

**Building Resilient Warriors:  
Taking the Canadian Army's Resilience  
Training Beyond the Classroom**

**A Monograph  
by  
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## **Abstract**

**BUILDING RESILIENT WARRIORS: TAKING THE CANADIAN ARMY'S RESILIENCE TRAINING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM** by LCol D. Craig Aitchison, Canadian Army, 49 pages.

In May of 2011 the Canadian Forces introduced new training into the curricula at the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School and select Army Schools. Resilience training consisting of a handful of classroom lectures focusing on theory, individual coping skills, and the role of leadership would now be taught at three points in a soldier's training. This classroom time introduces such concepts as the nature and types of mental health issues, the role of support structures and family, as well as the foundational skills for individuals such as the "Big Four. The training serves as the introduction to resilience development, but is not built upon practically or progressively through a recruit's training. This is a shortcoming of the present training regime.

While this introduction of theoretical resilience training is a good start, it is not enough. Like any new knowledge or skill, there is a need for reinforcement through practical application, practice, and use under challenging conditions in order to make it effective. Supervised mentoring and coaching from patient, experienced instructors, along with formal incorporation into exercise development, is the next logical and necessary step. Without it, the recruit will forget the theory, not adopt the skill out of habit, and default to whatever tools are at the top of his toolbox.

What is missing from this implementation is that the theory is only the first step; it must be taken and put into practice. To be effective in times of stress, theory must become habit. It must be incorporated into the practical aspects of training: garrison command roles and field assessments. This paper will offer constructive criticism directed at those that train, or are responsible for training policies, with the goal of shaping the development of training standards and plans. This will assist training staff to develop material and design individual training course exercises to build on the work done in the delivery of resilience theory in the classroom.

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## **Introduction**

In May of 2011 the Canadian Forces introduced new training into the curriculum at the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School and select Army Schools. Resilience training consisting of a handful of classroom lectures focusing on theory, individual coping skills, and the role of leadership would now be taught at three points in a soldier's training: basic training (for soldiers and leaders), primary leadership training, and sub-unit command training. New soldiers and aspirant leaders in the Canadian Forces will now complete resilience training at recruit training and army common junior leadership training. This classroom time introduces such concepts as the nature and types of mental health issues, the role of support structures and family, as well as the foundational skills for individuals such as the "Big Four": Goal Setting, Mental Rehearsal/Visualization, Self Talk and Arousal Management. The training serves as the introduction to resilience development, but is not built upon practically or progressively through a recruit's training. This is a shortcoming of the present training regime.

While this introduction of theoretical resilience training is a good start, it is not enough. Like any new knowledge or skill, there is a need for reinforcement through practical application, practice, and use under challenging conditions in order to make it effective. Supervised mentoring and coaching from patient, experienced instructors, along with formal incorporation into exercise development, is the next logical and necessary step. Without it, the recruit will forget the theory, not adopt the skill out of habit, and default to whatever tools are at the top of his toolbox.

For an Infantry Officer, the training syllabus from enrollment to classification qualification consists of fifty-two weeks of instruction. Fifteen weeks are spent at Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School in St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec completing the Basic Military Officer Qualification course, following which that officer candidate is assigned to the Infantry School in Gagetown, New Brunswick. There, the officer candidate is expected to complete successfully three courses: Basic Military Officer Qualification (Land), Basic Infantry

Officer Course Developmental Period 1.1, and Basic Infantry Officer Course Developmental Period 1.2. Resilience training is now conducted on Basic Military Officer Qualification and Basic Military Officer Qualification (Land) comprising four and five periods respectively, but is limited to classroom theory and PowerPoint presentations.

When the training was introduced at the Infantry School in May of 2011, the credibility of the Resilience Training Implementation Team was quickly established amongst the typically cynical infantry non-commissioned officer. The hand-picked instructors grasped the aim and objectives of the training, but it took effort from the Infantry School's leadership to get them invested in the content. Within only weeks, the vocabulary crept into the daily lexicon and eventually the instructors believed in the material and its usefulness.<sup>1</sup>

What is missing from this implementation is that the theory is only the first step; it must be taken and put into practice. To be effective in times of stress, theory must become habit. It must be incorporated into the practical aspects of training: garrison command roles and field assessments. Given the fifty-two weeks required to train an Infantry Officer, the development of this "habit" should be easily achievable. This view is shared by defence research scientists, Army Training staff, and most importantly, the author of the initial training programme.<sup>2</sup>

There are many who will resist the introduction of new training. The question of "why invest the time, money and effort?" is a reasonable one, especially given the already significant time pressures on an Army that has been engaged in combat operations for a decade; there may be more compelling training priorities. When one considers the fiscal pressures on the

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<sup>1</sup> Captain Ray Corby, former Officer in Charge of the Basic Military Officer Qualification (Land), Infantry School, interview with author, telephone interview, 16 December 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Deniz Fikretoglu, Defence Research Scientist, Defence Research and Development Canada (Toronto), interview with author, telephone interview, Toronto, ON, Canada, 22 August 2011, Lieutenant-Colonel Shawn Tymchuk, Major Julie Belanger, Captain John Rickard, Directorate of Army Training, interview with author, telephone interview, Kingston, ON, Canada, 2 September 2011, and Lieutenant-Colonel Suzanne Bailey, Canadian Forces National Practice Leader for Social Work, interview with author, telephone interview, Ottawa, ON, Canada, 22 August 2011.

Department of National Defence in particular, one may balk at the strength of the imperative. After all, developing a comprehensive resilience training programme that operationalizes such a training regime will take considerable effort on the part of trainers and training staff across the Army's Individual Training Authority and Directorate of Army Training, where priorities are already tightly managed and person days limited.

A second source for potential resistance will be a lack of efficacy study. In fact, this was the prime reason that Defence Research scientists recommended against developing a resilience training programme a decade ago.<sup>3</sup> But the fact is there is no better time than the present, and there are plenty of examples of existing training programmes that the Canadian Army can mirror. In fact within their own lineage, Canadian Army trainers have experience from which lessons can be drawn.

This paper will compare Canadian Army training methodologies of old with those presently being used in basic training establishments in the United States. Examples from the field of sports psychology will further support the development of a more comprehensive resilience training approach in the Canadian Forces. Using these examples, the paper will offer constructive criticism directed at those that train, or are responsible for training policies, with the goal of shaping the development of training standards and plans. This will allow those combat experienced Officers, Warrant Officers and NCOs to develop material and design individual training course exercises to build on the work done in the delivery of resilience theory in the classroom.

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<sup>3</sup> Defence Research and Development Canada (Toronto) conducts a range of research, but focuses mainly on Human Dynamics and the Human Dimension. See Angelopoulos, P. A., Houde, S. J. R. J., Thompson, M. M., McCreary, D., Blais, A. R., & Pasto, L., *Canadian Forces Training and Mental Preparation for Adversity: Empirical Review of Stoltz 'Adversity Quotient (AQ) Training for Optimal Response to Adversity, a Review of the AQ Literature and Supporting Studies*, DRDC Toronto, 2002, iv.



## Why Now?

“Not all wounds are visible, and the invisible wounds of mental illness are no less real, challenging, or potentially life threatening. In fact, sometimes they are more so.”  
- General R. J. Hillier, Canadian Chief of Defence Staff, 2005 – 2008<sup>4</sup>

In December 2008, the Canadian Forces Ombudsman issued a special report to the Minister of National Defence entitled *A Long Road to Recovery: Battling Operational Stress Injuries*. It was the second strategic review of Canadian Forces policies and programmes designed to battle the ever-growing number of operational stress injuries resulting from operations in Afghanistan and other theatres. The study recognised that a significant number of soldiers returning from Afghanistan were suffering from depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. The report also acknowledged that progress had been made, but cited limited resources as the principal factor preventing positive changes. It offered thirty-one recommendations, ranging from gathering statistical data, education about post-traumatic stress disorder, and family support programmes to changes to the governance structure; but nowhere did it consider or propose changing how to prepare soldiers for the psychological stresses they will encounter on the battlefield.<sup>5</sup>

Canadian mental health professionals have been debating the merits of training to reduce the risk of mental health injuries for years. In 2002, Defence Research and Development Canada (Toronto) reviewed a range of literature and related studies, but recommended waiting before implementing any sort of training due to a lack of empirical substantiation of the validity of

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<sup>4</sup> General Rick Hillier, original source unavailable, taken from the homepage of “Mental Health & Operational Stress Injury (OSI) Joint Speakers Bureau (JSB)” at <http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/cen/ps/mho-smb/jsb-bso-eng.asp> (accessed 7 November 11).

<sup>5</sup> Canadian Forces Ombudsman, *A Long Road to Recovery: Battling Operational Stress Injuries*, Annex A, December 2008, online: <http://www.ombudsman.dnd.ca/rep-rap/sr-rs/osi-tso-3/annex-annexe-a-eng.asp> (accessed 7 November 2011).

existing training methodologies.<sup>6</sup> More recently, there have been recommendations from a panel of mental health experts recognising that “training to enhance resilience has strong common-sense appeal: Service members will face significant adversity, particularly when deployed on a difficult operation” and recommends that the Canadian Forces “should continue to evaluate the resilience training aspects of its mental health training program.”<sup>7</sup> Finally in May of 2011, the Canadian Forces finally took decisive action and implemented a programme that introduces resilience training at the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School to recruits, at the Infantry School for all Army officers, and at the Land Force Area Training Centres to all junior NCOs. These are complementary classes that teach students about individual psychological stress and stressors, how to deal with them and how a leader can impact on subordinates’ stress.

There are several factors that indicate that there is no better time than the present to introduce such a change to the Army’s training methodology. The Canadian Forces is highly regarded by the Canadian public at this time.<sup>8</sup> As the memory of the contribution to the combat mission in Afghanistan fades, so too will that support. As much as the Canadian Forces should take this opportunity to leverage public support for investment in treatment and support services, so should it seek to overhaul the way soldiers are prepared for the rigours of operating in the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous context associated with the contemporary operating environment (COE).

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<sup>6</sup> Angelopoulos et al., iv.

<sup>7</sup> Zamorski, Mark A., MD, *Report of the Canadian Forces Expert Panel on Suicide Prevention*, Directorate of Mental Health/Deployment Health, Canadian Forces Health Services Group Headquarters, Ottawa, ON, Feb 2010, 27-28

<sup>8</sup> Approximately nine in ten Canadians perceive the Canadian Forces as a vital national institution (92%) and have a positive impression of the people who serve in the Forces (87%). A majority of Canadians also perceive the military as essential (93%) and a source of pride (85%). Comparisons to 2009 show that impressions of Canada’s military in all of these areas have significantly improved over the past year (increases range from 3 to 5 percentage points), IPSOS-Reid, *Qualitative & Quantitative Research: Views of the Canadian Forces - 2010*, March 2010, 1.

