



The Ideal Length of Tour

Perceptions of Canadian Forces Members Returning from Deployment

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Abstract

Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis (DGMPRA) was tasked to provide research and information to support a review of the policy on operational tour lengths. Two key questions were raised by the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS): (1) What are the current policies related to length and frequency of deployment in other nations?; and (2) What research does the Canadian Forces (CF) or other militaries have, or could they conduct, to support a review of current policies? The Operational Tempo Working Group was established to address these questions. The Working Group engaged the Director Military Personnel Operational Research and Analysis (DMPORA) to gather data on the opinions of CF personnel regarding deployment duration and frequency. Using the Human Dimensions of Operations (HDO) Survey, DMPORA gathered the relevant data from a sample of CF personnel who had recently returned from a deployment in Afghanistan with the aim of answering the second question posed by the CDS. Quantitative and qualitative results showed that most CF personnel preferred to serve on a six month deployment with Home Leave Travel Allowance (HLTA). More specifically, it was the preferred option across all rank and occupation groups. Based on this research, it is recommended that the CF maintain the current standard of six month deployments with HLTA.

Résumé

La Directrice générale – Recherche et analyse [Personnel militaire] (DGRAPM) a été chargée de réaliser une étude et de fournir des renseignements visant à appuyer la révision de la politique sur la durée des affectations. Le Chef d'état-major de la Défense (CEMD) a soulevé les deux questions suivantes : 1) Quelles sont les politiques en matière de durée et de fréquence de déploiement actuellement en vigueur dans d'autres pays? 2) Quelles sont les études dont les Forces canadiennes (FC) ou d'autres forces armées disposent, ou quelles sont les études qui pourraient être menées, pour appuyer la révision des politiques actuelles? Le groupe de travail sur le rythme opérationnel a été créé afin de répondre à ces questions. Il a chargé la Direction - Recherche et analyse opérationnelles (Personnel militaire) (DRAOPM) de recueillir des données concernant l'opinion des membres des FC sur la durée et la fréquence des missions. Pour répondre à la deuxième question posée par le CEMD, la DRAOPM s'est servie du questionnaire *Dimension humaine des opérations* (DHO) pour recueillir les données pertinentes auprès d'un échantillon des membres des FC récemment revenus d'une mission en Afghanistan. Les résultats quantitatifs et qualitatifs démontrent que la majorité des membres des FC préfèrent participer à des missions d'une durée de six mois avec indemnité de retour au domicile (IRD). Plus précisément, cette option est arrivée en tête, tous grades et groupes professionnels confondus. Au vu de ces résultats, nous recommandons aux FC de conserver la durée actuelle des déploiements, fixée à six mois avec IRD.

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Executive summary

The Ideal Length of Tour: Perceptions of Canadian Forces Members Returning from Deployment

Sarah Peddie; Karen Koundakjian; DGMPPRA TM 2009-007; Defence R&D Canada – DGMPPRA; June 2009.

Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis (DGMPPRA) was tasked to provide research and information to support a review of the policy on operational tour lengths. Two key questions were raised by the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS): (1) What are the current policies related to length and frequency of deployment in other nations?; and (2) What research does the Canadian Forces (CF) or other militaries have, or could they conduct, to support a review of current policies? The Operational Tempo Working Group was established to address these questions. The Working Group engaged the Director Military Personnel Operational Research and Analysis (DMPORA) to gather data on the opinions of CF personnel regarding deployment duration and frequency in order to answer the second question posed by the CDS. Using the Human Dimensions of Operations (HDO) Survey, DMPORA gathered the relevant data from a sample of CF personnel (N=935) who had recently returned from a deployment in Afghanistan during 2006.

Respondents' opinions regarding deployment length and frequency were elicited in two parts. First, participants were provided with four deployment options (four months without HLTA and less time between tours; six months with HLTA; six months without HLTA; and eight months with HLTA and more time between tours) and asked to indicate their preference regarding tours to Afghanistan. Next, participants were asked to provide any comments they had on the length and frequency of operational tours.

The majority of participants (65.7%) favoured deployments of six months with HLTA over the other alternatives. However, some preferred deployments of eight months with HLTA and more time between tours (14.1%) while others preferred deployments of four months without HLTA and less time between tours (12.8%). A small percentage of respondents (7.4%) preferred deployments of six months without HLTA over the other options provided.

Qualitative analysis revealed a variety of reasons underpinning deployment preferences. Respondents in favour of six month deployments with HLTA, in effect the status quo, were of the opinion that the current model was working well. In addition, they felt that deployments in excess of six months would be detrimental to soldiers' and their families' wellbeing. The small cohort in favour of six month deployments without HLTA felt that leave in the midst of operations weakened unit effectiveness and soldier focus prior to, and post HLTA. Respondents in favour of four month deployments without HLTA felt that troops could maintain their vigour and be at their best within a shortened timeframe. They were also interested in reducing stretches of time away from family. In exchange, they stated a willingness to deploy more often. One of the main motives expressed by those who preferred eight month deployments was to increase operational effectiveness through increased expertise and unit rhythm. The prospect of having more time between tours also had its appeal. Across groups, there was a range of attitudes regarding desired frequency of deployment.

Based on this research, the current policy on operational tours seems appropriate. It is recommended that the CF maintain the current standard of six months with HLTA as it was widely endorsed and it seems likely that this arrangement will continue to promote a general level of satisfaction among deploying personnel.

Sommaire

The Ideal Length of Tour: Perceptions of Canadian Forces Members Returning from Deployment

Sarah Peddie; Karen Koundakjian; DGMPRA TM 2009-007; R & D pour la défense Canada – DRASPM; Juin 2009.

La Directrice générale – Recherche et analyse [Personnel militaire] (DGRAPM) a été chargée de réaliser une étude et de fournir des renseignements visant à appuyer la révision de la politique sur la durée des affectations. Le Chef d'état-major de la Défense (CEMD) a soulevé les deux questions suivantes : 1) Quelles sont les politiques en matière de durée et de fréquence de déploiement actuellement en vigueur dans d'autres pays? 2) Quelles sont les études dont les Forces canadiennes (FC) ou d'autres forces armées disposent, ou quelles sont les études qui pourraient être menées, pour appuyer la révision des politiques actuelles? Le groupe de travail sur le rythme opérationnel a été créé afin de répondre à ces questions. Il a chargé la Direction – Recherche et analyse opérationnelles (Personnel militaire) (DRAOPM) de recueillir des données concernant l'opinion des membres des FC sur la durée et la fréquence des missions afin d'apporter une réponse à la deuxième question posée par le CEMD. La DRAOPM s'est servie du questionnaire *Dimension humaine des opérations* (DHO) pour recueillir les données pertinentes auprès d'un échantillon des membres des FC (N = 935) récemment revenus d'Afghanistan, où ils avaient été déployés en 2006.

L'avis des répondants au sujet de la durée et de la fréquence d'affectation a été recueilli en deux temps. Tout d'abord, on a présenté aux participants quatre options de déploiement (quatre mois sans indemnité de retour au domicile [IRD] et une période moins longue entre chaque affectation, six mois avec IRD, six mois sans IRD, ainsi que huit mois avec IRD et plus de temps entre chaque affectation). On leur a ensuite demandé d'indiquer leur préférence pour les affectations en Afghanistan. Puis, on leur a demandé de formuler des commentaires sur la durée et la fréquence des affectations.

La majorité des répondants (65,7 p. 100) préféraient participer à des déploiements d'une durée de six mois et recevoir une IRD plutôt que les autres options. Cependant, certains préféraient des déploiements de huit mois avec IRD et plus de temps entre chaque mission (14,1 p. 100), tandis que d'autres préféraient participer à des déploiements de quatre mois sans IRD et disposer de moins de temps entre chaque mission (12,8 p. 100). Un faible pourcentage des répondants (7,4 p. 100) préféraient les déploiements de six mois sans IRD aux autres options proposées.

