadership doctrine for the Canadian Forces, improving selection protocols, providing a conceptual foundation for the Defence Ethics program, developing diversity policies and programs as well as providing research and program-development support for the Canadian Force’s leadership reforms following the highly publicized Somalia incident (K. Wenek, personal communication, December 14, 2007, and February 29, 2008). In effect, Personnel Selection Officers have been working as internal I/O consultants.

Another parallel is that members of the Personnel Selection Branch face ongoing struggles for credibility. It has been, and remains, difficult to justify the role of the Branch to senior officers whose focus is not on the selection of their personnel, but their performance in combat and peace-keeping operations (including immediate concerns over ageing equipment and strained budgets). It is often difficult to put research into action, and to do so quickly is often impossible, despite pressure from the client, in this case, the senior leadership of the Canadian Forces. An inability to deliver according to the client’s time demands can sometimes serve to only confirm their doubts about the capabilities and value of Personnel Selection within the Canadian Forces. This struggle for credibility and the need to balance the demands of practise with the rigour of research is, in some sense, endemic to the field (Dunnette, 1990; Van Strien, 1998). Furthermore, when the need to recruit personnel is high, and there are few applicants, selection becomes of minimal consequence (although placement is still important). The Personnel Selection Branch has had “ups and downs regarding their fate in the Armed Forces”, when numbers of applicants are low (e.g., during the Korean War) the absence of valid selection processes lead to the selection of soldiers who lacked ability and had poor temperament, which in turn, resulted in terrible results for the Canadian Forces (P. Rowe, personal communication, December 10, 2007).

One thing is clear, over the course of time the Personnel Selection Branch has reacted within the context of the Canadian Forces to external pressures (from senior leadership or legislative changes, e.g.) rather than internal demands or pressures. It is not a branch that could or should be truly autonomous or define its own issues as its role is to support the operational effectiveness of the Canadian Forces, as a whole. Accordingly, it is reactionary; it should provide senior leadership with relevant information and support as required. Notwithstanding these identity complexities, there exists a parallel with the challenges faced by the Personnel Selection Branch and those faced by the I/O profession as a whole as I/O psychology “takes information from a broad range of

subdisciplines in psychology and applies these to the world of work, so just like in the Personnel Selection Branch, there has been confusion and/or evolution of what an I/O psychologist really is or does” (A. Okros, personal communication, March 10, 2008).

Contributions of the Canadian Forces to the I/O Psychology Profession

Historically, the Personnel Selection Branch has provided research and applied work opportunities for civilian I/O psychologists and trainees. For example, the Canadian Forces through their collaborations with civilian I/O psychologists has been instrumental to the theoretical development of the selection interview (P. Rowe, personal communication, December 10, 2007), utility analysis (Catano, 1988a, 1988b, 1989, 1990, 1993), and integrity testing (Catano & Prosser, 2006, 2007). Furthermore, the Personnel Applied Research Unit has served to provide many civilian graduate students with paid practicum experience with cutting-edge research experience with access to expansive databases. Collaborating with the Canadian Forces on applied projects enables civilian academics to authentically embrace the scientist-practitioner model. Applied work often stimulates new research ideas and it provides excellent examples to use in teaching (V. Catano, personal communication, November 19, 2008). Many civilian academics have also supervised student research projects that have used Canadian Forces data which have led to main stream publication (e.g., Ahronson & Cameron, 2007; Allen, 2003; Campbell & Catano, 2004; Catano & Johnston, 1993; Charbonneau & Nicol, 2002; Day & Livingstone, 2001; Holden & Scholtz, 2002; Johnston & Catano, 2002; Klammer, Skarlicki, & Barclay, 2002; Lamerson & Kelloway, 1996; Noonan & Sulsky, 2001; Vanderpool & Catano, in press). Curiously, however, examinations of the field (e.g., Latham, 1988) neglect to mention any military influences, either during or post Second World War.

The Personnel Selection Branch has also contributed to the professional development of psychology through its involvement in the CPA. Through the Military Psychology Section, Personnel Selection Officers have showcased the high caliber work being conducted in the Canadian Forces and have created networks with civilian I/O psychologists. The Military Section hosts an annual CPA Social Event which is very well attended by members of the Canadian I/O psychology community and has provided many with the opportunity to network and foster research collaboration.

Finally, the Personnel Selection Branch is highly involved in the international research community. For example, they participate in NATO research panels, the International Applied Military Psychology Symposium, the Inter-University Seminar of Armed Forces and Society, and The Technical Cooperation Program panel. From these collaborations Personnel Selection Officers have gained a broad international perspective and have been able to keep abreast of cutting-edge research and practise throughout the world (A. Okros, personal communication, December 10, 2007). This collaboration has resulted in many productive working partnerships and exchanges, such as the Australian Personnel Selection Officer exchange position. The broader I/O community may be able to learn from this expansive approach.