The Canadian Forces has excellent, combat experienced instructors in its schools and training staff. Officers, Warrant Officers, and Non-Commissioned Officers<sup>9</sup> recently returning from combat operations in Afghanistan are the perfect source of change within the Army's training system. Their experience combined with the will of the Army's leadership, a compelling argument of need and internal "public" support, make for excellent timing to implement new and innovative methods designed to best prepare Canada's soldiers for the demands of the COE.

But perhaps the most compelling reasons to adopt a comprehensive resilience training programme now are the organisational benefits this nature of training offers the Canadian Forces, and the fact that statistics indicate that the health benefits to the next generation of warfighters could be very real, and experts believe that the earlier this nature of training is introduced, the better.<sup>10</sup>

### **Organisational Benefits**

An organisation made up of resilient people is not immune to the chaos associated with change, but it adapts more readily and more rapidly. In a time of significant financial uncertainty, changes to overseas missions, reductions in the uniformed workforce and cuts to the public service, increased demands on individuals and all of the turmoil associated with it, the benefits of a more resilient organisational could be very real. Organisations populated with resilient people

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<sup>9</sup> In the Canadian Forces the rank of Warrant Officer is roughly equivalent to a U.S. Army first sergeant; it is the rank at which an infantryman would be a platoon second-in-command. NCOs include sergeants and Master-Corporals, the ranks at which an infantryman would be a section commander and section second-in-command.

<sup>10</sup> Drs. Amy Adler, Paul Bliese, Dennis McGurk, Charles Hoge, and Carl Castro, Battlemind Debriefing and Battlemind Training as Early Interventions With Soldiers Returning From Iraq: Randomization by Platoon, U.S. Army Medical Research Unit-Europe, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, Heidelberg, Germany, (June 2009).

will be more agile and more proactive, and more able to react positively to unexpected or drastic changes.<sup>11</sup>

Imagine the organisational benefits of populating the entire Canadian Forces with resilient leaders, soldiers and civilians. According to researchers in the field, the tangible gains would include increased levels of “adaptability and flexibility; higher levels on the personality dimensions of agreeableness, extraversion, and openness to experience; lower levels of neuroticism; higher degrees of self-esteem, mastery, intelligence, hardiness, coping by humor, problem-focused, coping, internal locus of control, optimism, hope, creativity, faith, forgiveness, as well as both achievement and goal orientation.”<sup>12</sup> The Canadian Forces would benefit greatly from personnel with such traits.

## **Statistics**

Possibly the more compelling reason for introducing a more comprehensive resilience training programme is the mental health of the Canadian Forces’ soldiers. Statistics clearly demonstrate that the incidences of operational stress injuries are high and on the rise.<sup>13</sup> While they are admittedly incomplete, recent newspaper reports highlight troubling numbers and a disturbing increase in operational stress injury cases across the Canadian and United States

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<sup>11</sup> Jaye Wald, Steven Taylor, Gordon J. G. Asmundson, Kerry L. Jang, and Jennifer Stapleton, “Literature Review of Concepts: Psychological Resiliency,” (Contract Report CR 2006-073), Defence Research and Development Canada Toronto, 2006, 5-7.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., and Lisa S. Meredith, Cathy D. Sherbourne, Sarah Gaillot, Lydia Hansell, Hans V. Ritschard, Andrew M. Parker, Glenda Wrenn, “Promoting Psychological Resilience in the U.S. Military,” *RAND Corporation, Center for Military Health Policy Research*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 2011), 21.

<sup>13</sup> Les Perreux, “Nearly 1 in 4 Afghan war veterans suffers from mental illness, study shows,” *Globe and Mail*, 16 November 2011, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/nearly-1-in-4-afghan-war-veterans-suffer-from-mental-illness-study-shows/article2238289> (accessed 17 November 2011).

Armies.<sup>14</sup> Many of these injuries do not present themselves for many months, and in some cases, years after the fact. So, notwithstanding Canada's transition from combat to a training mission in Afghanistan, the number of operational stress injury cases will continue to climb. The Canadian Army cannot afford to rest on its laurels.

Public outcry over the poor resources being put against the challenge of supporting these soldiers is also on the rise. Such high profile personalities as retired Lieutenant-General and now Liberal Senator Romeo Dallaire, himself a psychological casualty of war, have been very critical and vocal about the lack of support for the men and women of the Canadian Forces who suffer from operational stress injuries.<sup>15</sup> In a *Toronto Star* investigative series entitled "Wounded Warriors," several cases were cited where soldiers were failed by the bureaucracy. The government was slow to meet needs, unable to address individual requirements, and offered insufficient financial assistance to wounded veterans. Outspoken Infantry Officer, Major Mark Campbell, himself a double amputee above the knees, characterised the "government's financial treatment of injured war veterans is an 'abject betrayal' of a new generation of soldiers."<sup>16</sup>

In his interview, Senator Dallaire rightly points out to the Government that they have a moral obligation to support soldiers being sent into harm's way who return injured, either

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<sup>14</sup> See Michael Staples, "Scars of Afghanistan linger," *Fredericton Daily Gleaner*, Wednesday, 30 November 2011, <http://dailygleaner.canadaeast.com/opinion/article/1459921>, and Gregg Zoroya, "Rise in PTSD cases from two wars strains resources," *USA Today*, 30 November 2011. <http://www.usatoday.com/news/military/story/2011-11-29/PTSD-cases-rise/51476604/1> (both accessed 5 December 2011).

<sup>15</sup> Allan Woods, Bruce Champion-Smith and Richard J. Brennan, "Tories Must Act Fast to Avoid Shaking Morale, Dallaire Warns," *Toronto Star*, Wednesday, 10 November 2010. <http://www.thestar.com/article/888913--tories-must-act-fast-to-avoid-shaking-morale-dallaire-warns> (accessed 20 Jul 2011).

<sup>16</sup> The Canadian Press via the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "Major Who Lost Legs in IED Bashes Veteran Benefits," online: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/story/2011/03/08/calgary-veterans-affairs-charter-pension-reform.html> (accessed 13 January 2012).

physically or mentally.<sup>17</sup> But the Nation's leadership also has the responsibility to make sure that these soldiers are properly equipped, led and trained, including training to reduce the risk of suffering from an operational stress injury. Because in the end, whatever today's mission may be, the Army needs to focus on that of tomorrow since the risk of psychological injury is not unique to Afghanistan.

The Ombudsman Report of 2008 found that the majority of recommendations from the Ombudsman's previous report on the issue were not fully implemented to the satisfaction of his Office.<sup>18</sup> This underscores the lack of priority being placed on treatment and support programmes, which reinforces the argument for preventative measures.<sup>19</sup> The 2008 report cites a lack of resources as being a major limiter to progress in this regard. Furthermore, with the transition out of combat operations in Afghanistan, and domestic budgetary pressures, Joint Personnel Support Units' manning priorities have dropped and funding has been cut.<sup>20</sup> By introducing a progressive and comprehensive preventative training programme, the demand on the limited departmental resources that exist will be reduced, allowing for better treatment and support for those that so badly need it.

This problem of resource allocation is not unique to the Canadian Forces. Even with the significant resources behind the United States Army, there has been public outcry over the medical support for veterans. First, a century of dedicated wounded soldier support ended when the Walter-Reed Army Medical Center was closed, then there was a proposal to change the

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<sup>17</sup> Allan Woods et al., "Tories Must Act Fast to Avoid Shaking Morale, Dallaire Warns"

<sup>18</sup> Ombudsman Report, 3.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>20</sup> In the past 18 months, JPSUs (which are generally the equivalent of US Army Resiliency Centers) have experienced a 50% reduction in manning and equally drastic reductions in budget. Lieutenant-Colonel Chris Hand, CO JPSU NB and PEI, interview by author, telephone interview, 22 August 2011.

medical support system for returning wounded combat veterans.<sup>21</sup> The latter resulted in a considerable uproar from interest groups such as the American Legion. Craig Roberts, media relations manager for the American Legion, was quoted as saying “it’s not the Blue Cross that puts soldiers in harm’s way, it’s the federal government,” reinforcing the government’s moral obligation to treat wounded service members.<sup>22</sup> Better preparation will mitigate the need to treat soldiers on return to Canada or the United States; resilient soldiers will adapt to the demands of the conflict and return healthier for it.

## **What is Resilience?**

A globally accepted definition of resilience is difficult to find. The most common definitions include words like rebound, recover, adjust, adapt. Resilience relates to a response to or change following trauma, adversity, or stress to a system or individual. It is influenced by many factors, but the importance of the individual factors that do contribute depends on the situation, researcher or clinician.<sup>23</sup> Two words consistently associated with resilience, however, are hardiness and adaptability.

For the purpose of this paper, the definition of resilience offered by Merriam-Webster will be used. The online version of the dictionary defines resilience as “an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.”<sup>24</sup> The common use of resiliency is largely accepted as a

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<sup>21</sup> Sabrina Tavernise, “A New Chapter in Providing Care for Those Who Serve: An Emotional Ceremony as Walter Reed Army Medical Center Prepares to Close,” *The New York Times*, 28 July 2011, A13.

<sup>22</sup> FoxNews, “Veterans Groups Blast Obama Plan for Private Insurance to Pay for Service-Related Health Care,” 17 March 2009, online: <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/03/17/veterans-groups-blast-obama-plan-private-insurance-pay-service-related-health/#ixzz1dss4fbGy> (accessed 16 November 2011).

<sup>23</sup> Don McCearry, PhD, and Deniz Fikretoglu, PhD, Defence Research and Development (Toronto), interview by author, telephone interview, 8 February 2012.

<sup>24</sup> Merriam-Webster Dictionary, online: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resilience> (accessed 13 January 2012).

synonym, and is used interchangeably in the literature. This ought not to be confused with the “resiliency” programme and centers which the United States Army has established for the treatment of mental health injuries amongst its soldiers.

Merriam-Webster defines hardiness as “capable of withstanding adverse conditions.”<sup>25</sup> Salvatore Maddi, a leading researcher into hardiness adds that it is a combination of three attitudes (commitment, control, and challenge) that together provide the courage and motivation needed to turn stressful situations from potential catastrophes into opportunities for personal development.<sup>26</sup> The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines adaptability as capable of being or becoming adjusted to new conditions.<sup>27</sup> Resilience is not about mental toughness so much as mental elasticity.

## **Hardiness**

Researchers have identified several factors that contribute to success, with the personal characteristic of “hardiness” being singled out as the most important. This trait allows individuals to turn potential disasters into opportunity for enhanced performance, leadership and personal growth.<sup>28</sup> Leaders and soldiers, who are hardy, will flourish in the environments like those in which the Canadian Forces operates.

Isolating applicants who possess a high level of hardiness, or fostering it in recruits, should be a priority for recruitment as well as the focus of training goals in the basic training system. It stands to reason that people with high levels of hardiness are those from whose ranks

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<sup>25</sup> Merriam-Webster Dictionary, online: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hardiness> (accessed 13 January 2012).