L'analyse qualitative a révélé l'existence de multiples raisons sous-tendant les préférences en matière de déploiement. Les participants favorables aux déploiements d'une durée de six mois avec IRD, qui sont actuellement la norme, considéraient que le modèle actuel fonctionnait bien. Ils estimaient en outre que les déploiements d'une durée supérieure à six mois seraient préjudiciables au bien-être des militaires et de leurs familles. Le petit nombre de répondants en faveur des déploiements d'une durée de six mois sans IRD estimaient que la prise de congés pendant les opérations diminuait l'efficacité des unités et nuisait à la concentration des militaires avant et après lesdits congés. Les participants qui préféraient participer à des déploiements de quatre mois sans IRD estimaient quant à eux que les troupes étaient capables de conserver leur

énergie et de donner le meilleur d'elles-mêmes sur des périodes plus courtes. Ils voyaient également en cette option la possibilité de réduire la durée des périodes passées loin de leurs familles. En échange, ils se déclaraient prêts à être déployés plus fréquemment. Enfin, l'une des principales raisons avancées par les répondants qui ont déclaré préférer les déploiements de huit mois était l'amélioration de l'efficacité opérationnelle par le renforcement de l'expérience et l'accélération du rythme des unités. La perspective de disposer de plus de temps entre chaque affectation constituait également un atout à leurs yeux. Dans tous les groupes, on a relevé des positions très diverses à l'égard de la fréquence des déploiements.

Au vu des résultats de cette étude, la politique actuelle en matière d'affectations semble adaptée. Nous recommandons aux FC de conserver la durée actuelle de six mois avec IRD, étant donné que celle-ci est largement approuvée et qu'elle continuera probablement de contribuer à la satisfaction générale des militaires qui prennent part à des missions.

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The two authors contributed equally to this research.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis (DGMPPRA) was tasked to provide research and information to support a review of the policy on operational tour lengths. Two key questions were raised by the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS): (1) What are the current policies related to length and frequency of deployment in other nations?; and (2) What research does the Canadian Forces (CF) and other militaries have, or could they conduct, to support a review of current policies? The Operational Tempo Working Group was established to address these questions. In order to answer the second question posed by the CDS, the Working Group engaged the Director Military Personnel Operational Research and Analysis (DMPORA) to gather data on the opinions of CF personnel regarding deployment duration and frequency. Using the Human Dimensions of Operations (HDO) Survey, DMPORA gathered the relevant data from a sample of CF personnel who had recently returned from a deployment in Afghanistan. The pertinent findings are presented in the current report.

1.2 Aim

The analyses aimed to:

- a. Assess the preferred length and frequency of deployment of previously deployed CF personnel through quantitative analysis;
- b. Provide an understanding of the underlying reasons for the preferred length and frequency of deployment of these CF personnel through qualitative analysis; and
- c. Provide recommendations regarding the optimal length and frequency of deployment based on both the quantitative and qualitative findings.

2 Methodology

2.1 Sample Characteristics

Approximately 2,000 CF personnel, who had returned from a recent deployment in Afghanistan, were invited to complete the post-deployment HDO Survey. A total of 979 of these personnel participated in the survey, most of whom responded to the question on preferred length and frequency of deployment. Specifically, 935 participants responded to the deployment question. Among these respondents, the majority (72.4%) were Junior Non-Commissioned Members (NCM), and most were employed in the Combat Arms (62.4%). Tables 1 and 2 provide a breakdown of each rank group and occupation category respectively.

Table 1: Participant Breakdown by Rank

Rank	Frequency	Percent
Jr NCM	677	72.4
Sr NCM	151	16.1
Jr Officer	61	6.5
Sr Officer	39	4.2
Missing	7	.7
TOTAL	935	100

Table 2: Participant Breakdown by Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Combat Arms	583	62.4
Support and Service Occupations	315	33.7
Missing	37	4
TOTAL	935	100

2.2 Questionnaire

The CF has been using the HDO Survey to gather information related to operational tours since 1996 including operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, Haiti, Eritrea, and Afghanistan. The primary objective of the HDO Survey has traditionally been to provide Commanders and Commanding Officers with information on the human dimensions that influence operational readiness and effectiveness at both the individual and group level. The survey is administered at three key points in the deployment cycle, including the pre-deployment training phase, in-theatre, and post-deployment. Accordingly, survey questions are designed to monitor the human factors of interest at each stage. The post-deployment version has generally focused on measuring morale, cohesion, perceptions of leadership, stress in military service, and the symptoms related to stress. The inclusion of the question on preferred length and frequency of deployment marked a turning

point for the HDO Survey in that it expanded its mandate to include matters of interest at the strategic level.

2.2.1 Length and Frequency of Deployment

Respondents' opinions regarding deployment length and frequency were elicited in two parts. Initially, participants were provided with four deployment options and asked to indicate their preference regarding the length of tours to Afghanistan from most preferred to least preferred. The options were presented as follows:

___ 4 months without HLTA¹ (with less time between tours)

___ 6 months with HLTA

___ 6 months without HLTA

___ 8 months with HLTA (with more time between tours)

Next, participants were asked to provide any comments they had on the length and frequency of operational tours (see Annex A).

2.3 Analysis

While many of the respondents rank ordered the four deployment options from most to least preferred, over a third of the sample simply indicated their most preferred selection. The following analyses focus solely on the most preferred, or first choice selections made by the participants.

Overall frequencies of first choice selections were tabulated to determine what proportion of the sample favoured each of the four deployment options.

Crosstabulations were conducted to examine the distribution of first choice selections among the rank and occupation groups. Pearson chi-square tests were used to determine whether the distributions of responses were independent of, or dependent on, membership in a particular rank or occupation category.

Finally, qualitative analysis of the comments submitted in conjunction with participants' deployment preferences was conducted to provide an understanding of the underlying reasons behind the participants' deployment preferences.

¹ HLTA is the abbreviation for Home Leave Travel Allowance.

3 Results

Examining the overall frequencies of first choice selections showed that the majority of participants (65.7%) favoured deployments of six months with HLTA over the other alternatives. In effect, the majority selected the option that was representative of the existing deployment policy. However, eight month deployments with HLTA and more time between tours were preferred by some (14.1%) while four month deployments without HLTA and less time between tours were preferred by others (12.8%). A small percentage of respondents (7.4%) preferred deployments of six months without HLTA over the other options provided. The proportion of respondents who favoured each deployment option is displayed below in Figure 1.

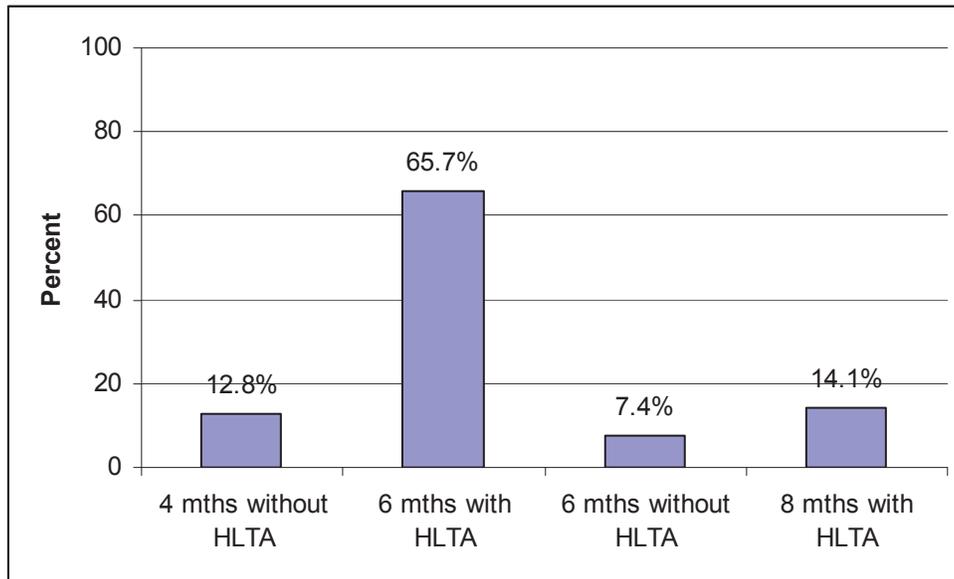


Figure 1: Overall Deployment Preferences (n = 728)

3.1 Deployment Preferences by Rank and Occupation

3.1.1 Deployment Preferences by Rank

Crosstabulations were conducted to examine the distribution of deployment preferences for each of the rank groups. The distribution of responses for each rank group is displayed below in Figure 2. As shown, deployments of six months with HLTA were highly favoured within each of the rank groups.

