



Then-Lieutenant-General Jonathan Vance, then-Commander Canadian Joint Operations Command, passes the Chief Warrant Officer pace stick from CWO Gérard Poitras (centre), Outgoing Command CWO, to CWO Gaudreault (right), Incoming Command CWO, during the CJOC Change of Command and Change of Appointment Ceremony in Ottawa, 2 June 2015.

Expanding Horizons, Leading the Future: The Role of the Chief Petty Officer 1st Class (CPO1) / Chief Warrant Officer (CWO)

by CWO Sherman Neil and CWO Richard Gillis

Introduction

This short article formally addresses the core obligations and responsibilities of CPO1/CWOs in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). It transcends environment and occupation, going to the very essence of what every CPO1/CWO must emulate, regardless of employment.

Background

In an increasingly complex and ever evolving operating environment, multi-disciplinary, comprehensive, and innovative approaches are critical enablers to sustain Canada's defence and security requirements, now and into the future.¹ Without a doubt, CPO1s/CWOs represent a vast depth of experience, wisdom, professionalism, ethics, and integrity, whose core competencies have served the CAF well in the past, and must remain sacrosanct at the operational and

tactical levels.² CPO1s/CWOs are also closely involved in leading an institution that presents two inseparable faces: a profession tasked with the defence of the state, embedded in the wider Department of National Defence (DND), where "[institutional excellence] is especially important because the current and proximate security environment compels it."³ The past two decades have shown that CPO1s/CWOs must also be strong contributors to CAF leadership teams⁴ immediately upon employment by participating in the decision-making cycle, which converts *strategic intent* into *operational and tactical effectiveness*. In order to meet these demands, it is essential that CPO1s/CWOs be capable of understanding, adapting and prevailing despite operational complexity and the challenges of balancing institutional imperatives for professional effectiveness and organizational efficiency. The ability to transform and adjust to new realities will be critical to the continued success of the CAF and CPO1s/CWOs have an important role to play in both hemispheres of the department.

The current state of CPO1/CWO succession planning has not evolved sufficiently to keep pace with the institutional requirements envisioned in *Beyond Transformation: The CPO1/CWO Strategic Employment Model*, the *Leadership Development Model*, and supported in the *Canadian Armed Forces Professional Development System Study*.⁵ To that end, the role of CPO1s/CWOs must be clearly defined, not only for those succession planned, but for all of them. They will need to be developed systematically, over time, and specifically employed within a model that synchronizes all the pillars of professional development⁶ and competencies, which will expand its strategic contribution to operational and institutional excellence.⁷

The Role

As members of the Defence Team, CPO1s/CWOs occupy a unique position within the framework of the CAF. They perform three equally important functions within our institution: they serve as trusted advisors within leadership teams, co-stewards of the Profession of Arms (POA) in conjunction with CAF Senior Officers, and as custodians of the Non-Commissioned Members (NCM) Corps.

CPO1s/CWOs are developed over the course of their careers. They are the product of a structured professional development system, and have been promoted through the ranks within their respective occupations, based upon both merit and potential, in order to fill a service requirement within the CAF. Over time, as their spheres of influence⁸ and scope of responsibilities⁹ increase, they begin to evolve from exerting *direct influence* (leading people) to performing *indirect influence* (leading the institution).¹⁰

Member of the Leadership Team

CPO1/CWOs provide knowledgeable advice grounded in critical thinking, supported by ethical reasoning, and cultured in practical experience.

While the definition of a Leadership Team may be flexible, the relationship between a CPO1/CWO and an Officer holding Command is unique. This partnership is formed by the deliberate pairing of that officer and the CPO1/CWO¹¹ to meet the needs of the command or environment. As the highest ranking NCMs within the CAF, CPO1s/CWOs have been entrusted by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) to serve as effective advisors to the senior leadership of our military. A commander should endeavor to seek the advice of his CPO1/



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The Coxswain, Chief Petty Officer 1st Class Phillip Hampson, greets crew members from the Spanish Auxiliary Ship *Patiño* onboard HMCS *St. John's* during a Mediterranean crew excursion as part of Operation *Reassurance*, 21 March 2017.

CWO in order to get the NCM perspective and ‘buy-in’ that will lead to mission success. Only then will the Senior Officer and the CPO1/CWO cultivate an atmosphere of respect, trust, and “unquestioned confidence”¹² in each other’s abilities, resulting in an integrated leadership team. As such, CPO1s/CWOs represent an important conduit, bringing distinctive and valuable contributions as loyal members of leadership teams. Their competencies, experience, knowledge, training, and education¹³ complement those of their commanders, thus enabling more informed decisions.

Members of a leadership team gather leadership characteristics and attributes as they have different experiences in both leading *people* and leading the *institution*. Their synergy in using a combination of direct and indirect influence is necessary for successful accomplishment of essential outcomes. It is this set of complementary skills that makes the pairing of Senior Officers and CPO1s/CWOs so unique.