<sup>26</sup> Salvatore Maddi, “Hardiness: The Courage to Grow from Stresses,” *Journal of Positive Psychology*, Vol 1, Number 3, (2006), 160–168.

<sup>27</sup> The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 10<sup>th</sup> Edn, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) 14.

<sup>28</sup> Salvatore Maddi, “Relevance of Hardiness,” *Military Psychology*, 2007, 61.



the military would wish to attract, recruit, train, and then develop its leaders. Hardy people are characterised as having “a high sense of life and work commitment, a greater feeling of control, and are more open to change and challenges in life.”<sup>29</sup> Such a person should therefore thrive in the environment facing today’s militaries and have a positive impact on the organisation.

One study in hardiness grants that it “develops early in life and is reasonably stable over time” but suggests that hardiness can be developed, is trainable under certain conditions, and that leadership has a significant impact on an individual’s and unit’s hardiness.<sup>30</sup> So by training leaders to be hardy, they can have a significant impact on their own mental well-being, their subordinates’ well-being, and positively impact the organisation as a whole by generating “an increased sense of shared values, mutual respect, and cohesion.”<sup>31</sup>

If hardiness is a trait that affects resilience in people subjected to stressful events, then it is therefore a desirable trait for soldiers and their leaders. If hardiness is something that can be screened for and developed, then it follows logically that militaries ought to be selecting and training its soldiers and leaders in order to leverage this trait. Furthermore, if hardy people thrive under pressure and challenge, then the organisational benefits of populating the Canadian Forces with people with high levels of hardiness is enormous: lower mental health issues, higher outputs, positive organisational work environment, and critical for a military, success in combat operations. An Army populated with hardy soldiers, in short, would be better prepared to win its nation’s wars. Training aspirant leaders both to develop further their own hardiness and to enhance the hardiness of others could be a true “force multiplier” for any military force.

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<sup>29</sup> Paul Bartone, “Resilience Under Military Operational Stress: Can Leaders Influence Hardiness?” *Military Psychology*, 18(3, suppl), 2006, 137.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 141.

## **Adaptability**

The second key component to resilience is adaptability. Adaptability is important because it implies “coming back to baseline functioning levels... or thriving and flourishing beyond baseline functioning.”<sup>32</sup> Adaptability has found its way into the Canadian Army lexicon as a descriptor for future land operations as well as its future foe; it stands to reason that its soldiers should be equally adaptive.<sup>33</sup> There are significant benefits to having adaptable team members.

## **A Case Study in Hardiness - Illinois Bell Telephone**

A study at Illinois Bell Telephone (IBT) over a thirteen-year period identified that certain people responded positively to the company’s upheaval following the industry’s deregulation. IBT suffered a personnel reduction of significant proportions, cutting 12,000 of the 26,000 workforce. Turmoil, uncertainty over job security, inconsistent supervisor-employee relationships, significant movement between functions for those that remained (creating a substantial decrease in job knowledge and confidence). Severe judicial oversight to ensure IBT followed the new competition legislation meant a major disruption was experienced by those that continued to work for the company.<sup>34</sup>

Data collected over a six-year period following the deregulation and associated upheaval demonstrated that two-thirds of the sample “suffered and collapsed.” They experienced problems in job performance, such as workplace violence and absenteeism. They also experienced higher

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<sup>32</sup> Lisa S. Meredith, Cathy D. Sherbourne, Sarah Gaillot, Lydia Hansell, Hans V. Ritschard, Andrew M. Parker, Glenda Wrenn, “Promoting Psychological Resilience in the U.S. Military,” *RAND Corporation, Center for Military Health Policy Research*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 2011), 2.

<sup>33</sup> Department of National Defence, “Land Operations 2021: Adaptive Dispersed Operations The Force Employment Concept For Canada’s Army Of Tomorrow,” B-GL-310-001/AG-001 (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 2007), 4.

<sup>34</sup> Salvatore Maddi, “Hardiness Training at Illinois Bell Telephone,” In J. P. Opatz (Ed.), *Health Promotion Evaluation* 1987, 101–105.

rates of marital divorce. Their health also suffered; they experienced a higher rate of heart attacks, cancer, mental disorders, and suicides. In contrast, the other third of the sample not only survived, but thrived.<sup>35</sup>

Those who were successful in transitioning and stayed at IBT tended to be promoted faster, rising up in management. Those who left used their growth experience to make significant contributions to competitor companies, or started their own businesses. As to their health outcomes, they felt more energy and vitality, and experienced fewer negative health symptoms than before the upheaval.<sup>36</sup>

One-third of the employees were successful in transitioning their personal circumstances into something positive. The three key characteristics that they were deemed to have possessed were high levels of commitment, control, and the ability to more readily accept challenges, and researchers have concluded that they were “hardy” and “adaptive.”<sup>37</sup> These traits are equally desirable in military personnel given the ambiguous nature of operations in today’s complex environments.

There are several methods that can be used to develop hardiness and adaptability in people. The field of sports psychology offers a scientific view, and has established links with its use and results. Based on the recollection of those that were trained in the Army’s schools in the nineteen-fifties and sixties, confidence building activities such as those used then created much hardier soldiers than today’s training system. The United States Marines Corps has a time-tested methodology that continues to produce top-notch graduates from its common officers course. Each offers its unique contribution to the operationalisation of resilience development and will be reviewed in the following case studies.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

## Case Studies

### Sports Psychology

“Fast is slow, slow is smooth, smooth is quick”  
- Unknown

The science of sport has only been around for about 100 years, and modern sports psychology only since the nineteen-sixties. Notwithstanding its relatively new establishment as a branch of psychology, in sport, as well in other elite team disciplines, psychology has been adopted as a fundamental part of high-performance training. Since that time sports psychology has found its way into both team and individual sport. Whether Olympic calibre individual athletes, or professional team members, this element of the science of sport has become as accepted and pervasive as physiotherapy, medicine, and coaching.<sup>38</sup>

The study of sports psychology is now offered in most major academic institutions, and graduates can chose to move into academic fields of study or into an applied field.<sup>39</sup> Canadian Sports Psychologist Dr. John Dunn has chosen to do both. He teaches undergraduate and graduate sports psychology courses at the University of Alberta and works with elite national/international and professional athletes. He is widely published having written or co-authored twenty-five journal articles, sixteen in the last decade alone.<sup>40</sup> With experience working with Canada’s national women’s field hockey team, men’s and women’s biathlon teams, men’s alpine ski team, Team Alberta/Canada (men’s Curling), and the Edmonton Oilers (NHL) and having attending

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<sup>38</sup> Alan S. Kornspan, “The Early Years of Sports Psychology: The Work and Influence of Pierre de Coubertin,” *Journal of Sport Behavior*, March 2007, 30.

<sup>39</sup> An online search revealed 71 graduate level programmes offered in the United States alone, online: <http://www.gradschools.com/search-programs/sports-psychology> (accessed 21 January 2012).

<sup>40</sup> Homepage for Dr. John Dunn, online: <http://www.ualberta.ca/~jdunn/> (accessed 21 January 2012).

such major international sporting events as the Pan American Games, World Championships, and Winter Olympics, he is considered an experienced and capable fieldworker as well as academic.<sup>41</sup>

Outside of sports, Dr. Dunn has also conducted performance psychology seminars with various branches of the military, police services, and the Canadian Olympic Committee. His work within his specialty has become of particular interest to the Canadian Military, and in the past five years he has worked with the Canadian Special Operations Force Command and the Canadian Army's Combat Training Centre. He has been a key contributor to the new Canadian Forces' Resilience Training Programme developed by Lieutenant-Colonel Suzanne Bailey.<sup>42</sup>

Dr. Dunn is a strong proponent of delivering performance training to members of the military, and so it should come as no surprise that he has been involved with the development of the Canadian Forces' Training Programme. Just looking at the "Big Four" one sees clear links; goal setting, visualisation, self-talk and arousal management are the four most common techniques used by sport psychologists to help athletes improve performance and, likewise, form the cornerstone for the Canadian Forces' Resilience Training Programme.<sup>43</sup>

These same "Big Four" the Canadian Forces has adopted figure more and more prominently in athlete coaching techniques. Athletes sponsored by *Own the Podium* directly benefited from the introduction of sports psychologists into their Integrated Support Teams; a cornerstone of the Sport Science and Innovation element of the programme.<sup>44</sup> Consistent praise for this aspect speaks to this fact.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., and Dr. John Dunn, Sports Psychologist, University of Alberta, interview by author, telephone interview, 16 November 2011.

<sup>43</sup> Dr. John Dunn, interview.

<sup>44</sup> For more on *Own the Podium* see the section entitled *Owning the Podium* beginning on page 18 below.

<sup>45</sup> Lawrie and Corbett, *Own the Podium Evaluation 2011*, 7.

As described in the next section, even *Own the Podium*'s trainers used elements of the "Big Four." The simple act of goal setting sets an example for athletes and teams to follow. In fact multiple interviewees agreed that *Own the Podium* "is to be commended for having a very clear vision and very clear goals."<sup>46</sup>

Other athletic organisations also use sports psychology to improve athlete performance. At around the same time as *Own the Podium* was being implemented, Boston University hired a "head" coach to complement their head coach. Sports Psychologist Leonard Zaichkowsky defends his profession from those that would label it as hocus pocus by saying that they "use scientifically validated procedures in interventions to help athletes."<sup>47</sup> Boston University's "head" coach lists the issues he sees with the college's team members: stress management, anxiety, confidence development, and psychological support during serious injury recovery are but a few. His involvement includes pre-season and post-season, as well as pre-game and post-game.<sup>48</sup> Sports psychology has become a key part of their athletics programme. It has a lot to offer the Canadian Forces as well.

### Sports Psychology: An Effective Tool or Mumbo-Jumbo?

In the late nineteen-thirties, Chicago Cubs owner Phillip Wrigley hired Coleman Griffith, a pioneer in sports psychology, to do a complete psychological analysis of the team's players and coaches. Despite the Cubs experiencing regular success on the field, winning several pennants through the decade, Wrigley believed that fine-tuning a player's mind was more important than pitching, catching, hitting, or coaching. Griffith realised that visualisation was a critical element

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Brian Fitzgerald, "Master of the Mind Games," *Bostonia*, Spring 2005, 26.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 26-28.

to psychological preparation for the competition on the field. He may not have called it that, but he clearly understood it:

One of the best attitudes for the actual playing of the game is expressed by the phrase, “the will to win.” This phrase means, of course, different things to different men, but each man can find out what it means for him. He should get hold of it, think about it, and adopt it as his very own. What is still more important, he should make it a necessary feature of every practice period and of every game he plays. He must reduce it to a habit.<sup>49</sup>

That year the Cubs won the World Series.<sup>50</sup>

### Owning the Podium

Like Wrigley before them, the Canadian Government, leading up to the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics, was determined that Canada would “*Own the Podium*” and quintupled funding for amateur sport.<sup>51</sup> Stephen Harper’s government was committed to placing first in medal count, overcoming the previous two Canadian hostings when Canadian athletes were shut out of the gold medal standings.<sup>52</sup> *Own the Podium* was “designed to help Canada’s winter athletes win the most number of medals at the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver, and to place in the top-three nations in the gold-medal count at the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games.”<sup>53</sup> While it failed to meet the first goal, it did meet the second. And while Canada did not win the most medals in 2010, it did win the most gold medals by a wide margin, and overcame the legacy of failure when

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<sup>49</sup> Christopher D. Green, “Psychology Strikes Out: Coleman R. Griffith and the Chicago Cubs,” *History of Psychology*, 2003, Vol. 6, No. 3, 276.