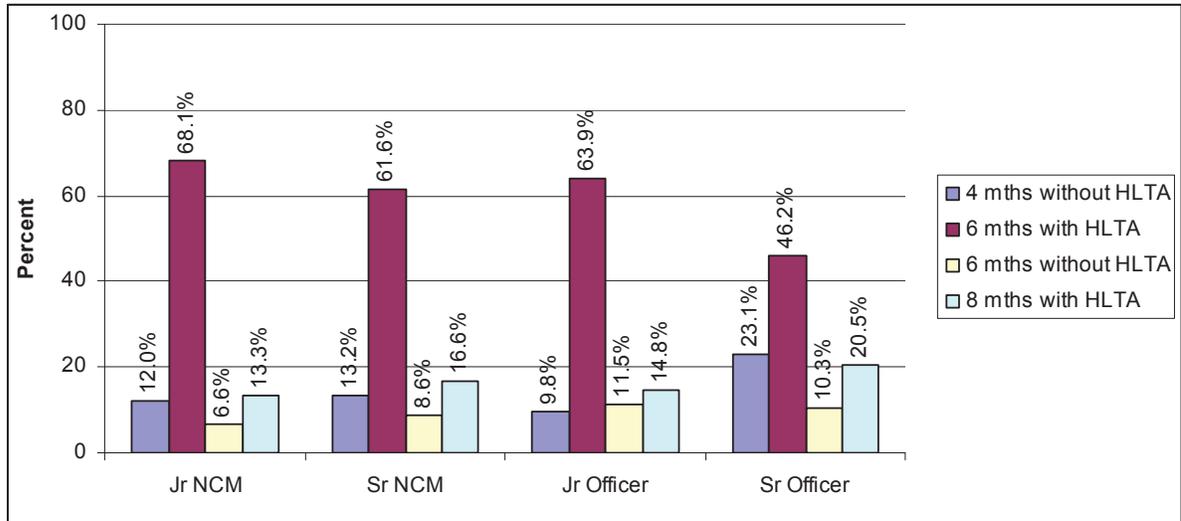


Figure 2: Distribution of Deployment Preferences by Rank (n = 928)

A Pearson chi-square test determined that deployment preferences were independent of rank. Although the pattern of responses is not identical across all four groups, the difference in proportions is not significant, $\chi^2(9, N=928) = 12.01, p = 0.213$. In short, a relationship between rank and deployment preferences was not found.

While an overall relationship between rank and deployment preferences was not detected, separate tests which compared the preferences of Senior Officers to those of each of the other rank groups found a significant relationship, when considering the deployment preferences of Junior NCMs and Senior Officers $\chi^2(3, N=716) = 8.38, p = 0.039^2$. As shown in Figure 2, Senior Officers were somewhat more diverse in their preferences and were less supportive of the six month option with HLTA than Junior NCMs. However caution should be exercised, given that Senior Officers constitute a very small portion of the respondents (39, or 4.2%). Therefore, these results are not necessarily representative of all senior officers.

3.1.2 Deployment Preferences by Occupation

Crosstabulations were also conducted to examine the distribution of deployment preferences for the two occupation groups (i.e., combat arms and support and service occupations). The distributions of first choice selections for each occupation category are presented in Figure 3.

For both occupation groups, a six month deployment with HLTA was the most popular choice, while a six month deployment without HLTA was the least favoured.

² Although it is not always appropriate to carry out separate tests when overall significant differences are not present, the consistent disparity between junior and senior ranks warrants specific investigation.

In contrast, their preference profiles regarding four and eight month deployments were dissimilar. Among Combat Arms personnel, a higher proportion selected the eight month option over the four month option, while Support and Service personnel showed the opposite pattern. At first glance, this result may seem counterintuitive, given the nature of the jobs and the different degrees of risk involved. Findings from the qualitative analysis help to shed light on the matter. A thorough examination of the comments solicited in part two of the deployment question established a number of reasons behind respondents' first choice selections. In brief, respondents who supported eight month deployments were largely concerned with boosting operational effectiveness. On the other hand, one of the most important themes that emerged among those who favoured four month deployments was the desire to reduce time away from family. An inspection of the marital status and number of dependents reported by each occupation group showed that the majority of the Support and Service sample were either married or common law (68%), while over half of the Combat Arms sample were single. In addition, approximately half of the Support and Service sample reported having at least one dependent, compared to the thirty-three percent reported by the Combat Arms sample.

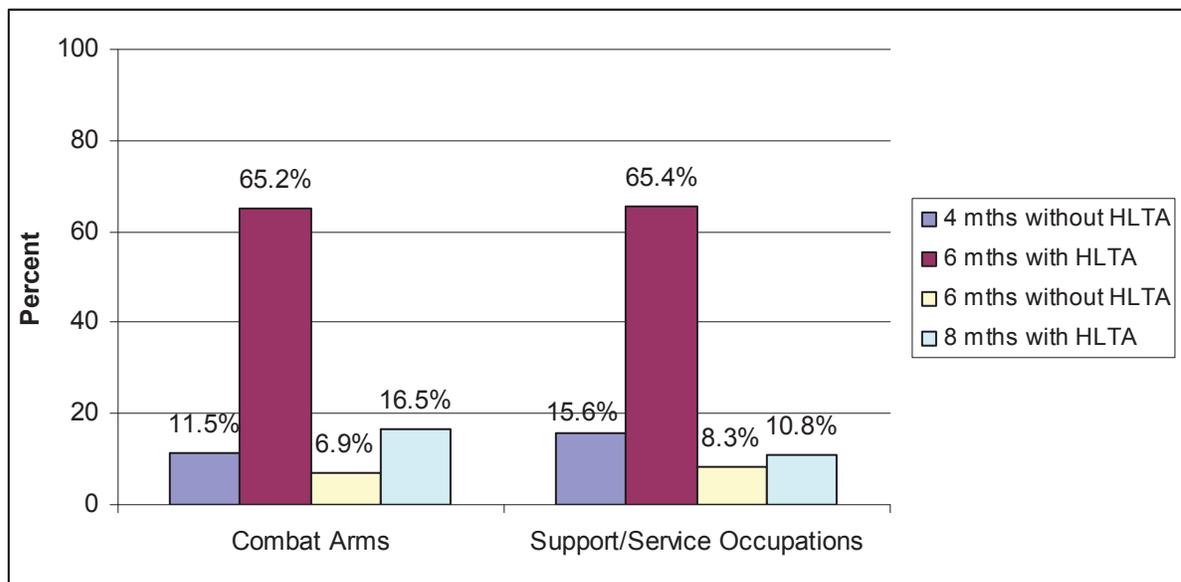


Figure 3: Distribution of Deployment Preferences by Occupation

A Pearson chi-square test to determine whether the distribution of responses was contingent on occupation was not significant, however it was approaching significance $\chi^2(3, N=898) = 7.70$, $p = 0.053$. In other words, an outright relationship between deployment preferences and occupation was not established, yet it approached significance, which suggests that perhaps a more multifaceted dynamic was at work. The qualitative findings and demographic differences between the occupations discussed above evoke the following questions. Is the relationship between deployment preferences and occupation the same for single and married personnel? Is it the same for those with and without dependents? The answer to both of these questions is indeed negative. When marital status was used as a layering variable in chi-square tests between deployment preferences and occupation, significant results were found for married respondents $\chi^2(3, N=489) = 9.96$, $p = 0.019$, yet not for single respondents $\chi^2(3, N=404) = 1.08$, $p = 0.781$. Similarly, when the number of dependents was used as a layering variable in tests to establish the

relationship between deployment preferences and occupation, significant results were found for personnel who had dependents $\chi^2(3, N=344) = 7.87, p = 0.049$, but not for personnel who did not have dependents $\chi^2(3, N=545) = 1.80, p = 0.614$.

In sum, while the initial chi-square test did not establish an association between deployment preferences and occupation for the overall sample, further tests revealed that a relationship between deployment preferences and occupation did exist for married personnel and those with dependents. That is, married respondents and those with dependents, have different preferences for deployment length than those who are single and without dependents respectively.

3.2 Examination of Comments

In addition to establishing preferences among proposed deployment alternatives, participants were asked to provide any comments they had on the length and frequency of operational tours. A total of 352 respondents (38%) provided comments in response to part two of the question. It should be noted however that some respondents contributed comments to more than one theme established in the qualitative analysis. Accordingly, 388 comments were coded.

In order to get an understanding of the underlying reasons behind the deployment preferences of CF personnel, the qualitative analysis was structured according to first choice selections. The comments were grouped according to the respondents' first choice, and then analyzed to reveal the prominent themes within each group. The analysis revealed group specific themes as well as themes that spanned across groups. The important themes for each group are presented separately. An additional theme which emerged overall is presented in aggregate. Finally, comments pertaining to the frequency of deployment are also presented in aggregate.