CPO1s/CWOs are key enablers and change agents who exert influence upon conditions of service, as well as upon the formulation and implementation of policy changes that affect uniformed personnel, civilian employees, and their families.¹⁴ They come

from a “unique position of credibility when communicating”¹⁵ because of their trusted position as senior advisors and confidants. In line with our military ethos, every CPO1/CWO must possess the moral courage to speak truth to power. This trust must also be maintained throughout the NCM Corps by consistently being an example of professionalism in all circumstances. The CPO1/CWO must be able to bridge the gap between both the Officer and NCM Corps by communicating up and down the chain of command, using an extensive network that is based upon the relationships they have been built over the span of their careers.

Further to meeting the expectations of these responsibilities, a certain number of CPO1s/CWOs will also lead their Occupations and Branches. Their qualifications, education, and training, gained over the course of their careers, allow these subject matter experts to provide knowledge and guidance that is focused towards either an Occupational or an Environmental domain on all matters affecting NCMs, from professional development to succession management principles. These responsibilities are critical in providing the institution with a platform upon which training and education can be built.



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Lieutenant-General Steve Bowes (left), then-Commander of Canadian Joint Operations Command, presents Chief Petty Officer 1st Class Andrew Tiffin, outgoing JTF-1 Chief Warrant Officer, with his General Service Medal in recognition of CPO1 Tiffin’s service during Operation *Impact*, 3 June 2016.



DND photo RP006-2016-0019-005 by Corporal Jay Ekin

CWO Gaudreault, CJOC CWO, addresses members of Land Task Force Rotation 6 in Camp Albertshof during *Allied Spirit V* of Operation *Reassurance*, 2 October 2016.

Co-Stewardship of the Profession of Arms (POA)

*“Given a choice between self-serving behavior and pro-organizational behavior, a steward’s behavior will not depart from the interests of his or her organization. [...] Thus, even where the interests of the steward and the principal are not aligned, the steward places higher value on cooperation than defection. The behavior of the steward is collective, because the steward seeks to attain the objectives of the organization.”*¹⁶

The POA is comprised of experts in the lawful, ordered application of military force,¹⁷ serving under the authority of the Canadian Government. They are trusted professionals who defend Canadian rights and interests. The core military values – duty, loyalty, integrity, and courage – are the heart of the POA. “The legitimacy of the [POA] in Canada essentially depends upon members fulfilling their professional responsibilities in accord with Canadian values, Canadian and international laws, and the Canadian military ethos.”¹⁸ Members of the POA share a common loyalty toward doctrine that ensures the organizational effectiveness of this unified

force. To maintain the health of the POA, we must achieve the appropriate balance between the functional imperative of professional effectiveness and the societal responsibility to be subordinate to civil authority and to reflect national values.¹⁹

Stewards of this profession are responsible to achieve mission success, while considering member well-being, internal integration, and the external adaptability of the institution, all the while fostering the ethical conduct of CAF members, based upon Military Ethos.²⁰ It is through these responsibilities that stewards maintain the trust of the government they serve, and ultimately, the confidence of the Canadian people to meet its mandate. The public’s trust and the belief in its military are non-negotiable.

As co-stewards of the POA, CPO1s/CWOs are instrumental in nurturing the four attributes of the POA: military ethos, identity, expertise, and responsibility.²¹ Competent and committed, they have an obligation to model and foster the practice of ethics, which includes respecting the dignity of all persons, serving Canada before self, and obeying and supporting lawful authority such that members of the CAF and members of the Defence Team will consistently perform their duties to the highest ethical standards.

As the future security environment will challenge all aspects of the POA, the co-stewards must help build a force capable of professional standards that will exceed the expectations of Canadian society. This trust between the CAF and Canadian society can be achieved by fostering an ethical culture that will ensure a proper balance between military identity and Canadian values.

Custodian of the NCM Corps

“NCM Corps 2020 established the criteria for a fully professional NCM corps and initiated a restructuring of NCM courses for the most junior, through intermediate and advanced courses, culminating in a [CPO1/CWO] qualification. These actions ensure that those selected to the highest NCM ranks are prepared for the responsibilities associated with their role as “custodians” of the NCM corps and “co-stewards” of the profession of arms.”²²

If co-stewards of the POA ensure Canadian values are respected, the custodian of the NCM Corps is responsible for maintaining a distinct military identity grounded in fundamental beliefs and expectations about military service, including the acceptance of unlimited liability, fighting spirit, discipline, and teamwork.²³ This responsibility is an important stability pillar in an ever-changing organization.

As custodians of the NCM Corps, CPO1s/CWOs must be keenly aware of the delicate balance between mission success and member well-being by taking proactive steps to ensure institutional excellence in areas including, but not limited to welfare, efficiency, and good discipline. This role shall never be taken lightly, and it must be transmitted to those who follow them.

CPO1s/CWOs have a responsibility to invest in our Professional Development (PD) System, and to support their subordinates' participation in, not only military training and professional military education, but also through the provision of personal lifelong learning and experiential opportunities. Additionally, they are responsible for the development of the NCM Corps by ensuring that the knowledge and expertise they have gained over the course of their careers is mentored to the next generation.

Their character and military experiences must shape and create a fighting spirit that is the hallmark of a highly effective force.