<sup>50</sup> “Just One Bad Century”, [http://www.justonebadcentury.com/chicago\\_cubs\\_tales\\_08\\_12.asp](http://www.justonebadcentury.com/chicago_cubs_tales_08_12.asp) (accessed 30 January 2012).

<sup>51</sup> “Winter Historical Comparison,” *Own the Podium*, online: <http://ownthepodium.org/Funding/comparison.aspx> (accessed 30 January 2012).

<sup>52</sup> When Canada hosted at Montreal in 1976 and Calgary in 1988 no gold medals were won by Canadian athletes, a source of national embarrassment.

<sup>53</sup> “About,” *Own the Podium*, online: <http://ownthepodium.org/About/> (accessed 30 January 2012).

hosting.<sup>54</sup> The investment in athletic support, including a significant investment in sport psychologist support, clearly come out in the anecdotes they relate and the news coverage of the day.

Such stories of how Canada's Freestyle Skiers began to dominate their sport leading up to Vancouver were early indicators of the benefit of such investment. A *National Post* article speaks of a team that thanks to *Own the Podium* has been expertly coached and has grown to become "second to none and a toughened mentality and has skiers firmly believing they can beat anyone in the world." Despite initial weak individual performances, the team recovered and proved they were world-class skiers, sweeping the event. Much of this success can be attributed to the science of sport.<sup>55</sup>

Medal counts in themselves do not necessarily reflect the efficacy of sports psychology. But the final report on *Own the Podium* has anecdotal feedback from athletes and coaches that indicates that mental preparation and psychological training played a part in their success and that it needs to be expanded in future programmes.<sup>56</sup> Other indicators of the beneficial links between performance and the psychology of sport are the stories of figure skater Joannie Rochette and professional golfer Graeme McDowell.

### A heroic performance

Joannie Rochette's story is one that all sports psychologists should recount to underscore the effect they can achieve in athletic determination. Rochette is a six-time Canadian National

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<sup>54</sup> Canada won gold in 14 events (1<sup>st</sup>) and placed third overall in medal count. Kevin Lawrie and Rachel Corbett, *Own the Podium Evaluation 2011*, prepared for Joanne Mortimore, Director, Planning and Operations of *Own the Podium*, 5 September 2011, 25.

<sup>55</sup> John Korobanik, "Canada's Freestylers Prove They Can Deliver: Gold-medal Sweep," *National Post*, 12 March 2007, S11.

<sup>56</sup> Lawrie and Corbett, *Own the Podium Evaluation 2011*, pages 17, 30 and 32.



figure skating champion, Olympic and World medalist. By the time she competed in Vancouver, she had been skating for twenty-two of her twenty-four years. She was a bronze medal hopeful and an athlete that benefited from a veteran coach who understood and endorsed the role of sports psychology.

Just two days before Rochette was scheduled to perform, her mother suddenly died. Despite this personal tragedy, Rochette chose to compete in honour of her mother, completing a complicated programme. Despite personal distractions that would cripple most people, she skated a personal best, winning bronze and the hearts of all of those that bore witness to her “heroic” performance.<sup>57</sup>

In recognition of her inspiring determination, she was awarded the inaugural Terry Fox Award for the 2010 Winter Olympics.<sup>58</sup> Rochette was later chosen as Canada’s flag bearer for the closing ceremony.<sup>59</sup> In December 2010, she was voted the Female Athlete of the Year by The Canadian Press.<sup>60</sup> According to sports psychologist and Dr. Gregg Steinberg, “Joannie controlled her emotions in an extremely tough situation” and he points out that in life “there are many tough situations, that we must control and master our emotions [in which] to be successful.” Steinberg even goes on to contrast Rochette’s focus with Dan Jensen’s lack thereof when competing in the

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<sup>57</sup> Cam Cole, “Rochette delivers emotional performance,” *Vancouver Sun*, 24 February 2010, A3 and Bonnie D. Ford, “In the wake of loss, Rochette inspires,” ESPN, 23 February 2010, online: <http://espn.go.com/espn/print?id=4940647&type=story> (accessed 30 January 2012).

<sup>58</sup> The Terry Fox Award was awarded to the two Olympic athletes who embodied Terry Fox's values of determination and humility in the face of adversity. It was created for the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics. Canadian Press, “Rochette, Majdic share Terry Fox Award,” online: <http://www.cbc.ca/olympics/figureskating/story/2010/02/27/sp-rochette-fox-award.html> (accessed 30 January 2012).

<sup>59</sup> Paul Waldie, “Flag-bearer Rochette 'surprised and touched,’” *The Globe and Mail*, 1 March 2010, A8.

<sup>60</sup> “Rochette Voted Female Athlete of the Year,” *The Globe and Mail*, 28 December 2010, online: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/sports/more-sports/rochette-voted-female-athlete-of-the-year/article1851155/singlepage/#articlecontent> (accessed 30 January 2012).

1988 Olympic, when he understandably emotionally crumpled after learning of the death of his sister.<sup>61</sup>

Whether as a result of sports psychology or simply personal determination and desire, Rochette's focus is a testament to a resilient performance-oriented individual; the type of individual that would thrive in combat.

### It's Just the Basics, Simple Stuff

Graeme McDowell attributes his stunning win of the 2010 United States Open to the work he has been doing with renowned golf sports-psychologist Bob Rotella. While he describes the skills he has learned from Rotella as "just basics" he adds that these basics are skills "you can't ignore and techniques you can use when you're under pressure, breathing and imagery and basic things that we all use that we all take them for granted. The best players do them without thinking and the not-so-good players make mistakes."<sup>62</sup>

These were famous last words for McDowell, who clearly failed to apply these basics at the 2011 United States Open. He gave up a comfortable opening day position in day two, exiting the tournament he had won just a year before. Describing himself as "a bit of a mental case," McDowell squarely placed the blame for his dramatic downfall on his state of mind. He characterised his attitude as "pretty average" and acknowledged that he had lost belief in himself.<sup>63</sup> This is hardly an example of the confidence necessary to win such a prestigious event, and a great illustration of how the mind can play a role under stress.

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<sup>61</sup> Dr. Gregg Steinberg, "Joannie Rochette Wins the Bronze Medal Because She Mastered Her Emotions," February 26, 2010, online: <http://drgreggsteinberg.com/joannie-rochette-wins-bronze-medal-because-she-mastered-her-emotions> (accessed 8 February 2012).

<sup>62</sup> Kelly Elbin, interview with Graeme McDowell, online: [http://www.asapsports.com/show\\_interview.php?id=65442](http://www.asapsports.com/show_interview.php?id=65442) (accessed 30 January 2012).

<sup>63</sup> Paul Kelso, "The Open 2011: Graeme McDowell Says His 'attitude has been pretty average for the last two days' as He Exits," *The Telegraph*, 15 July 2011, online:

## The Good Old, Bad Old Days

For those who went through basic training in the late nineteen-fifties and early nineteen-sixties the experience of becoming a soldier was very different than that of today. Basic training was a lot more like what the movies portray, what most envision, than what today's reality offers. Although today it would be unacceptable for a Gunnery Sergeant to greet recruits as maggots, pukes, and amphibian shit, then it was not.<sup>64</sup> While the Canadian Army had never adopted the Marine Corps approach to recruit training, those that went through Depot Training in the nineteen-fifties and sixties still paint a picture where the approach to "discipline was fairly medieval with a lot of shouting and threatening."<sup>65</sup> Recruits were regularly confined to barracks, for weeks on end, and even had their civilian clothes collected at the start of the training in order to foster a sense of uniformity and commonality amongst the platoon.<sup>66</sup> Yelling and screaming were the norm.

As much as the nature of the training environment has changed over the past fifty years, so has the nature of the student. In the case of retired Lieutenant-Colonel Brian Reid, the composition of his recruit platoon in the late nineteen-fifties included three Second World War veterans and three or four others who had previous service and then reenlisted, including two Korean War vets.<sup>67</sup> Apparently, no one bypassed recruit training in those days, even those with prior service.

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<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/golf/8641530/The-Open-2011-Graeme-McDowell-says-his-attitude-has-been-pretty-average-for-the-last-two-days-as-he-exits.html> (accessed 30 January 2012).

<sup>64</sup> Stanley Kubrick, dir., *Full Metal Jacket* (United States, 1987).

<sup>65</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel (ret'd) B.A. Reid, interview by author, e-mail interview, 9 November 2011.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

The staff was equally experienced. Most of the Royal Canadian School of Infantry instructors were also veterans of the Second World War or Korean War; most were fair, but all of them were tough. Generally poorly educated and only semi-literate, they were trained and hardened on the battlefields of Europe and Korea, survivors of two wars. They knew what men were capable of as they had experienced it firsthand. They also knew what it would take to prepare this generation for their war. Training was intense, with every day proving to be a new physical and mental challenge. Field craft and warrior skills were at the heart of the training. They “started early and ended late.”<sup>68</sup>

The demands of the training were very high. Courses were very structured and every free moment was filled with training or other time-consuming activities.<sup>69</sup> Whether by design, or just because “that’s the way things were,” stress was a very large part of the training, including very early reveilles on weekends, and without the benefit of lights, giving recruits “five minutes to muster in battle order and then route marching us to the bottom of the Shilo Ranges. We spent the weekend doing section attacks all the way back to camp.”<sup>70</sup> Even at the Royal Military College, there was considerable physical and mental stress put on cadets through inspections, charge reports, and minor punishments for failure to live up to standards.<sup>71</sup> One result of this pressure, when combined with exacting and sometimes arbitrary standards, was a very high attrition rate. Reid’s experience on his Basic Artillery Officer Course was that only seventeen from the thirty-eight candidates who began the course were commissioned having completed their training.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Major-General (ret’d) Walter Holmes, interview by author, e-mail interview, 23 November 2011.

<sup>69</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel (ret’d) A.D. Clarke, interview by author, e-mail interview, 10 November 2011.

<sup>70</sup> Reid, interview.