3.2.1 Important Themes by Deployment Preference

3.2.1.1 Preference for Six Months with HLTA

The majority of the sample (N=614) preferred deployments of six months with HLTA, over the other alternatives provided. When the 220 comments submitted by this group were reviewed, the following central themes emerged:

Table 3: Summary of Main Themes Regarding Preference for Six Months with HLTA

Theme	Sub-theme
1. Tours in excess of six months are too long.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – toll on family and personal life – soldier wellbeing, burnout
2. Status quo should be maintained.	
3. HLTA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – requirement for HLTA – timing and flexibility of HLTA
4. Alternative preferences for tours.	
5. Need for R&R.	

3.2.1.1.1 Theme 1: Tours in Excess of Six Months are too long (39 Comments)

The prominent opinion expressed by this group of respondents was that tours in excess of six months were too long. Various examples from their own experience were given to support this point of view:

“Over 6 months is too long - just returned from 8 month tour and will quit if asked to deploy for that long again.”

“I did 9 months & found it to be too long. Prior tours were 6 months & easier.”

One of the main concerns with extended tour lengths was the toll it would take on family and one’s personal life.

“Longer tours are more disruptive to personal life and family life. I find it harder to reintegrate after this last tour because it was a hard pace and long duration (9 months). My previous tours of 6 months were easier to cope with and reintegration was quick (4-8 weeks).”

“An 8 month tour would place serious strain on my family relationship and we had probably reached our limits by 6 months.”

“Families and small children cannot cope any longer than 6 months. I will definitely think twice about ever deploying for 8 months.”

“For reservists, who leave their families to start workup training up to a year before the tour deploys, longer tours would be a big strain on their personal lives.”

Another common view within this theme was that deployments longer than six months were detrimental to soldier well-being. Some of the respondents explained that the stress of operations was too much to bear for periods greater than six months and could result in mental and physical burnout.

“6 months is just long enough now. Any longer and the troops will be burnt out not to mention the strain it’ll have on the families.”

“Where tours are intense, in terms of either stress or workload, six months is about the maximum period for an individual to bear the pressure. The time required to recover from the fatigue or stress will also increase if the tour length increases.”

“Our tour was seven months long. In my opinion it was one month longer than it should have been. We were constantly in combat for extended periods of time. I watched friends be killed/injured. Up to the 6 month point I was fine. By the end of the 7th month, I was mentally and physically exhausted.”

“6 months with HLTA is a good system but anymore time in theater would probably be too long. Look at how burnt out the Americans are getting from their 1 yr tours.”

3.2.1.1.2 Theme 2: Status Quo should be Maintained (25 Comments)

Another important theme that emerged among those who indicated a preference for six month deployments with HLTA was simply that the status quo was working well and should be maintained.

“It works. Leave it alone.”

“See no benefit if making it shorter or longer. Current length of 6 month tours work.”

“The way we have it now is fine.”

“Present length works as best as you could expect.”

3.2.1.1.3 Theme 3: HLTA (25 Comments)

In addition to the themes related to deployment length described above, a number of comments made by this group addressed the topic of HLTA.

Most comments pertaining to HLTA reinforced the notion that it was wanted and needed during operational tours (13 comments).

“I think no matter how long the tour is you should always get HLTA because of the amount of stress that you are under in Afghanistan.”

“HLTA is very important. It gives personnel a chance to rest, re-focus and prepare to finish the tour on a high note.”

“I think that removing HLTA is not an option.”

“HLTA is a necessity during a combat tour and is one of the few things that probably mitigated compassionate personnel losses throughout.”

“HLTA is also important to reservists who leave their families as soon as pre-deployment leave is over and don't see them until post deployment leave starts.”

Several comments focused on the timing of HLTA. A few respondents stated their opposition to HLTA occurring early on in a tour.

“My tour was just over six months. I was an augmentee and single so I got the shaft and had my HLTA 1 month into tour. I was not ready to go on leave. Then I had so long to go to the end.”

“No early HLTA. I understand the logistical reasons for having to send people early but there should be a provision for soldiers who get their HLTA within the first two months of a tour such as a four day R&R in Dubai. Early HLTA creates big time mid-tour burn out.”

Others suggested that HLTA would be best taken at the end of the deployment, or that soldiers should be allowed to voluntarily forgo or defer HLTA when operational tempo was high.

“Save the HLTA for after the deployment (have R&Rs throughout the deployment).”

“It is my opinion that a 5 month tour without HLTA would benefit the member. It would still be a 6 month tour however the last 3 weeks could be the member’s HLTA. It is extremely difficult to return after being home or on vacation.”

“In a high operational tempo, soldiers should be allowed to cancel, cut short, or defer their leave on a voluntary basis so they can be with their unit during ‘rough’ times or directly after critical incidents.”

3.2.1.1.4 Theme 4: Alternative Preferences for Tours (18 Comments)

A number of respondents put forward alternative preferences for tours that were not part of the choices provided in the questionnaire.

Most suggestions were for longer tours with additional HLTA or rest and relaxation (R&R) (12 comments).

“7 months with HLTA.”

“8 months with HLTA and two R&Rs would probably work for most people as well.”

“9 months 1 HLTA and 2 R&R.”

“9 months with two HLTA. Good.”

3.2.1.1.5 Theme 5: Need for R&R (16 Comments)

The final theme addressed the need for more R&R while on tour.

“HLTA alone is not enough. We were outside the wire for more than a month at a time and when we came back to KAF it was usually for a half-day or one day. This constant stress really wore me down. We need time to unwind, especially after intense missions.”

“R&R would be a welcome break from a high tempo even if it is a few days off in a main camp.”

“Put R&Rs back into the tours because 1 HLTA isn’t enough.”

“Having R&R would be nice considering the level of stress.”

“72 hour leaves or even a place on base where there is no organized military structure and acts as R&R where you can come and go as you please and acts as a leave centre for down time.”

3.2.1.2 Preference for Eight Months with HLTA (with more time between tours)

The second most preferred deployment option overall (14.1%, n=132) was eight months with HLTA and more time between tours. A total of 71 comments were submitted and reviewed from this group. The central themes are presented below along with a sample of the comments.

Table 4: Summary of Main Themes Regarding Preference for Eight Months with HLTA

1. Gains in individual and unit effectiveness.
2. Support for longer tours with additional leave.
3. Advantages and appeal of a longer break between tours.
4. Deployment length based on job type.

3.2.1.2.1 Theme 1: Gains in Individual and Unit Effectiveness (10 Comments)

The premise of many of the comments made by this group was that longer tours would allow individuals and units to be more effective. Respondents pointed to the benefits of extended deployments such as increased levels of knowledge and experience in operational roles, and enhanced unit rhythm which would allow units to accomplish more.

“The time taken in handovers is lengthy and an 8 month tour would allow for units to accomplish more and be more knowledgeable on situations.”

“I believe that in order to be more effective overseas we need to have longer tours allowing for more experience in a given role and therefore a higher level of effectiveness.”

“12 months one HLTA, you don’t start working as a good unit until at least 4 months of combat. And really start to roll after 7.”

“Tours should be at least 1 year. As a soldier on the ground it takes that long to learn about your AOR and the players in it and be able to influence the situation.”

3.2.1.2.2 Theme 2: Support for longer Tours with Additional Leave (9 Comments)

Another set of comments confirmed this groups' support for longer deployments, in most cases by suggesting tours longer than eight months with additional leave.

"8 months with longer HLTA."

"Deployments should be one year with one HLTA and two 96 hour breaks."

"Do 9 month tours with a 96 hour leave in Dubai in addition to HLTA."

"I think combat tours should be one year with one HLTA and one R&R."

3.2.1.2.3 Theme 3: Advantages and Appeal of a longer Break between tours (5 Comments)

Consistent with the condition of their first choice selection, which specified additional time between tours would accompany an eight month deployment, a third series of comments emphasized the advantages and the appeal of a longer break between tours.

"Given Op Temp and length of pre-deployment training regiments, a longer tour in theatre (8 to 12 months) with a longer break between deployments would seem to make sense."

"With a longer tour it would assist creating a greater time span between tours and allow units and soldiers to have more time at home and decrease the stress of possible year after year, or year on year off tour situation."

"An eight or nine month tour with HLTAs would be great if that meant not having to go back for 3 years instead of the present 1 & 1/2 to 2 years."

3.2.1.2.4 Theme 4: Deployment Length Based on Job Type (5 Comments)

Another minor theme that emerged within this group was the idea that deployment length should be based on the type of job that one is doing.

"Would depend upon the job during deployment."

"The length of tour should depend on what your actually doing while outside the wire."

There were a number of comments that did not fall within the four main themes but were mentioned by more than one respondent. A few respondents brought up issues related to the timing of HLTA previously noted by those preferring a six month deployment with HLTA. A couple of respondents suggested that deployments should be staggered to allow replacements time to get trained and gain experience before taking over from their predecessors, and finally a couple of respondents highlighted the need for more R&R.