As the most senior ranking NCMs, CPO1s/CWOs are entrusted to protect and promote our military customs and traditions, which “...produce special social structures that contribute to a sense of organic unity and military identity.”²⁴ They must also ensure that organizational stability is balanced against the need to adapt to rapid changes.²⁵

Conclusion

This cadre of professionals represents the culmination of many years of experience, knowledge, training, education, and self-development. Regardless of their service, occupation, or specific job, each and every CPO1/CWO must share the core responsibilities of advisor, co-steward of the POA, and custodian of the NCM Corps. Their sphere of influence and scope of responsibility can range from the tactical, where they are firmly anchored in the direct leading of people, to the strategic, where their effect is more indirect. CPO1s/CWOs require a deliberate ability to anticipate and create the conditions necessary for operational success and institutional excellence. It is these three unique functions of providing an essential and distinct capability to the leadership team, co-stewarding the Profession of Arms, and embodying the role of custodian of the NCM Corps which form the bedrock upon which all employment must be developed and their importance safeguarded for future generations.

Chief Warrant Officer Sherman Neil, MMM, CD, *is currently the Project Manager for the CPO1/CWO Strategic Employment Model project in Ottawa, Canada.*

Chief Warrant Officer Richard Gillis, CD, *is currently the Project Lead for the CPO1/CWO Strategic Employment Model project in Ottawa, Canada.*

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DND photo SW2016-0167-05 by Leading Seaman Brad Upshall

Members of the Joint Task Force Nijmegen 2016 contingent are greeted at the airport in Lille, France, by Regimental Sergeant Major Chief Warrant Officer Luc Moreau, 15 July 2016.

NOTES

1. Department of National Defence, *The Future Security Environment 2013-2040*, Chief of Force Development, Ottawa, 2014.
2. Department of National Defence, *Beyond Transformation: The CPO1/CWO Strategic Employment Model*, Chief of Force Development, Ottawa, 2012, p. 2.
3. Major-General Éric Tremblay and Dr. Bill Bentley, "Institutional Excellence: An Initial Road Map," in *Canadian Military Journal*, Vol 16, No 1, 2015, p. 14.
4. Canadian Defence Academy, *Canadian Armed Forces Professional Development System Study – Final Report*, 16 December 2014, Kingston, page v.
5. *Canadian Armed Forces Professional Development System Study*. On the specific issue of succession planning, see Robert W. Walker, *The Professional Development Framework: Generating Effectiveness in Canadian Forces Leadership*, Canadian Defence Academy, Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, Technical Report 2006-01, Kingston, 2006, p. 43. Walker's model hinges upon achieving congruence between CAF overall effectiveness, leadership development, and CAF applications, such as succession planning, which are the outcomes. Effectiveness and leadership development components have already been captured in doctrine and the professional development system. The "outcomes" component of the model, as envisioned in the leadership manuals, remains to be systematically implemented. Reviewing and evolving succession planning based upon a competency approach would therefore be one of the next logical steps in the larger CAF modernization process.
6. The four pillars of professional development are education, training, experience, and self-development.
7. *Generating Effectiveness in Canadian Forces Leadership*.
8. The CPO1/CWO SEM Project defines "sphere of influence" as areas of activity over which a CPO1/CWO exerts influence (2016).
9. The CPO1/CWO SEM Project defines "scope of responsibility" as the range of activities, duties, and responsibilities that a CPO1/CWO is reasonably expected to carry out or fulfill within the domain of their job or position (2016).
10. Department of National Defence, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*, Canadian Defence Academy, Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, Kingston, 2005, p. 7.
11. Department of National Defence, *Institutional Leadership 2030* (Draft version), Canadian Defence Academy, Kingston, 2015.
12. *Beyond Transformation*, p. 17.
13. *Ibid.*, p.18. See also Karen J. Rankin *et al.*, *Canadian Armed Forces Competency Dictionary (CAF CD): Content Integrity and Consistency Validation*, Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis, Ottawa, 2015, and Department of National Defence, "Non-Commissioned Members General Specification," in *Canadian Forces Manual of Military Employment Structure*, Vol. 2, Part 2, (A-PD-055-002/PP-002).
14. Chief Warrant Officer Daniel Moyer, *Roles and Responsibilities of the Non-Commissioned Officer Tactical to Strategic*, Command Senior Enlisted Leader Allied Land Command, 14 April 2016.
15. Lieutenant-Colonel Timothy D. Connell, *Developing Strategic Leaders in the NCO and Warrant Officer Corps*, United States Army War College, 2013, p. 5
16. James H. Davis *et al.*, "Toward a stewardship of theory of management," in *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 1997, p. 24.
17. Department of National Defence, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, Canadian Defence Academy, Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, Kingston, 2009, p.10.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-42.
20. *Conceptual Foundations*, p. 19.
21. *Duty with Honour*, pp. 14-23.
22. Department of National Defence, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Leading the Institution*, Canadian Defence Academy, Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, Kingston, 2005, p. 14.
23. *Duty with Honour*, p. 26.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
25. *Conceptual Foundations*, p. 34.