<sup>71</sup> Clarke, interview.

<sup>72</sup> Reid, interview.

Major-General Holmes has the same recollection from his experiences at the Royal Canadian School of Infantry in the sixties, where he remembers a loss rate in excess of fifty percent of those who began the training.<sup>73</sup> Holmes reported “at the age of nineteen along with approximately 300 other young men” and successfully completed a year of hard training, including parachutist training. It was a different era and high loss rates were “a measure of the success of the training regime, not its failure.”<sup>74</sup> Holmes recalls vividly the final and most significant challenge of his first phase of training that consisted of a five-day trek through the 6,000 hectare Minesing Swamp outside of Camp Borden. In his words:

It was late November, ice had formed on the water and it was cold. It was a grueling test. In my section we lost eight of our ten members, ten of us went in and two of us came out. By the time we got back to camp the bed spaces of those who didn't make it were empty!<sup>75</sup>

Holmes recalls more examples of how they were tested: on exercise if they did not make the rendezvous where rations were cached, they did not eat. Taught to survive on meager rations and by living off the land, they became excellent foragers. “It was amazing how good crushed crackers in hot water with instant creamer and wild blueberries tasted” he recalled. In cases where candidates failed to meet the expectations of the chain of command, intense pressure was applied to cause them to seek release. Whether their indecision was related to Corps affiliation or their desire to attend the Basic Parachutist Course, the theme of “make up your mind or walk” was prevalent amongst the combat veteran trainers who suffered no fools.<sup>76</sup>

Physical Fitness Training per se was not part of the daily routine, but moving constantly at the “double,” long marches to and from ranges, as well as frequent sports days and an annual

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<sup>73</sup> Holmes, interview.

<sup>74</sup> Colonel (ret'd) W.J. Aitchison, interview by author, e-mail interview, 18 December 2011.

<sup>75</sup> Holmes, interview.

<sup>76</sup> Holmes, interview.

Royal Canadian School of Infantry swim meet and track and field day, promoted the warrior spirit and permitted soldier-athletes to demonstrate their athletic prowess and, incidentally, work on their level of fitness.<sup>77</sup> Resilience was not part of the vocabulary in those days, but building mental toughness was. While it may not have been intended, the stress placed on candidates served as a kind of resilience training that stood them in good stead when they arrived at their units, where the pace of life was somewhat slower but the responsibility they were given was much greater.

We intuitively understood that mental toughness and physical and mental hardiness were hallmarks of good soldiers, probably at least in part because the soldiers who trained us exhibited those qualities. For sure we did not appreciate what the instructors were doing at the time, but in retrospect it is very clear that at least some of what they were applying, even if unknowingly, was resilience training.<sup>78</sup>

What was the upshot? They “grew to appreciate [they] were up for any challenge.”<sup>79</sup> And in this case, as with many others, success breeds success. They were a fit and hardy team, all of whom went on to pass the jump course with flying colours. The stories speak for themselves and today’s Army can learn from its past.

## **The USMC Basic School**

“If I had an hour to solve a problem I'd spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and 5 minutes thinking about solutions.”  
- Albert Einstein

For over thirty-five years, The Basic School (TBS) has trained Marine Officers in basic and Infantry Officer training. Receiving Officer Candidates School (OCS) graduates, with only months in the Marine Corps, TBS has the onerous task of turning them into Marine Officers. The

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<sup>77</sup> Aitchison, interview.

<sup>78</sup> Aitchison, interview.

<sup>79</sup> Holmes, interview.

cornerstone of the training they receive while completing the six months of training at TBS is confidence related.<sup>80</sup>

All Marine officers, regardless of military occupation specialty, complete the Basic Officer Course (BOC) at TBS in Quantico, Virginia. Prior to this phase of their training however, they must complete OCS, a twelve-week selection phase for commissioning. OCS's mandate is to "train, evaluate, and screen officer candidates to ensure they possess the moral, intellectual, and physical qualities for commissioning."<sup>81</sup> Graduates of OCS are well prepared for BOC. This level of preparedness is reflected in TBS's enviably low attrition rate of 1%.<sup>82</sup>

After six months at TBS, one graduate of BOC is virtually indistinguishable from another; they all look like the Marines on the recruiting poster. They are fit, can make sound decisions, effectively communicate, and execute plans they have developed. They are proud and confident in themselves and their peers, are well versed in platoon tactics and ready for specialty training. BOC produces men and women of exemplary character devoted to leading Marines. BOC graduates are warfighters who embrace the Corps' warrior ethos, are able to decide, effectively communicate, and take action in the fog of war. They are physically strong and mentally tough. They have encountered their limits, and pushed past.<sup>83</sup> They are what the Canadian Army should be seeking to produce on Basic Military Officer Qualification (Land). Regrettably, they do not.

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<sup>80</sup> Much of the content of this section is drawn from a personal visit as part of an Infantry School delegation to the USMC The Basic School, Quantico, VA in May of 2011. Footnotes are added where secondary validation was possible.

<sup>81</sup> USMC Training Command, "Officer Candidates School," <http://www.trngcmd.usmc.mil/OCS/default.aspx> (accessed 9 December 2011).

<sup>82</sup> Major Carlos Barela and Captain Ted Driscoll, Director and Deputy Director of the Infantry Officer Course, Quantico, VA, interview by author, telephone interview, 9 January 2012.

<sup>83</sup> USMC Training Command, "The Basic School," <http://www.tecom.usmc.mil/tbs/> (accessed 9 December 2011).

Graduates of BOC go on to specialty training. For Infantry Officers, it is the Infantry Officers Course (IOC) also located at TBS. IOC is a thirteen-week training and assessment course that experiences an envious attrition rate of only 10-15%.<sup>84</sup> IOC emphasises adaptive learning, and seeks to produce adaptive thinking Infantry leaders.<sup>85</sup> Adaptability is stressed because the Marine Corps, much like the United States Army, recognises that the “capacity to adapt is a chief contributor to military success at the tactical level.”<sup>86</sup>

Candidates are placed in situations designed specifically to replicate conditions of combat in order to make them better able to be successful in combat. Under these conditions, they are given multiple decision making opportunities and are expected to make effective decisions under mental, moral and physical stress. These evaluations seek to measure knowledge, skill and fitness simultaneously as they would be in the contemporary operating environment.<sup>87</sup>

Evaluation on IOC begins immediately. On day one, students are assessed on their knowledge, skills, and fitness on the Combat Endurance Test (CET). The CET consists of multiple legs of land navigation, with skill and knowledge tests at each point along the way. Candidates are not given any insight into what is to be assessed, how long the test is, nor the sequence in which they are expected to complete the test. Indeed, the CET is conducted in such a way as to put candidates under mental and physical stress while they are being evaluated. Placed under time pressure that forced them to move at a fast pace between stands, denied adequate water and food for the test timeframe, and then given only enough information to get from one

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<sup>84</sup> Barela and Driscoll, interview.

<sup>85</sup> For the reference material used by TBS and other information on adaptive learning and adaptive leadership see Raising the Bar: Creating and Nurturing Adaptability to Deal with the Changing Face of War, Future Leader: The Journey of Developing (and Nurturing) Adaptability, The Future Is Now and “From Swift to Swiss” in Performance Improvement, Vol 45, Number 2 by Major Don Vandergriff (United States Army ret’d).

<sup>86</sup> Major Don Vandergriff (United States Army ret’d) and Colonel George Reid (United States Army ret’d), “Old Dogs and New Tricks: Setting the Tone for Adaptability”, *Army Journal*, August 2007, 11.

<sup>87</sup> Barela and Driscoll, interview.



stand to the next, students are monitored and gauged to determine if they meet the threshold to enter training.<sup>88</sup> This serves as an introduction to the ambiguous and uncertain environment of IOC.

Once an officer begins IOC, they can expect more of the same. They will be continuously subjected to stress, placed in situations of ambiguity and asked to make decisions, then articulate back to the staff the basis for their decision and then asked to learn from the process. It is part of the Adaptive Learning environment and methodology the Marines have adopted over the last couple of years. Focusing on the “why” behind a student’s decision allows for staff to evaluate candidates’ thought processes, not just action.<sup>89</sup>

Whether siting machine guns in the classroom or conducting a tactical field exercise, the course places the focus on the tactical decisions being made, not the doctrinal theory behind it. While the theory may form the foundation for the decision, the emphasis remains on the ability to make decisions, communicate and execute plans they have developed. Decision making ability is stressed constantly, and the inability to make decisions accounts for the vast majority of training failures.<sup>90</sup>

Combined with the scenario-based teaching and learning, TBS and IOC have deliberately created a high level of uncertainty threaded throughout the candidate’s training aimed at building candidate resilience. Even discussion groups on ethics and morality are approached in the same way; it has become part of the teaching philosophy. The premise IOC follows is that it is about preparing the mind; the body gets its own preparation on the obstacle course, endurance course, physical training sessions, and in the field. This approach was very similar to that of the Royal

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Major Chad Foster, No “Approved Solutions” in Asymmetric Warfare: Nurturing Adaptive Leaders in an Outcomes-Based Training Environment, *Assembly*, July/August 2009, 28-29.

<sup>90</sup> Barela and Driscoll, interview.

Canadian School of Infantry in the nineteen-sixties, training the body was a side effect of tough, physical training, not necessarily PT.

Adaptability in TBS's training culture extends beyond the curriculum and teaching methodology, it lives in the command climate as well. The Director of IOC, has been given some broad scope to improve the training conducted at IOC. He is far less constrained by Training Plans and Qualification Standards than his Canadian counterparts. This allows him and his staff to have a rapid change cycle, and be able to quickly implement positive change to the training thereby producing the highest quality graduate they can to meet the Marine Corps' exacting standard.<sup>91</sup>

Beyond the school house, the Marine Corps has also introduced resilience training within the field force. It has been branded Mind Fitness and consists of training the brain along the same lines as the Canadian Forces Resilience Training programme and the world of sports psychology.<sup>92</sup> It relies on meditation-like exercises aimed at strengthening and "rewiring" the brain to be able to adapt to stressful situations that demand focus. The difference between Mind Fitness and the Canadian Forces' resilience training is that the USMC recognises that mental preparedness training is a continuous endeavour.<sup>93</sup>

According to the author of the programme, the next step for Mind Fitness seeks to combine stress inoculation with the existing Mind Fitness training. Elizabeth Stanley, a retired Army officer turned professor believes that in order to build "resilience, we need a stress response to push us out of our comfort zone, but we also need effective recovery to come back to base line." This idea of "rewiring" is not new, but until recently neural researchers believed that adults

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> McCearry and Fikretoglu, interview.