3.2.1.3 Preference for Four Months Without HLTA (with less time between tours)

Approximately an eighth of the sample (12.8%, n=120) indicated a preference for four month deployments without HLTA over the other alternatives. A total of 51 comments were analyzed from this category. The main themes are presented below along with a sample of the comments.

Table 5: Summary of Main Themes Regarding Preference for Four Months without HLTA

1. Personnel at their mental and physical best.
2. Less stress on families, less strain on relationships.
3. Willingness to deploy.

3.2.1.3.1 Theme 1: Personnel at their Mental and Physical Best (6 Comments)

One of the core themes that emerged among this group was the notion that with shorter tours personnel would more likely be at their best for the duration of deployment. They felt that the shortened timeframe would make it possible for personnel to remain keen and strong throughout the deployment and would result in a decrease in human error, complacency, and mental health issues.

“Deploy for less time. Keep troops fresh and strong.”

“4 months is better, people don’t get complacent as quickly.”

“For the combat that is seen in Afghanistan, 4 month tours would benefit members, by decreasing incidents of mental health repatriations due to members suffering with 6 months or more in theatre.”

“After working with the US, UK & Dutch I believe any tour longer than 6 months is dangerous. After working with the volume of patients and lack of staff it could cause more human errors. The US medics worked at a much lazier pace because they had 12 months to go and lost interest and were discouraged by month 6.”

3.2.1.3.2 Theme 2: Less Stress on Families, less Strain on Relationships (6 Comments)

An equally important theme that emerged from this group was the desire to reduce time away from family. Respondents indicated that less time away from family would mean less stress on families and less strain on relationships.

“Cut down time away from family.”

“A 4 month tour would also lower the stress levels on families back home.”

“Also, less time away from home/support = less separations and/or divorces.”

“Extended tour lengths are not desired. It will be too long away from family.”

3.2.1.3.3 Theme 3: Willingness to Deploy (5 Comments)

Consistent with the condition of their first choice selection which specified that four month tours would be followed up sooner, a number of respondents expressed a willingness to deploy more often for shorter periods of time. Others suggested that shorter tours would boost willingness to go on tours in general.

“3-4 months duration would be my preference. I would deploy more often, for shorter periods, if possible.”

“I have discussed this with many of my friends (military), I feel if deployments were 3 months long, but more frequent, more people would be willing to go on tour and stay in the army.”

“I think that if the tour of duty was shortened to 4 months you would have more troops willing to go. Being in a place like Afghanistan, and spending 80-90% of the tour ‘outside the wire’ on missions can be stressful.”

In addition, there were a number of comments that did not fall within the three main themes but were mentioned by more than one respondent. For some, support for four month deployments without HLTA stemmed from their opinion that HLTA caused people to lose focus on the mission. Other respondents suggested that a shortened deployment would be more feasible for reservists. Others simply stated that deployments of six months were too long. Finally, a couple of respondents indicated that even with shortened tours, R&R was needed.

“I believe, as a supervisor and in a management position, that we lose some loyalty before a member is proceeding on HLTA and just after returning. Concentration on the mission is lowered as the member is looking forward to the HLTA.”

“For reservists, less time away from work would be feasible for anyone”

“6 months was too long anything more is way too long.”

3.2.1.4 Preference for Six Months without HLTA

A small percentage of the overall sample (7.4%, n=69) indicated a preference for six month deployments without HLTA. A total of 45 comments were submitted by this group. The main themes are presented below along with a sample of the comments.

Table 6: Summary of Main Themes Regarding Preference for Six Months without HLTA

1. HLTA mid-tour is disruptive.	– burden on members who remain – impact on operational effectiveness
2. Alternative preferences.	

3.2.1.4.1 Theme 1: HLTA (23 Comments)

Most of the comments submitted by this group centred on HLTA.

The main motive given for wanting to eliminate HLTA mid-tour was that it was disruptive to the unit and in some cases disruptive to family members back home. Several comments relayed the message that HLTA placed extra burden on the people who remained and was damaging to the operational effectiveness of units. (12 comments)

“I firmly believe that a 6 month tour only requires at the least 1 R&R (96 hrs). HLTA is not required and actually causes duress on sub-units still in country.”

“It is extraordinarily difficult to develop sophisticated situational awareness in a complex operating environment such as Afghanistan. HLTA breaks the process and decreases operational effectiveness and flexibility.”

“A six month tour without a HLTA would be easier on family, kids, and the unit deployed.”

“I have 5 deployments of 6+ months. This was my first without HLTA and I prefer it this way. Breaking up the tour half way has proven disruptive both at home and on duty. My family preferred no HLTA as well.”

Another commonly cited reason for wanting to omit HLTA mid-tour was because it interfered with one’s focus on the job (6 comments).

“It was very hard to go back after the HLTA and it took me a while to get 100% focused on the job back in theater. I would rather have more time off on my return.”

“I found that leaving a ‘war zone’ & being in bed with my wife 36 hrs later to be very difficult. Even worse, returning to Afghanistan and getting focused again was very difficult.”

“An operational break can be provided other than HLTA by means such as a 4-7 day R&R. This would allow soldiers to remain focused and commanders to tailor leave plans to operations instead of the alternative.”

A few comments within this theme asserted that instead of having HLTA during a tour, more leave should be granted at the end of a tour.

“No HLTA, increase leave at the end of tour by several weeks.”

“Six months with HLTA at end of tour in a 3rd location (reverse HLTA to Cyprus leave centre).”

“A combat tour should be without HLTA. HLTA should be at the end of the tour.”

3.2.1.4.2 Theme 2: Alternative Preferences (5 Comments)

A number of respondents put forward alternative preferences for tours that were not part of the choices provided in the questionnaire. All suggestions were for longer tours.

Finally, a few respondents in this group indicated that a six month tour without HLTA would need to have R&R added in.

3.2.2 Aggregated Views

3.2.2.1 Length of Pre-deployment Training

It was evident from comments made by respondents from each of the preference groups that the length of pre-deployment training was an issue. Some respondents indicated that it was the amount of time spent on pre-deployment training that needed to be addressed rather than the length of deployment. In general, respondents felt that the length of training was too long. In particular, many respondents indicated that pre-deployment training kept them away from their families for too long. Some respondents indicated that it was detrimental to their quality of life, and in some cases to their careers. Others suggested that the length of training was disproportionate to the value it provided, or that it was too spread out, and could be more concentrated and focused (29 comments).

“Tour length is not as harsh to family as the 6-12 month of work up training prior to deployment.”

“The most distressing portion of operational tours for myself and most soldiers in my deployed unit was pre-deployment training. The pre-deployment period was much too long, was too spread out with little training value. Most soldiers from my deployed unit were augmentees to the mounting area, and had to spend months at a time in Edmonton/Wainwright away from their families and accomplishing nothing of value.”

“If proper training at the unit can be accomplished to ensure soldiers can do their jobs then we can stop training for a 6 month mission, 6 months prior turning the ‘mission’ in to a year. Now guys come home for 1 yr between missions except they are away training for another mission in that time frame

and heading out the door once a year is up. That leaves no time for career courses, family life or an opportunity to enjoy what we fight for.”

“Problem is not the tour. It’s the ridiculous length and lame content of the work up training. It should be focused, collective and 60 days or less. We are already trained. The time is only required to ‘gel’ together and review skills etc.”

“The deployment length itself is less important than the workup training. For a reservist to go on 20 month of work up before tour makes him feel like he is doing 2 tours at once. As well, it puts more stress on family life and civilian careers when a 6 month tour balloons into almost a year and a half due to work up ‘requirements’.”

3.2.2.2 R&R

Although the topic of R&R was featured as a prominent theme for the group of respondents who preferred six month deployments with HLTA, it should be noted that the desire and need for more R&R was articulated by respondents in each of the four preference groups (23 comments).

3.2.2.3 Frequency of Deployments

There was range of views expressed among each group regarding the frequency of deployments. There were a substantial number of respondents that expressed an interest in deploying more frequently. Many respondents felt that those who wanted to deploy more often should be allowed to do so (37 comments).

“I would personally like to be involved in further tours on a frequent basis.”

“I think that the frequency of tours could increase.”

“More tours, less time in between.”

“I wish those who wanted to stay deployed could do so, for as long as they want. I’m getting out of the army because 15 months is too long to wait for another tour.”

“People who wish to volunteer to do consecutive tours with only six months in between should be allowed.”

“Make them more available and frequent for those that want them.”