Contributions of the I/O Psychology Profession to the Canadian Forces

Civilian I/O psychologists have been invited to review the literature, conduct research, consult on policy decisions, provide talks, and train PSOs. Rowe established a firm bond with the Canadian Forces, specifically the Personnel Selection Branch following the establishment of the Master's program in Industrial/Organisational psychology at the University of Waterloo until her recent retirement. This relationship has been a two-way street, as members of the Branch have gone to Waterloo for postgraduate training, and civilian master's students in the program have spent work terms in various military settings. In fact, until the mid80s, Rowe was the only I/O psychologist to academically supervise Personnel Selection Officers. Rowe speculates that many civilians working in the I/O realm have even benefitted from relationships in other organisations where former Personnel Selection Officers hold positions (P. Rowe, personal communication, December 10, 2007). The same holds true for Saint Mary's University, Guelph, Western, and Calgary.

Because the professionalism and reputation of the Personnel Selection Branch relies heavily on the competence of its Personnel Selection Officers, the importance of higher-level education is paramount. Accordingly, the Personnel Selection Branch had the highest percentage of Canadian Forces funding for postgraduate training (more than doctors and lawyers)—it was 10% but has been reduced to 5% of the Branch being at University at any one time (A. Okros, personal communication, December 10, 2007). They rely heavily on the expertise of Canadian Universities specialising in I/O psychology to provide top quality education and relevant training to the Personnel Selection Officer Corps. To facilitate postgraduate training of Personnel Selection Officers, faculty from Saint Mary's University have been contracted to teach several core courses in Ottawa (V. Catano, personal communication, November 19, 2008). This collaboration reduces training costs for the military and expedites Personnel Selection Officer graduate training.

The Canadian Forces is such a large federal government agency that it is more vulnerable than most organisations to Human Rights challenges. Accordingly, Personnel Selection Officers provide added value protecting not only the Department of National Defence from needless lawsuits, but individuals as well through fair, evidence-based selection and placement protocols. The Personnel Selection Branch looks to research and best practises from field experts and academia and has regularly sought the advice of prominent I/O psychologists in Canada to meet these challenges.

Fostering the Partnership

As we reflect on the relationship between the Personnel Selection Branch and the broader I/O community, it is evident that the association has served both parties very well. As we look to the future, it is important to recognise the ways in which this alliance can be maintained and strengthened. The Canadian Forces has maintained a substantial database, perhaps one of the largest in this country (S. Eyres, personal communication, November 30, 2007); although it is understood that there are proprietary obstacles, streamlining processes for civilian researchers to access this data could certainly advance I/O psychology in Canada and continue to

foster a productive partnership between the Canadian Forces and academia in this context. The Military Section is still active within CPA, and the Personnel Selection Branch continues to host and organise social events at their conferences that have proven mutually beneficial. Personnel Selection Officers regularly participate in other academic conferences as well; they present relevant Canadian Forces' research and learn about relevant research being conducted by those outside of the military. Civilian academia has historically provided high caliber training to the Personnel Selection Officers. These personal and informational exchanges certainly help educate each respective organisation about the other and can only serve to advance I/O psychology in both military and civilian contexts and therefore should continue in the future.

History tends to repeat itself; presently, the fate of the Personnel Selection Branch is once again in jeopardy and its future role is uncertain. Once the final disposition of the Personnel Selection Branch is confirmed, under the leadership of the latest Personnel Selection Branch advisor, Lieutenant-Colonel Larry Grandmaison, the future of these mutually beneficial relationships between the Personnel Selection Branch and I/O psychology in Canada may become clearer. It is the hope of many Personnel Selection Officers and I/O psychologists (including the authors) that the relationship between the military and civilian sector will continue to strengthen and that this integration and increased collaboration will continue to benefit the science and practise of I/O psychology in Canada.

Résumé

Les auteurs ont examiné des documents d'archive publics et publiés et ont interviewé des officiers seniors et retraités de la sélection du personnel, ainsi que des psychologues canadiens influents dans la sphère industrielle/organisationnelle (I/O), afin de documenter l'histoire de la branche de sélection du personnel des Forces canadiennes. Les auteurs soulignent l'étroite relation de travail entre les psychologues I/O civils et militaires, et suggèrent qu'ils ont mutuellement influencé la pratique de la psychologie I/O au Canada.

Mots-clés : psychologie industrielle/organisationnelle, officiers de la sélection de personnel des Forces canadiennes, histoire critique, collaboration interdisciplinaire

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