<sup>93</sup> James Sandborn, "Mind Fitness Routines Fight Combat Stress," *Marine Corps Times*, 3 October 2011, <http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/2011/10/marine-mind-fitness-training-traumatic-stress-100311/> (accessed 10 January 2012).

were poor subjects for the process called *neuroplasticity*. More recent studies have shown that the brain can be molded throughout one's life, and that new neural pathways can be developed, promoting better mental adaptability to ambiguous situations. This new approach to training the brain has garnered senior Marine Corps leadership support and has allowed the Mind Fitness programme to move forward quickly.<sup>94</sup>

Perhaps not surprising due to the commonality in cultures, the Marine Corps training mirrors that of the Canadian Forces. Indeed, it served as a model for the fledgling Canadian Forces training programme.<sup>95</sup> While some of the terminology may differ, the foundation is the same. Mind Fitness is accomplished through repetitive mental exercises very similar to the “Big 4” the Canadian Forces uses. Other than the continuity mentioned above, the other chief difference is the philosophical acceptance of this nature of training. Stanley compares it to how “physical exercise changes our body, our muscles, our cardiovascular system, ... if we do these [mental] exercises that train our attention and concentration, we are beginning to rewire the brain, ... we are building new neural pathways.”<sup>96</sup> Emphasising the need for continuous reinforcement, Stanley goes on to point out that students of Mind Fitness must “continue to spend at least 30 minutes each day on Mind Fitness.”<sup>97</sup> It is not a “fire and forget” learning objective, it must be reinforced throughout.

Senior leadership within the Marine Corps have also endorsed the idea and training regime. General Joseph Dunford, the Assistant Commandant, sees Mind Fitness as part of the solution. Further endorsement comes from I Marine Expeditionary Force Deputy Commanding General Major-General Melvin Spiese, one of Mind Fitness' biggest advocates. Spiese states that

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> McCearry and Fikretoglu, interview.

<sup>96</sup> James Sandborn, “Mind Fitness Routines Fight Combat Stress.”

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

the feedback to date “from the Marines who have participated at the platoon level is [positive], they think there’s something to it.”<sup>98</sup>

But this is more than just another good idea from the ivory tower. Marines who participated in the initial training regime said they felt an immediate difference. After battle scenarios, they were able to calm themselves more quickly than those who had not had Mind Fitness training. Even the ever-skeptical Infantry non-commissioned officer “has found it to be a powerful tool to help cope with stress.”<sup>99</sup> Sergeant Muhesien Hussen, a squad leader even notes that Mind Fitness “has made him a calmer, more thoughtful leader in the field and in garrison” and that he is “more patient with his Marines and has developed the wherewithal to think of creative solutions to unpredictable situations.”<sup>100</sup> This serves as a strong endorsement for this nature of training.

Major-General Spiese predicts that the training, limited so far to I Marine Expeditionary Force, will likely spread to the rest of the Marine Corps. He believes that “if this is something that we see is important to the being of a Marine, then we’d probably look [to introduce this training] at places that are common to all Marines.”<sup>101</sup> The logical point of introduction is at the entry level, much as the Canadian Forces has done by introducing it first at the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School and the Infantry School.

By combining the type of resilience training Mind Fitness offers, with the adaptability and hardiness building conducted during BOC and IOC, the Marine Corps may well have a war-winning formula worthy of copying, after all two timeless idioms are: “no sense reinventing the wheel” and “imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.” The Canadian Forces needs to pay close

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

attention to the results of this new and evolving training methodology and look at how it could adopt elements of how BOC and IOC work together to produce more resilient leaders and soldiers.

## **Training in Canada's Army**

There are only two sources for [military spirit],  
and they must interact in order to create it.  
The first is a series of victorious wars; the second,  
frequent exertions of the army to the utmost limits of its strength.  
- Clausewitz<sup>102</sup>

### **Canadian Army Doctrine**

There are many elements that make up the Canadian Army's training environment, some of which are cultural and some systemic. Some of these elements add to effectiveness, while some of them detract from it by limiting the ability of the Army's Individual Training System to reach its full potential. Combat Training Centre schools in Gagetown are certainly manned with excellent, combat-proven leaders at the junior officer, Warrant Officer and non-commissioned officer ranks, and when combined with well-designed courses and a mission-focused command climate, the environment certainly seems ripe for success.<sup>103</sup>

While there are several components as to what makes training successful, and the above-mentioned ones are but a few, a holistic review of how Canada's Army trains would be worthwhile. Several factors, well within the control of the recruiting and training systems, can certainly be improved upon. For example, the misplaced belief that all courses must be

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<sup>102</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton Press, 1984), 189.

<sup>103</sup> Combat Training Centre is a subordinate formation to the Land Forces Doctrine and Training System and responsible for overseeing individual training conducted within eight schools (including all of the combat arms schools) located on 4 bases across Canada. For more organisational information see <http://armyapp.forces.gc.ca/lfdts-sdift/default.asp>.

modularised hampers effective assessment by putting evaluation too early in a course.<sup>104</sup> Others will posit that poor recruitment and selection processes do not effectively filter out those who lack commitment or ability to succeed.<sup>105</sup> There are many variables associated with producing a quality graduate from any army course; the nature of the individual training environment is a complex system. The aspect of that system that has not yet been examined in detail is how one practically develops resilience, how to build mental toughness and adaptability, or how to inoculate soldiers against stress when theoretical learning is consolidated and evaluated - on field training exercises.

In the Army's capstone training pamphlet, *Training for Land Operations*, the Land Force Doctrine and Training System recognises both that "land forces will be expected to operate in conditions of great complexity, chaos, and ambiguity" and that training has a role in producing "adaptive, ethical and resilient soldiers and leaders."<sup>106</sup> This recognition should set the conditions for the development of progressive, demanding training that builds moral and physical strength and improves the resilience and intellectual ability of its soldiers and leaders. *Training for Land Operations* also recognises that this "mindset must be inculcated in initial training and continue throughout a soldier's career."<sup>107</sup>

*Training for Land Operations* articulates the philosophy, principles and processes that guide training for land operations within the Canadian Forces.<sup>108</sup> The publication has several stated themes, most notably that "training must produce adaptive, ethical and resilient soldiers

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<sup>104</sup> Many courses are broken down into two-week modules allowing for Army reserve (part time) soldiers to complete them over a longer period of time when they can take their vacation from their full time job. For an example, see the Training Plan for Basic Military Officer Qualification (Land).

<sup>105</sup> This led to the Army Individual Training Authority to support the reintroduction of Selection Boards for Combat Arms Officers in May of 2011.

<sup>106</sup> B-GL-300-008/FP-001, *Training for Land Operations*, Canadian Army, 20 July 2010, 1-3 and 1-7.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., iii.

and leaders.”<sup>109</sup> Because it is impossible to either foresee or prepare for all operations, training for land operations must develop moral and physical strength and resilience as well as intellectual ability.

The principles articulated within the pages of *Training for Land Operations* include several that are relevant to resilience training. Beginning with training being *command driven*, there is no better time than the present to leverage a generation of combat veterans, represented by the Commander of the Army down to the junior officers and NCOs that are commanding at the most tactical level. With the understanding of the COE that they have gained firsthand in theatres such as Iraq and Afghanistan, combined with their experience with their ability to change how their Army trains its soldiers, the time is right to introduce such fundamental change as to how soldiers are prepared for the rigours of combat in the theatres of operation foreseen for the upcoming generation.

By *training the way we fight*, especially training to be the best and to make ethical decisions, trainers can prepare aspirant leaders and soldiers for the demands that will be placed upon them. Beginning with simple but realistic scenarios, gradually increasing in “complexity, ambiguity and adversity of conditions, soldiers should eventually be faced with difficult decisions, to be made in difficult circumstances, with simulated consequences that fit their decisions, actions and reactions.”<sup>110</sup> Just as physical fitness training is conducted as part of individual and leadership training, and the body responds to that physical conditioning, so must psychological resilience training be conducted to exercise intellectual and moral skills; knowledge and attitudes of soldiers must be practised and strengthened.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 1-7.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 1-11.

Training must begin with the *simplest fundamentals and basic skills*.<sup>111</sup> With the introduction of the theory in Basic Military Officer Qualification and Basic Military Officer Qualification (Land), early in a recruit's training, the first step to meet the principle *train progressively* has been met, but only the first. It is upon this basic theory that true abilities and skills can be built. Much as for physical fitness, marksmanship and weapons handling, field craft and navigation, combat casualty care and communications, training can build upon the introductory theory and skills associated with psychological resilience. As these basic skills are mastered, increased complexity and more difficult conditions can be imposed.<sup>112</sup>

The principle *training to adapt* implies preparing for the next conflict. Defining where and what the conflict will look like is very difficult. But by preparing for an environment that is characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity the Army will be held in good stead. *Training for Land Operations* states that training “must be designed to condition soldiers and, particularly, leaders against surprise and shock and to promote agility, *encouraging adaptation to unfamiliar situations*.”<sup>113</sup> Adaptation is what resilience training is all about.

Finally *Training for Land Operations* promotes leading an *addiction-free lifestyle* and *developing effective coping skills* to manage daily stress.<sup>114</sup> The combination of these two choices may lead to improved psychological and physical resilience, which are fundamental to operational effectiveness. Healthy soldiers make for an effective organisation.

While the above principles were designed to be generically applicable to training in general, clearly they apply to resilience training too. The difficulty will not stem from the Army's ability to implement the training, but to adopt each principle and design a holistic system that

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 1-14.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 1-16 (emphasis added).

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., C-4.



allows for all aspects of Army training to be command-driven, conducted as they fight, based on fundamentals, adaptive, and to promote healthy living. Overcoming the natural cultural resistance to change will require a change to the philosophical base of how training is conducted in the Army, how one mentors trainers and trainees, and how resilience training is embedded in all training, not just the classroom theory.

## **Operationalising Resilience Training in Canada's Army**

Operationalising resilience training will prove to be a challenge, but one that is not insurmountable. With the above models serving as excellent starting points, thoughtful consideration by experienced trainers and a willingness to change, the Canadian Army Individual Training System can make a real contribution to the psychological preparation of its soldiers and organisational effectiveness of the Canadian Forces. By adopting some simple practical reinforcement methodologies used in sports psychology, progressive practical employment of the theories and skills taught in the classroom, and challenging exercises such as those conducted at the Royal Canadian School of Infantry in the nineteen-sixties, and assessment tools such as TBS' CET, graduates from combat arms phase training will be that much better prepared to effectively lead and develop resilient, ethical soldiers and adapt themselves to the rigours of combat.

In addition to the doctrinal principles of training, this paper proposes that by implementing some basic principles to support the introduction, the Canadian Army can maximize the potential of this change to its training programme. Such simple principles as expectation management, early introduction, continuous and progressive reinforcement and further development of knowledge and skills, systematic incremental increases in pressure applied, instructor training and mentoring, and effective use of the after action review process will enhance the likelihood of success. Training of the mind can and should become as natural as training on weapons, equipment, doctrine, and tactics, techniques and procedures. The Canadian Army has dedicated significant resources to such things as equipping its personnel with the latest

body armour, billions of dollars for the best protected vehicles, acquired the most sophisticated counter-IED equipment, and invested in the most advanced medical services for soldiers wounded physically. It is now time to apply the same vigour to providing military personnel with some of the psychological tools required to operate in the COE, the ability to confront effectively an asymmetric enemy who fights under different rules of engagement in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment.