“It should be the individual’s option to extend for another tour.”

“The forces should not be afraid to offer back to back tours, or waivers to soldiers willing to serve more often.”

On the other hand, many comments about the frequency of deployment suggested that more time was needed and desired between tours (29 comments).

“Don’t send people back with such high frequency.”

“Currently I am doing a tour every 2 years. I need more time between.”

“The tours are too close together with not enough time off in between. We need more adjusting time with real life.”

A small number of comments suggested that the frequency of deployments was fine as is.

A few comments indicated that an increase in the frequency of deployment would be harmful to families and lead to burn out among the troops.

“Less time between tours would screw up families with small children, (no routine).”

“The frequency of tours for our military is going to destroy people. Some occupations are only going to see the frequency increase if the CF continues on its current path. The troop will be burnt out before long and we’ll see nothing but problems.”

Finally, a number of comments addressed the problem of availability of personnel and recognized that the frequency of deployment was largely driven by numbers. Some respondents were concerned that the same individuals were being called on to deploy over and over while others were not taking their turn (8 comments).

“The CF is not doing a good job to ensure that all members of my trade at my rank level do their turns on operational tours. Too many of my peers ‘play the system’ and get away with never deploying or having to serve in a field unit.”

“The amount of people not volunteering, the amount of people not in or trained does not allow the rest of us to not go back”

“We have to sort out the problem with member red flagging every time their name is put forward for a tour other than what they would like to have.”

“Ensure more members go. Not the same ones over and over.”

“Seems it is the same people going over all the time.”

4 Summary and Recommendations

The majority of participants (65.7%) ranked a six-month deployment with HLTA, the current standard, as their first choice. More specifically, between-group comparisons showed that a six-month deployment with HLTA had the highest endorsement among each of the rank and occupation groups. Notwithstanding, the other three deployment alternatives each had some support. The overall preferences for deployments of eight months with HLTA (14.1%) and four months without HLTA (12.8%) were much the same while a markedly smaller portion of respondents preferred deployments of six months without HLTA (7.4%).

The qualitative analysis provides insight into the reasons why so many of those surveyed favoured the current standard and why some did not. In sum, many respondents noted that tours longer than six months were difficult for families to endure and negatively impacted the well-being of those deployed. Indeed, concerns about family separation and fatigue were largely what motivated personnel to prefer shorter, albeit more frequent tours. In general though, the current length of six months was thought to be working well and HLTA was considered a valuable and needed break from the stress of operations. Mid-tour HLTA is not without its challenges to units and individuals, however, as those who endorsed six month tours without HLTA pointed out. The time period before and after HLTA can be particularly difficult for personnel in terms of morale and focus. In part, for this reason and for the sake of unit effectiveness, a small portion of the surveyed sample would prefer to deploy without HLTA. Increasing operational effectiveness was one of the reasons why personnel preferred to extend deployments beyond the six month mark, although support for deployments of eight months was also driven by the prospect of more time between tours. Overall, there does seem to be a cohort of individuals who are highly motivated to serve more, given the number of comments in favour of longer tours (20%) and those respondents who expressed an interest in deploying more often than is currently allowed.

Two additional areas of concern were brought forward from the comments made by the respondents. The topic of R&R was mentioned by all preference groups. CF personnel in this study expressed the need for R&R which suggests that the high level of combat being experienced in Afghanistan necessitates periods of down time. It has been suggested that R&R may serve as a protective factor against mental health risks (MHAT V, 2008). The topic of pre-deployment training also carried over to all preference groups. The length of pre-deployment training, as well as its content, seem to be sources of considerable dissatisfaction. These same concerns have been documented in research conducted with focus groups on CF Bases (Murphy & Gingras, 1997), and more recently on troops preparing to deploy to Afghanistan (Garabedian, 2007). In particular, the amount of time spent away from family due to pre-deployment training continues to be a source of stress and strain for individuals deploying today.

The personnel in this study expressed a range of views regarding the frequency of deployment including those who wanted to deploy less, those who wanted to deploy more, and those who were content with the way things were. Of further note, were comments that remarked that the same people were being called on to deploy over and over, a factor which has implications for individuals' mental health (MHAT III, 2006; MHAT V, 2008) and turnover tendencies (Hosek & Totten, 1998).

It is clear from the findings that CF personnel have varying preferences about deployment. While many personnel may have positive opinions about deploying in general, the difference between how much they would prefer to deploy and how much they actually deploy can be a source of dissatisfaction with military life (Hosek, 2004). Yet, accommodating all of the different deployment preferences of CF personnel is likely impossible and moreover not advisable as the preferences of some individuals may not be in their best interest. Studies by the Mental Health Advisory Team (MHAT III, 2006; MHAT V, 2008) have found significant differences in mental health status between multiple deployers and first time deployers. Deployment length has also been linked to mental health status (MHAT IV, 2006). In other research, frequency and length of deployment were cited as factors that increased personnel stress and led to burnout and exhaustion (Hosek, Kavanagh, & Miller, 2006). In light of these findings it appears that it would not be in the best interest of CF personnel, regardless of their preferences, to deploy on frequent, lengthy tours. When the difference between deployment preferences and actual deployment cannot be reconciled, developing a strategy to manage and shape the deployment expectations of CF personnel may be one solution to foster accord.

Based on this study, it is recommended that the CF maintain its current deployment standard of six months with HLTA. Notwithstanding the popular opinion of the existing standard, over a quarter of the sample indicated they would prefer to deploy for periods other than six months. In addition, a range of views was expressed on desired frequency. Thus, it is further recommended that the CF continue to monitor the deployment preferences of its personnel and endeavour to understand their expectations in order to manage them.

In light of issues that surfaced through the course of the qualitative analysis, it may be appropriate for the CF to consider ways of addressing the following concerns:

- a. challenges faced by soldiers prior to and after HLTA;
- b. dissatisfaction with the length and content of pre-deployment training;
- c. soldiers' expressed needs for more R&R; and,
- d. burden of deployment not adequately spread (i.e., same people having to go).

This research is not without limitations. The study was conducted on a sample of personnel who had all been deployed as part of the same Roto in Afghanistan in 2006. While many of these soldiers had been involved in previous deployments, it is possible that some unique aspects of this recent tour were highly influential in shaping the findings. Further, the themes established in the qualitative analysis were based on comments submitted by a subset of the overall sample. The deployment preferences of this sample of individuals, and the opinions expressed by those respondents who contributed comments are not necessarily representative of the wider CF population. A further limitation to the study is related to the particular deployment question that was put to the sample and ultimately fostered the findings. Among the four options provided, six months with HLTA was the clear favourite, however it is possible that a different option would have come out on top had it been included along with the other options. Future research may address these limitations by replicating the study on other samples, and by getting feedback from CF personnel on other options that may be appropriate to include.

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Annex A The Human Dimensions of Operations Survey

HUMAN DIMENSIONS OF OPERATIONS^{SE} POST DEPLOYMENT



The Human Dimensions of Operations (HDO) is a survey designed to capture a “snapshot” of the climate of your unit at any given time. The information you and your comrades provide is averaged and used at a group level. Your responses are important as they provide your commander with one indicator of the morale, stress, and confidence in leadership within your unit. Each of these dimensions has been demonstrated to be a vital component to predict the combat readiness and effectiveness of units. As such, your participation and honesty are central to contributing to the most accurate “snapshot” possible. For those of you who may no longer be employed with the unit you were on tour with, please respond to all questions with your current unit in mind, unless otherwise instructed.

Thank you for your participation.

This survey has been reviewed by D Pers AR and is authorized for administration within DND/CF in accordance with CANFORGEN 145/02 ADMHRMIL 079 UNCLASS 131028Z DEC 02. Authorization number: 235 and the DRDC HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (Protocol # L-397).

PROTECTING THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF YOUR RESPONSES

YOUR RIGHTS AS A PARTICIPANT: You may ask questions of the researcher(s) at anytime. You may end your participation at any time, and are free to skip any question that you do not wish to answer. However, if you do choose to complete the survey, answer as honestly as possible so that the data accurately reflects your experience.

PROTECTING THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF YOUR RESPONSES: The CF will protect the confidentiality of your responses to the extent permissible under Canadian Law.

You should be aware that under the Access to Information Act, Canadian citizens are entitled to obtain copies research reports and research data (including the database pertaining to this project) held in Federal government files. Similarly, under the Privacy Act, Canadian citizens are entitled to copies of all information concerning them that is held in Federal government files including research databases. Prior to releasing requested information, the Directorate of Access to Information and Privacy (DAIP) screens the data to ensure that individual identities are not disclosed.

