



National Defence
Strategic Joint Staff
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Ottawa, Ontario
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Défense nationale
État-major interarmées stratégique
Quartier général de la Défense nationale
Ottawa, (Ontario)
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Fellow Logisticians,

As your newly appointed Strategic J4, I felt compelled to write to you from a key position within our CAF sustainment enterprise from the perspective of 'a Logistician to Logisticians' above all else. Like you, and as one of you, **I want to have a progressive and constructive influence on how we shape change in these dynamic times.** I realize that my moral authority is somewhat diminished by historical and recent misconduct by senior CAF leadership and that your trust in your chain of command, in many cases has been affected.

I also acknowledge that most of you are employed within environmentally distinct commands, or within institution centric organizations of the CAF and/or Department of National Defence. That said, while I understand that Environmental Commanders manage trades affiliated to their environment, they do not manage the Royal Canadian Logistics Service (RCLS) and as such, they do not manage Logisticians, even though they employ them and account for them from a succession planning perspective. **Beyond their environmental affiliation, Logistician sailors, aviators and soldiers are trade-managed and developed centrally by the RCLS.**

Through your respective chain of command **you have assuredly heard of the existential need for culture change.** I hope you have discussed cultural change, reflected on it, developed an understanding of it and embody it in your daily interactions. I know from personal recent experience that the organizations I have belonged to have undertaken significant effort in ensuring steps towards cultural change to ensure we are more inclusive and all members can bring their very best to the table every day. **It is simply the right thing to do.**

As some aspects of our CAF culture are good, we want to maintain and reinforce these. However, we need to acknowledge and act upon, the existential threat from within that exists in the form of the harmful aspects of our culture. **Without a doubt, there are aspects of our culture that are harmful, are exclusionary in nature, and run counter to everything we aspire to as expressed through our CAF Ethos: Trusted to Serve.**

The last two paragraphs evoke notions of evolution and renewal, and as such, some of our most senior CAF leaders have also shifted their discussion from 'culture change' to '**cultural growth.**' This perspective is especially useful as we recognise that there is no single silver bullet to ensure instantaneous cultural growth, as well as admit to a collective awareness that we are not there yet.



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The RCLS must support the ambitions of *Trusted to Serve* by embodying this cultural growth. The Royal Canadian Logistics Service has a rich history of diversity from the ethnically diverse troops supplying the trenches of WWI through the various women's service corps that filled logistical roles in WWII. Building on this rich history, we must evolve in lock step with the Environmental Commands and the other Level 1s. In fact, **the RCLS should be playing a trail blazing role** considering that the sixteen thousand-strong RCLS consists of a large percentage of the CAF (16%), and continues to be one of its most diverse services. With this in mind, we must recognize that the RCLS is made up, in a large proportion, of those that have been the most vulnerable to those harmful aspects of our CAF culture. Therefore, we must act decisively and deliberately. We are long past the time to evolve. In fact we must accelerate our 'growth' and become organizational leaders of this critical change.

Working with others, **we will conduct an in-depth examination of who we are (our identity), and work to bridge any gaps between that, and who we need to become.** We will particularly be watchful for any signs **which could signal a troubling sub-culture within our service, counter to our identity and to what we need to be.**

I intend to undertake four first steps in order to bring focus, generate momentum, and deliver effects. **Together, following these steps, Logisticians will work towards establishing greater trust, and creating forums for discussion direct to RCLS Leadership (not via intermediaries), and towards the greater inclusion of the rank and file in developing new approaches to cultural growth:**

- Much like the CAF has accomplished over the last year or so in examining our CAF Trg, Education and Professional Development establishments to ensure an introspective look, and in order to bring on accelerated change, I intend to conduct a similar examination of CFLTC from a RCLS perspective. **The RCLS will work hand in hand with CMP and CPCC to ensure that CFLTC is producing Logisticians aligned with our CAF Ethos: Trusted to Serve.**
- Also in line with the CAF's emphasis on **strength of character over competence** when it comes to selection of CAF leaders, **the RCLS will look at how we plan for leadership succession, including the atypical career path, across all rank levels and look at how we train Logisticians at our training establishment, bases and wings,** across all Logistics Specialties, from our most junior leaders in the NCM cadre to the most senior NCOs and from our junior officers to our senior ones.



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- We will **form diverse advisory teams that will conduct this examination on behalf of the RCLS, and they will advise our most senior levels within the RCLS on their findings and make recommendations.** Working closely with these teams, their recommendations and the ensuing change initiatives will lead to cultural growth and address these harmful aspects of our culture.
- Finally **these advisory teams at the strategic level will work with and encourage grass-roots movements at the local level.** These interconnections will undoubtedly help with cultural growth from within.

Attracting talent is important. Retaining talent is equally as important. These are mutually supportive. We must not lose sight on the quality of experience we offer as Logisticians. That is why cultural growth initiatives cannot solely be focussed on CFLTC during those formative years, it must find its way into our everyday lives, at all stages of our service to our nation.

We are in a battle for talent as we try to attract CAF recruits from all segments of Canadian society. **For us to be attractive to more Canadians and tap into this enormous potential, we need to be more inclusive and represent the values aspired-to by a larger proportion of Canadians while remaining true to the positive aspects of our CAF culture.** That said, **this effort is not a recruiting strategy and is not a retention strategy, it is simply the right thing that needs to be done.**

This effort will require honest, difficult and uncomfortable conversations. Most of all it will need to yield tangible action. This will require leadership. **Throughout, as we endeavour to improve, we may make mistakes. We must humbly learn from these and strive to accelerate our existentially important cultural growth, in lock step with those we are duty-bound to support, for those we are entrusted to lead, and for the nation we proudly serve.**

Sincerely,

Luc Girouard
Brigadier-General
Strategic J4 / Director General Support
Strategic Joint Staff