Managing expectations of recruits (indeed applicants) is important. They must have a good idea of what to expect from their training, including the possibility of failure, the likelihood that they will encounter their limits, but equally important is that they are capable of surpassing these limits. Canada's most recent recruiting campaign proved to be a refreshing step in the right direction in this regard. "Fight With the Canadian Forces" showed members of the Forces in a variety of roles, from combat to domestic operations, but it still glorified the attractive side of the profession. Sweden recently revamped their recruiting ads with a simple, but clear message to aspiring officers. Their "Cube," "Maze" and "Fan" ads show candidates undergoing simple tests in incredible stressful conditions. "Cube" is a particularly powerful image of what the Swedish Armed Forces seeks from its applicants, someone who when placed under pressure remains calm and functions effectively.<sup>115</sup> These ideas in marketing are not new, Clausewitz understood that a "soldier is just as proud of the hardships he has overcome and the dangers he has faced."<sup>116</sup> The role of recruit instructors is to expose trainees to this life lesson.

Expectation management is critical in applicant self-selection. In 2007, the British Royal Marines launched a recruiting campaign with the catch line "99.99% Need Not Apply," meant to underline the demanding nature of the selection and training commandos undertake. Anecdotal

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<sup>115</sup> Swedish Armed Forces Recruiting website, online: <http://forsvar.fileflat.com/english/> (accessed 14 November 2011).

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

commentary suggested that it limited the applicants too much: attraction became a problem.<sup>117</sup>

Their latest recruiting campaign is called “It’s a State of Mind” and emphasises the desire, drive and determination it takes to become a Royal Marine, but not psychologically limiting applicants to apply. The short, simple commercials demonstrate that flashy advertisements can be very effective in capturing the essence of service in the Royal Marines; expectations should be managed. In one twenty-second video, it talks about limits of the mind, but stresses that “limits are not a barrier, they are a target. A reason to push yourself harder... and leave them behind.”<sup>118</sup> A worthy objective of training, let alone attraction and recruitment.

Institutional selection is equally important. The British Army’s Army Officer Selection Board is an excellent example of establishing expectations early in an applicant’s process. Out of every five applicants, one will self-select out of the process, because they conclude that the Army is not for them, those that choose to continue with their desire are at least aware of the Army’s expectations of them, and what to expect as an aspiring officer in the British Army.<sup>119</sup>

Early introduction of resilience training is vital to the success of this nature of training.<sup>120</sup> According to performance psychologist Dr. John Dunn, front-end loading performance on demand training would allow for recruits to remain calm and in control throughout their training.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, with 52 weeks of training for the average infantry officer, early introduction allows for continuous and progressive reinforcement of the knowledge and skills.

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<sup>117</sup> Conversation Royal Marine Major Matt Skuse with author, Kandahar 2009.

<sup>118</sup> *Battle in the Mind: Limits* [Video], [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zs0laPHgRdg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zs0laPHgRdg) (accessed 5 December 2011).

<sup>119</sup> Canadian Infantry School visit to the British Army’s Army Officer Selection Board in Westbury, England, May 2011.

<sup>120</sup> Drs. Amy Adler, Paul Bliese, Dennis McGurk, Charles Hoge, and Carl Castro, *Battlemind Debriefing and Battlemind Training as Early Interventions With Soldiers Returning From Iraq: Randomization by Platoon*, U.S. Army Medical Research Unit-Europe, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, Heidelberg, Germany, (June 2009).

<sup>121</sup> Dunn, interview.

While the Canadian Forces has done this by introducing it on Basic Military Officer Qualification, reinforcement of the classroom theory has not been done.

Scientific studies suggest that it takes between eighteen and 254 days to change a habit, which is not very helpful to creating an argument for changing behavior through a fixed training period.<sup>122</sup> What may be useful is that this study found that on average it took about sixty-six days to change behavior, a period of time well within the scope of an infantry officer's training. In introducing resilience training early, a recruit provided with continuous and progressive reinforcement of knowledge and skills, should be better prepared to succeed on the balance of their training, and more importantly, upon completion.

Continuous and progressive reinforcement of knowledge and skills is what is presently missing in the Canadian Forces' application of resilience training. During Basic Military Officer Qualification there are four forty-minute periods given on the theory of resilience training. These four periods cover mental health theory (definitions and causes of mental health issues), mental toughness and the "Big Four" (goal setting, visualisation, self-talk, and arousal management), preventative strategies, and a class using scenarios.<sup>123</sup>

What is missing from the existing programme is that the mentoring and practical application of this theory does not follow.<sup>124</sup> The reinforcement of the knowledge and skills must

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<sup>122</sup> Phillippa Lally, Cornelia H. M. van Jaarsveld, Henry W. W. Potts, Jane Wardle, "How Are Habits Formed: Modelling Habit Formation in the Real World," *European Journal of Social Psychology*, Volume 40, Issue 6 (October 2010), 998.

<sup>123</sup> Kimberley Guest, handout "Basic Military Qualification Course, JSB Content, 4 module briefing," provided 2 November 2011.

<sup>124</sup> There was strong consensus from all those interviewed from the defence research and development, Army training staff and mental health communities that this is the next necessary step. Dr. Deniz Fikretoglu, Defence Research Scientist, Defence Research and Development Canada (Toronto), interview with author, telephone interview, Toronto, ON, Canada, Lieutenant-Colonel Shawn Tymchuk, Major Julie Belanger, Captain John Rickard, Directorate of Army Training, interview with author, telephone interview, Kingston, ON, Canada, and Lieutenant-Colonel Suzanne Bailey, Canadian Forces National Practice Leader for Social Work, interview with author, telephone

follow in this case much as it does in any other skill taught in a classroom. Consider the idea of teaching immediate action drills for weapons handling, but then never following it up with hands on training before progressing to a range; it would never be done. Adopting the same hands on approach to resilience training is necessary to make a change to a recruit’s behaviour.

The table below offers the resilience equivalent to the immediate action drill analogy.

**Table 1 Comparison between Immediate Action Drill (the unload) and Resilience Training<sup>125</sup>**

	Immediate Action Drill	Resilience Training
Classroom (theory)	Immediate action drills (eg. The unload) taught using the explain, demonstrate, imitate method	Teach the “Big Four” (goal setting, visualisation, self-talk, and arousal management)
Classroom (practical)	Unload conducted prior to the beginning of each weapons class	Visualisation exercise conducted using the unload drill, mentally rehearsing the actions conducted on the unload, then conducting it under instructor supervision
Garrison (practice)	Unload conducted in quarters informally by recruit	Practically rehearse the unload, having conducted a mental rehearsal first (visualisation)
Garrison (application)	Unload conducted with training ammunition under range-like conditions	Instructor-mentored visualisation followed by practical exercise doing the unload <i>precisely</i> how it would be done on a range
Range (practice)	Unload practiced prior to being issued ammunition	Instructor prompted, student conducted independent visualisation prior to practice prior to being issued ammunition
Range (application)	Unload conducted using live rounds on a firing point	Instructor prompted, student conducted independent visualisation prior to unload conducted using live rounds on a firing point
Field (practice)	Unload practiced at commencement of first field training exercise	
Field (application)	Unload conducted using blank rounds following a section attack	

Obviously the above table represents a simple example on how just one of the “Big Four” can be

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interview, Ottawa, ON, Canada, 22 August 2011, 2 September 2011, and respectively 22 August 2011.

<sup>125</sup> As envisioned by the author.

practiced using a simple weapons handling drill. In this case, by the end of Basic Military Officer Qualification when the student goes to conduct an unload drill, they will be practiced not only in the drill itself, but conditioned to visualising the drill as they go to conduct it. Imagine the applicability of this example to more complicated weapons handling drills, complex drills or other exercises.

Of course, the strength of the “Big Four” does not just lie in weapons handling, it lies in its applicability to all tasks. Students will be more successful in leading morning physical training sessions if they have set their specific goal, visualised the conduct of a successful class, talked themselves through the leadership task, and then controlled their anxiety as they execute the physical training session. As they become confident in their newfound resilience knowledge and skill, this confidence will transfer to other leadership tasks.

One of the highest hurdles to clear will be how the Army systematically and incrementally increases the pressure applied to recruits undergoing training. Overcoming the historical baggage of adding stress for the sake of adding stress will take effort from leadership and some support from the scientific community. The will to force the pendulum back closer to how training was done in the nineteen-sixties will need to overcome all sorts of resistance; internal resistance from senior leadership, still serving Cold Warriors and the public’s perceptions to name a few. This is why from a trainer’s point of view, the legitimacy of the training rationale is critical. Much like TBS’s CET, the aims of particular exercises will need to be clear, well-documented and based in sound decisions based on logic. If it were based on empirical scientific evidence, that would be ideal. As mentioned above, the scientific community is not there yet with studies to support the efficacy of resilience training. Historical Canadian and allied experiences combined with anecdotal support will have to satisfy those questioning any such decision until the results from formal studies are available.

Leaders and trainers will have to not only be comfortable with any changes made, but may have to defend what they are doing to those who are less, or ill-informed. Students who

encounter significant obstacles to success sometimes tell only half of the story to their parents, who in defence of their child will sometimes take it to the public. Any shift toward implementing a deliberate and progressive programme to apply increased pressure purposely upon recruits will have to be accompanied by a robust communications plan to clearly articulate the “whys and what fors” of such a programme. Comprehensive studies of the programmes described above (the USMC’s TBS and the British Army Officer Selection Board in particular) should precede any introduction of change, as they have already in place precisely what this paper proposes.

Instructor training and mentoring are vital to the success of a holistic and comprehensive resilience programme. Even a highly specialised Canadian Special Forces Command (CANSOFCOM) unit, where resilience and performance on demand training has been conducted for years, found that without a strong train-the-trainer and instructor-mentoring programme, they would have been unable to advance their agenda to leverage the potential of this type of training.<sup>126</sup> Indeed, exposing students to the mentoring process that the instructors receive has proven to be an effective tool for the development of both trainers and students. For example, some staff may feel that their credibility is put at risk when placed in a position of instruction. What the CANSOFCOM unit has found is that by instructors lowering their guard and allowing their students to see that they too have room to grow and develop as teachers by being debriefed by experts in resilience training, their credibility had in fact increased.<sup>127</sup> Instructor debriefs also serve to remind instructors that they play a key role in the messaging about the subject; if they use the particular skill or knowledge being taught, and believe in it, they will be more effective in delivery. Sometimes that dispassionate outside observer keeps the best of us on track.