To further safeguard your anonymity and privacy, you should not write your name, service number or personal record identifier anywhere on this questionnaire. Second, you should ensure that any written comments you may offer are sufficiently general that you cannot be identified as the author.

BENEFITS: Your responses will be used to provide your commander with an indication of the morale, stress, and confidence in leadership within your unit, each of which have been demonstrated to predict the combat readiness and effectiveness of units. In addition, information from this questionnaire can be used to better tailor the post-deployment programs and services.

RISKS: Minor eyestrain and boredom. If you experience any persistent feelings of psychological discomfort we encourage you to contact your medical officer, or family doctor. You are reminded that you may skip questions that you would prefer not to answer.

A list of services within the CF that you may also contact if these feelings persist is also provided separately. We encourage you to take this information with you when you are finished the survey.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Should you wish to contact primary researcher for any reason please use the information provided below:

	D Pers AR	DRDC Toronto
	Captain Marie Norris	Dr. Megan Thompson
Tel:	613-996-7408	416-635-2040
CSN:	996-7408	86-7-634-2040
e-mail:	Norris.me@forces.gc.ca	Megan.Thompson@drdc-rddc.gc.ca

Please read the following instruction carefully before filling out the survey.

Please respond to the scaled questions by filling in one bubble per section with a fine-tipped marker or a dark coloured pen.



The bubble can be filled in or circled.



If you change your mind about your responses, please put an X through the incorrect bubble and fill in the correct answer.



Please return **all the pages** of the survey.

UNIT CLIMATE PROFILE

The purpose of this section is to measure morale, cohesion, and other aspects important to military performance. Using the scale beside each question please fill in the circle that corresponds with your level of agreement/disagreement with the given statement.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
					1 2 3 4 5
1.	My platoon/troop is ready for combat.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
2.	Soldiers in my platoon/troop know what is expected of them.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
3.	I am confident in the combat abilities of soldiers in my platoon/troop.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
4.	It feels good to be part of my platoon/troop.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
5.	The level of morale of my platoon/troop is very high.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
6.	Overall, my platoon/troop is effective in field training exercises.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
7.	I am satisfied with the social events in my platoon/troop.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
8.	In my platoon/troop, my friends are ready to go to combat, if and when it is necessary.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
9.	If we were going to war, I would rather go with my platoon/troop than with any other platoon/troop I know of.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
10.	The soldiers in my platoon/troop encourage each other to work together as a team.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
11.	The soldiers in my platoon/troop know what the unit is trying to accomplish.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
12.	My personal level of morale is very high.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
13.	The soldiers in my platoon/troop are proud to be in this unit.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
14.	My job is important to the mission of the unit.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
15.	Soldiers in my platoon/troop would stick together in a combat situation.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
16.	Overall, my platoon/troop is effective in garrison (e.g., inspections, individual task training, physical fitness).				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
17.	There is a lot of togetherness in my platoon/troop.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
18.	When I talk to my immediate supervisor, he/she doesn't pay attention to what I'm saying.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
19.	My immediate supervisor gives us big jobs late in the day and wants them done before we leave work.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
20.	My immediate supervisor encourages soldiers to give their best efforts.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
21.	My immediate supervisor maintains high standards of performance.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
22.	My immediate supervisor offers new ideas for solving job-related problems.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
23.	My immediate supervisor is willing to listen to any problems.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
24.	My immediate supervisor refuses to explain his/her actions.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
25.	My immediate supervisor puts suggestions by soldiers of the platoon/troop into operation.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
26.	My immediate supervisor makes sure his/her role in the unit is understood by the soldiers.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Please continue on the next page.

UNIT CLIMATE PROFILE

1	2	3	4	5					
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree					
				1	2	3	4	5	
27.	My immediate supervisor acts without consulting the soldiers in the platoon/troop.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
28.	My immediate supervisor makes us work a lot of extra hours.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
29.	My immediate supervisor lets other supervisors interfere with my work group.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
30.	In the event of combat, I have confidence in my platoon/troop commander.			①	②	③	④	⑤	O NA
31.	In the event of combat, I have confidence in my platoon/troop warrant.			①	②	③	④	⑤	O NA
32.	In the event of combat, I have confidence in my company commander.			①	②	③	④	⑤	O NA
33.	In the event of combat, I have confidence in my section commander.			①	②	③	④	⑤	O NA
34.	In the event of combat, I have confidence in my Commanding Officer.			①	②	③	④	⑤	O NA
35.	In the event of combat, I have confidence in the CSM/SSM.			①	②	③	④	⑤	O NA
36.	I think I would perform better in battle than other members of my platoon/troop.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
37.	I feel I am making a contribution to Canada by serving in the Army.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
38.	I am confident in my abilities as a soldier.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
39.	I feel proud to be a soldier in the Canadian Army.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
40.	I am better trained than soldiers from other nations.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
41.	I feel the Army has an important job to do in defending Canada.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
42.	Differences in rank should not be important after hours.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
43.	What a member does in private life should be of no concern of his/her supervisor/commander.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
44.	What a member does in off duty hours is none of the military's business.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
45.	I plan on making the military my career.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
46.	I would encourage my civilian friends to enlist in the Army.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
47.	A career in the Canadian Forces is worthwhile.			①	②	③	④	⑤	

This is the end of this section. Please continue on the next page.

STRESS IN MILITARY SERVICE

Below is a list of issues, situations and threats that have caused stress for personnel serving in the military. Please indicate to what extent these stressors have caused you trouble or concern during the previous month.

1	2	3	4	5					
No trouble or concern	A little trouble or concern	Some trouble or concern	Much trouble or concern	Very much trouble or concern					
				1	2	3	4	5	
1.	Conditions of service (e.g., pay, allowances).			①	②	③	④	⑤	
2.	Administrative support.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
3.	Career issues (e.g., promotion, postings).			①	②	③	④	⑤	
4.	Training issues (e.g., repetition).			①	②	③	④	⑤	
5.	Boredom while at work.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
6.	Degree of control over your work tasks.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
7.	Uncertainty about what your work role is or will be (e.g., mission, ROEs).			①	②	③	④	⑤	
8.	Boredom while off-duty.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
9.	The quality of your personal clothing and equipment.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
10.	CF policies that impact on your work.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
11.	Time spent away from your family due to service.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
12.	Problems with or in your family.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
13.	Communication with your family.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
14.	Concern about the impact of deployment on your relationship with your family.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
15.	Level of support shown by those outside the CF (e.g., government, media).			①	②	③	④	⑤	
16.	Lack of privacy.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
17.	Mental or physical fatigue.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
18.	Harsh environmental conditions (e.g., heat, dust).			①	②	③	④	⑤	
19.	Threat of serious injury.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
20.	Double standards (e.g., in supply, applying rules, receiving privileges).			①	②	③	④	⑤	
21.	Standard of living conditions in the field/on deployment (e.g., food, sleeping quarters).			①	②	③	④	⑤	
22.	Lack of recreation opportunities.			①	②	③	④	⑤	
23.	Seeing widespread suffering (e.g., starvation, forced migration).			①	②	③	④	⑤	
24.	Seeing instances of inhumanity (e.g., mass graves, neglected children, signs of torture).			①	②	③	④	⑤	
25.	The impact of a different culture (e.g., attitudes toward women, death, time).			①	②	③	④	⑤	
26.	Experience with death (e.g., seeing someone die, handling corpses).			①	②	③	④	⑤	
27.	Risk of contracting a serious disease.			①	②	③	④	⑤	

This is the end of this section. Please continue on the next page.

SIGNS

Here is a list of troubles or complaints people sometimes have. Using the given scale, please indicate how often you have experienced each of these over the previous month.

	1 Never	2 Sometimes	3 Often	4 Very often			
				1	2	3	4
1.	Common cold or flu.			①	②	③	④
2.	Dizziness or faintness.			①	②	③	④
3.	General aches or pains.			①	②	③	④
4.	Sweating hands (e.g. hands feeling wet and clammy).			①	②	③	④
5.	Headaches.			①	②	③	④
6.	Muscle twitching or trembling.			①	②	③	④
7.	Nervousness or tenseness.			①	②	③	④
8.	Rapid heartbeat (while not exercising or working hard).			①	②	③	④
9.	Shortness of breath (while not exercising or working hard).			①	②	③	④
10.	Skin rashes or itching.			①	②	③	④
11.	Upset stomach.			①	②	③	④
12.	Trouble sleeping.			①	②	③	④
13.	Feeling down, blue or depressed.			①	②	③	④
14.	Difficulty concentrating.			①	②	③	④
15.	Crying.			①	②	③	④
16.	Lack of appetite.			①	②	③	④
17.	Loss of weight.			①	②	③	④
18.	Taking medication to sleep or calm down.			①	②	③	④
19.	Overly tired/lack of energy.			①	②	③	④
20.	Loss of interest in things (e.g., TV, news, friends).			①	②	③	④
21.	Feeling life is pointless			①	②	③	④

Please continue on the next page.

PERSONAL COMMITMENT

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about various aspects of the operational tour using the scale provided below.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
					1 2 3 4 5
1	I feel like "Part of the Family" in the Army.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
2	The Army has a great deal of personal meaning to me.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
3	I feel a strong sense of belonging to the Army.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
4	I feel "emotionally attached" to the Army.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
5	It would be too costly for me to leave the Army in the near future.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
6	I am afraid of what might happen if I quit the Army without having another job lined up.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
7	Too much of my life would be interrupted if I decided to leave the Army now.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
8	One of the problems of leaving the Army would be the lack of available alternatives.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
9	I do not feel any obligation to remain with the Army.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
10	The Army deserves my loyalty.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
11	I would not leave the Army right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤
12	I owe a great deal to the Army.				① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Please continue over to the next page.

LENGTH OF DEPLOYMENT

Indicate your preference regarding the length of tours to Afghanistan from most preferred (1) to the least preferred (4) option.

- 4 months without HLTA (with less time between tours)
- 6 months with HLTA
- 6 months without HLTA
- 8 months with HLTA (with more time between tours)

Please provide any additional comments on the length and/or frequency of operational tours.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. What is your current rank?
 - Pte
 - Jr NCM (Cpl or MCpl)
 - Sgt
2. What is your age?
 - 17-21 32-36 47-51
 - 22-26 37-41 52+
 - 27-31 42-46
3. What is your sex?
 - Male Female
4. What is your highest level of education?
 - Some high school
 - High school diploma
 - Some university/some college
 - University degree/college degree
 - Postgraduate Degree
5. What is your first official language?
 - English French
6. What is your marital status?
 - Married (incl common-law)
 - Single (incl divorced, widowed, separated)
7. **Dependents:** Excluding your partner/spouse how many dependents live with you?
 - 0 1 2 3 4 5+
8. What is your status?
 - Regular Reservist
9. How many years of service in the Canadian Forces have you **completed**?
 - 5 or less 16 to 20
 - 6 to 10 21 to 25
 - 11 to 15 26+
10. Prior to this tour, have you been deployed on a UN or NATO tour in the last 12 months?
 - Yes No
11. Have you previously completed this survey?
 - Yes No
12. Identify your status and time in the unit you will be with in theatre?
 - augmentee
 - permanent member and less than 6 months
 - permanent member more than 6 months and less than 12 month
 - permanent member more than 1 year
13. How many UN/ NATO tours have you had?
 - a. in total:
 - 0 1 2 3 4 5+
 - b. in the last 5 years:
 - 0 1 2 3 4 5+
14. On average, how many **hours per day** did you work this week: _____
15. On average, how many **hours per day** did you work 2 weeks ago: _____
16. Using the scale below, please describe how **routine** your job has been.

	Not at all Routine	Somewhat Routine	Routine	Highly Routine
This Week	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2 Weeks Ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Using the scale below, please describe how **intense** your job has been.

	Not at all Intense	Somewhat Intense	Intense	Highly Intense
This Week	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2 Weeks Ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

18. How many months have you been away from home due to combined military requirements (e.g., course, training, operations, etc.) in the last 12 months **not** including your recent tour? _____

19. To your knowledge, when are you scheduled for another operational tour?

- in less than 6 months
- within the next 12 months
- within the next 1.5 years
- unknown

20. What unit are you currently employed in?

<input type="radio"/> 1 PPCLI	<input type="radio"/> 2 PPCLI	<input type="radio"/> 3 PPCLI
<input type="radio"/> 1 CER	<input type="radio"/> 1 CMBG HQ & Sigs	<input type="radio"/> 1 Fd Amb
<input type="radio"/> LDSH	<input type="radio"/> 1 Svc Bn	<input type="radio"/> 1 RCHA
<input type="radio"/> 5e RALC	<input type="radio"/> 12 RBC	<input type="radio"/> 2 RCR
<input type="radio"/> 1 Cdn Fd Hosp	<input type="radio"/> KO Calg R	<input type="radio"/> Calg Highrs
<input type="radio"/> Other (please specify)		

21. What company are you currently employed in? _____

22. If you are a Reservist, where are you currently employed?

- Full time in the civilian sector and parading with your unit
- Full time in the civilian sector and not currently parading with your unit
- Full time in the CF

23. What type of occupation category are you employed?

- Combat Arms
- Support Staff
- Admin Staff

Select only one from each column

24. Please indicate which of the following you belonged to in theatre?	25. Also, please indicate which company, squadron, troop, platoon, or section you belonged to.
<input type="radio"/> Theatre Support Element	<input type="radio"/> Command Element <input type="radio"/> CIS Sects <input type="radio"/> UMS <input type="radio"/> Military Police Section <input type="radio"/> Camp Mirage Security Pl <input type="radio"/> Support Branch <input type="radio"/> NCCIS Det
<input type="radio"/> Tactical Airlift Unit	<input type="radio"/> Ops Staff <input type="radio"/> CC130 Aircrew <input type="radio"/> Maint Flight <input type="radio"/> MAMS Sec
<input type="radio"/> TFA/NCE	<input type="radio"/> TFA HQ <input type="radio"/> TFA Ops <input type="radio"/> CA NTC Comd <input type="radio"/> MP Pl <input type="radio"/> ESU
<input type="radio"/> MNB HQ	<input type="radio"/> Bde Comd <input type="radio"/> HQ Staff
<input type="radio"/> INF BG	<input type="radio"/> BG HQ <input type="radio"/> Coy HQ <input type="radio"/> Sigs <input type="radio"/> Recce Pl <input type="radio"/> Surv Tp <input type="radio"/> A Coy <input type="radio"/> B Coy <input type="radio"/> C Coy <input type="radio"/> Arty Bty <input type="radio"/> CS Engr Sqn <input type="radio"/> BG PRT <input type="radio"/> TUAV <input type="radio"/> CIMIC <input type="radio"/> MP Pl
<input type="radio"/> Sigs Sqn	<input type="radio"/> Sqn Command <input type="radio"/> Sqn OR <input type="radio"/> Sig Ops <input type="radio"/> Extension Tp <input type="radio"/> B(CP) Tp

24. Please indicate which of the following you belonged to in theatre?	25. Also, please indicate which company, squadron, troop, platoon, or section you belonged to.
Sigs Continued	<input type="radio"/> CP Sect <input type="radio"/> Rover Sect <input type="radio"/> CIS Svcs <input type="radio"/> IS Tech Sect <input type="radio"/> SM Sect <input type="radio"/> Line Sect <input type="radio"/> SP TP
<input type="radio"/> TF NSE	<input type="radio"/> NSE HQ <input type="radio"/> Camp Service Coy <input type="radio"/> CSS <input type="radio"/> D & S
<input type="radio"/> DSS PL	<input type="radio"/> DSS PI OP ARCHER
<input type="radio"/> HSS	<input type="radio"/> Role 1 <input type="radio"/> Role 3
<input type="radio"/> ASIC <input type="radio"/> SAT <input type="radio"/> NTC	
<input type="radio"/> Other Element (Please Specify)	<input type="radio"/> Other Coy (Please Specify)

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Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis (DGMPRA) was tasked to provide research and information to support a review of the policy on operational tour lengths. Two key questions were raised by the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS): (1) What are the current policies related to length and frequency of deployment in other nations?; and (2) What research does the Canadian Forces (CF) or other militaries have, or could they conduct, to support a review of current policies? The Operational Tempo Working Group was established to address these questions. The Working Group engaged the Director Military Personnel Operational Research and Analysis (DMPORA) to gather data on the opinions of CF personnel regarding deployment duration and frequency. Using the Human Dimensions of Operations (HDO) Survey, DMPORA gathered the relevant data from a sample of CF personnel who had recently returned from a deployment in Afghanistan with the aim of answering the second question posed by the CDS. Quantitative and qualitative results showed that most CF personnel preferred to serve on a six month deployment with Home Leave Travel Allowance (HLTA). More specifically, it was the preferred option across all rank and occupation groups. Based on this research, it is recommended that the CF maintain the current standard of six month deployments with HLTA.

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