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<sup>126</sup> Major Paul Carroll, Chief Instructor within a CANSOFCOM unit, interview with author, telephone interview, 16 November 11.

<sup>127</sup> Dunn, interview.

Effective use of the after action review (AAR) process has proven very successful in the CANSOFCOM unit. It keeps the subject of resilience in the forefront, reducing the “skill fade” in the weeks following the delivery of the theory.<sup>128</sup> For example, when instructors conducted an AAR after close quarter battle range serials, they were able to incorporate resilience points into the feedback from and to the group. Use of resilience vocabulary, when combined with the steps of the AAR, allows for positive reinforcement, an important part of resilience development as well as instructor development.<sup>129</sup> In fact, the CANSOFCOM unit’s experience with resilience training has been positive. They have observed an increase in student performance and morale on a very demanding course, as well as increased instructor buy-in to the programme being delivered, better instructor confidence and lower attrition amongst students; it is working. In the words of Major Paul Carroll, the CANSOFCOM unit Chief Instructor, “success breeds success.”<sup>130</sup>

For the CANSOFCOM unit, this is a multi-year project, much as it would have to be for the Army. What they do have, though, is a roadmap for moving the initiative forward, pretty good traction, and they recognise that resilience training is but one aspect of how to leverage human potential, one thread in a tapestry that makes up the training realm. All in all, “indications are positive.”<sup>131</sup>

The need for objective assessment in order to justify decisions for failing a student runs against the saying attributed to Albert Einstein: “Not everything that counts can be counted; and not everything that can be counted, counts.” A recruit’s response to stress injections can be assessed, but only subjectively. Trust in the professionalism of Canada’s officer, Warrant Officer

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Corby, interview.

<sup>130</sup> Carroll, interview.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.



and non-commissioned officer instructors, and the chain of command that supports them, is the only way a holistic student evaluation can take place. Measuring such traits as determination, will, and of course resilience, is very difficult. One can surely assess a quitter, but can an instructor *objectively* differentiate between the candidate whose brain freezes on a range and the candidate who simply cannot conduct immediate action drills on his service rifle? Implementing any change in an organisation can be challenging. A plan that is measured in implementation, systematic, forthright, effectively communicated and acceptable to the chain of command would have to be developed using the Army Training staff at Land Forces Doctrine and Training System. Buy-in from senior leaders, Arms and Branch Advisors and instructional staff will be essential.

## **The Way Ahead – Canada’s Next Tactical Bound**

“Without fear there can be no courage”  
- Unknown

The rationale for a comprehensive look at how the Canadian Forces conducts resilience training, thereby developing hardiness and adaptability in its leaders and soldiers is based on a desire to make the Canadian Forces a better organisation. The spin-offs of such training include strong organisational benefits and over the mid to long term, lower incidents of mental health issues. The timing is right; strong public support and combat experienced leaders and instructors combine for an ideal opportunity. The case studies provide examples of the benefit of introducing techniques used in sport, incorporating demanding confidence building exercises in training such as in the nineteen-sixties, and in the case of the Marine Corps, emphasising adaptability as a training goal.

Other training methodologies such as stress inoculation training ought to be explored. There has been considerable research and many articles published on the topic. These need to be reviewed and digested by Army trainers and training staff and incorporated into the development

of a progressive resilience training programme. Experts in the field, such as Dr. Donald Meichenbaum, a cognitive-behavioral therapist, have published their theories and work with a view to educating trainers on the benefits of stress inoculation training. He has determined that there are three steps in such training: education, skills acquisition and consolidation, and final application and follow-through.<sup>132</sup> Steps one and two of this methodology are in place. Step three is what is being proposed by this paper.

Meichenbaum's third step would include the demonstration of coping skills on a graduated scale under circumstances controlled by instructors. Such activities as classroom role playing, garrison and field leadership tasks, tactical exercises without troops, and tactical decision games with backbriefs to senior officers would be an example of the nature of graduation and circumstances. Each task would involve formal feedback, ideally using the after action review process, as well as a grade from the instructor to allow for measurement of improvement and capturing the assessment and candidate comparison.

## **Conclusion**

### **Efficacy Shortcomings**

The lack of empirical evidence of the efficacy of the introduction of support from sport psychologists into any programme, including *Own the Podium*, is a serious shortcoming for the argument to bring such practices into mainstream training systems. Although in the above examples, Team Canada and professional and college athletes appear to have benefited from a significant financial increase and broad-based support, including psychological support, there are too many factors that influence performance to state objectively and unequivocally that there is a direct causal link between the sports psychology and performance. Nonetheless, with such strong

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<sup>132</sup> Donald Meichenbaum, "Stress Inoculation Training: a Preventative and Treatment Approach," in: Lehrer PM, Woolfolk RL, Sime WE, eds. *Principles and Practice of Stress Management*. 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Guilford Press; 2007), 3-40.

endorsement from those that use sport psychology to gain a competitive edge, and positive subjective evaluation of its effectiveness, the applicability within the profession of arms ought to be strongly considered. After all, combat is just the ultimate in human competition.

Notwithstanding the lack of empirical efficacy studies, there are several that indicate the potential exists for such empirical data to be collected. One very recent Department of National Defence study clearly suggests there are strong links between the assessment of resilience in order to inform the design of effective resilience training. Once training has been effectively designed, it can be measured in terms of effectiveness.<sup>133</sup>

Preliminary findings of a study into the results of British Army training indicate positive outcomes to that training. While there are several factors that contribute to the mental health of soldiers deployed on operations, this study surveyed almost 1,000 soldiers and determined that “war is not necessarily bad for psychological health.”<sup>134</sup> Contributing researcher Neil Greenberg is presently working on a follow-up study to validate this survey.<sup>135</sup>

Finally, Defence Research and Development Canada (Toronto) has sought funding to conduct a large-scale study of the efficacy of the training being conducted at that stage of training.<sup>136</sup> The United States Army has just completed a study, with the results available in the

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<sup>133</sup> Jennifer Lee, Kerry Sudom, Don McCreary, “Higher-Order Model of Resilience in the Canadian Forces,” *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, Vol 43, No. 3, July 2011, 222.

<sup>134</sup> Jamie Hughes, Fiona Cameron, Rod Eldridge, Madeleine Devon, Simon Wessely and Neil Greenberg, “Going to War Does Not Have to Hurt: Preliminary Findings from British Deployment in Iraq,” *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 2005, 536.

<sup>135</sup> Colonel Carl Castro, MD, interview with author, telephone interview, 7 September 2011.

<sup>136</sup> Funding for a DRDC (Toronto)-led study was to be secured during the writing of this paper. This study was to look at the training being delivered at CFLRS to Basic Military Officer Qualification/BMQ students over a four-year period. Dr. Deniz Fikretoglu, Defence Research Scientist, Defence Research and Development Canada (Toronto), interview with author, telephone interview, Toronto, ON, 22 August 2011.

near term to help inform any future Canadian Army initiatives.<sup>137</sup> But given the anecdotal and preliminary findings of the effectiveness of such training, and the amount of time to develop, pilot, and refine any comprehensive programme such as this would be, beginning the development now is important.

The field of sports psychology has a lot to offer the Canadian Forces. By training leaders and soldiers to be as focused as Joannie Rochette, they will thrive under the type circumstances uncertain and ambiguous missions found in the volatile and complex environments in which the Canadian Forces will operate in the future. By investing time in the development of such training methodologies will serve their soldiers well.

The Canadian Army can learn from its history. Soldiers trained fifty years ago were a tough bunch. They relate the nature of their training, and the culture and philosophies of the day, and credit each of those with molding them into a confident, cohesive team. Whether by adopting “gut check” exercises and training such as the five-day trek through the Minesing Swamp or mandatory basic parachutist courses for all infantry officers, there are easy and challenging ways to inculcate leaders and soldiers with the confidence General Holmes felt upon graduation.

TBC and IOC have it right; the training environment must mirror the conditions soldiers will encounter in combat. The conditions under which the typical soldier will operate in the Adaptive Dispersed Operating Environment described in Land Operations 2021, clearly indicate that the teaching methodology employed at TBS and IOC creates a learning environment where equally adaptive leaders are developed. This model is one the Canadian Forces must closely examine and use as the foundation for the necessary shift in Canadian Army training

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<sup>137</sup> Castro, interview and Dan Sagalyn, “Health Experts Question Army Report on Psychological Training,” *PBS Newshour*, 2 January 2012, [www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/military/.../csf\\_training\\_01-02.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/military/.../csf_training_01-02.html) (accessed 4 January 2012).

methodologies. The relationship between TBS and the Infantry School has already been established, it must be nurtured and then exploited.

### **Proceed With Caution**

As cautioned above, the lack of efficacy studies that can offer concrete evidence if or how resilience training creates more hardy and adaptable soldiers and leaders is cause for measured and deliberate adjustment from the status quo. While there is plenty of anecdotal support to raise the bar in ensuring soldiers and leaders are prepared for combat, many will argue that the training is good enough. The issue here is not about what is good enough. It is about how the training being delivered now in the first phase of a soldier's or an officer's career can be improved such that they will be a confident, resilient, and adaptable member of a high-performance and high-demand professional organisation. By preparing leaders and soldiers for the ultimate test, combat, they will be better prepared for the rigours associated with it, and offer significant organisation benefits as well. Whether those benefits manifest themselves in lower incidence of mental health injuries, more productive and adaptive team members or simply a happier and healthier force, then the change in training would be worth it.

If there were to be a shift toward implementing such a resilience building programme, one that deliberately and progressively applies pressure to recruits, it will have to have a robust communications plan designed to support it. By leveraging the contacts re-established with the USMC's TBS and the British Army Officer Selection Board in the Spring and Summer of 2011, those charged with designing and implementing such a programme can see firsthand how other armies achieve their successes.

Furthermore, the development of resilience needs to be divorced from just making training "harder." Graduates from the United States Army Ranger course can tell two things.

When subjected to intense physical and psychological stress, they may have developed incredible confidence to overcome future combat and life challenges, but they did not learn a whole lot.<sup>138</sup>

Sleep deprivation interferes with the brain's ability to process and store the material being delivered.<sup>139</sup> Each goal, building resilience and placing students under intense stress to observe performance and character have different objectives; one should not be confused with the other.

The argument to take this next logical step will resonate with those that recognise the need and opportunity for such a fundamental change in training philosophy; those who have commanded in combat and those who are instructing at the schools that conduct basic training. Only with the support of those in positions of authority and influence can these necessary changes take place. The onus rests on these senior leaders and Army training staff within the army Training Authority to exercise that authority and make the right decision to take action.

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<sup>138</sup> Colonel James Markert, interview by author, 17 January 2012.

<sup>139</sup> Stephen Flanagan, "Losing Sleep," *Armed Forces Journal*, December 2011, 12-13.

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