

The former and current members of JWC's Organizational Development (Planning) Team (from left): Mr Andrew Eden, Col (Ret.) Kurt Arne Gimre, Mr Garry Hargreaves, Lieutenant Colonel Julie Freedman, Ms Dodi Cullen, CPO Paul Thistlewaite. Photo by Major Stephen Olsen, JWC PAO.



INTERVIEW

By Inci Kucukaksoy, JWC PAO

Mr Garry Hargreaves Chief of JWC's Organizational Development Team

Can you tell us a bit about the JWC optimization process in general? When did the work start and what have been the highlights?

— I think I would say it started just as the last NATO Peacetime Establishment (PE) review was finalized and when the former JWC Commander Major General Jean-Fred Berger stated that we were not fully prepared to meet the post-2014 era. That was in 2012. That perception was picked up and refined by Major General Erhard Buehler who initiated and championed the design, which was then further developed under the leadership of Major General Reinhard Wolski. In that time, there have been many highlights. One important highlight for me has been the way that people, for the most part, have gathered and formed around the new vision and willingly engaged with change; even those who would never be here to see the fruits of their labour. Their effort and commitment was selfless. Another significant highlight was the support we received from HQ SACT and the national channels all the way up to the NATO Defence Manpower Committee (NDMC). One senior Human Resources representative stated

prior to the meeting that this could either be an "intergalactic catastrophe or it would be fine." Thankfully it went fine, which was both a major relief and a highlight.

Looking back, what have been the areas that you wrestled with?

— In any organizational change process, you will have those who might be seen as catalysts, drivers, and protagonists, and for these people, change is vital. They provide the much needed energy and impetus. There are also those who are the more ambivalent; perhaps they are not yet convinced about the concept, but they are willing to "give it a try". Finally, you might have those who are skeptical or downright resistant to change, for whatever reason, and need a little more time and effort to be convinced or to become tolerant of the initiative. As the process evolved, and it became better communicated, more transparent and inclusive, those who were initially struggling to accept change started climbing on board and I think we reached a tipping point. Reaching this point was a real highlight for me and my small team. Along the way,

we also had to wrestle with a dynamic Programme of Work (PoW) and other real-world challenges. An organizational development and change programme is not easy to de-conflict with a dynamic PoW, so the optimization had to continue through times when the organization was totally absorbed with delivery. In practical terms, this meant that our small team had to disconnect and step outside the here and now in order to think about a changing training and educational environment as well as our evolving mission.

Why was there a need for reorganizing the Joint Warfare Centre?

— With the transition of the ISAF mission to Resolute Support, training and exercises become the venue for connecting forces, reinforcing interoperability, introducing new capabilities and demonstrating solidarity. JWC is now aligned around a perceived delivery of up to four operational level multi-HQ exercises per year. The ISAF training event was much less dependent upon the creation of settings, scenarios and simulations. These changes were



the key drivers behind the decision to reorganize into a trial organization. Other evident reasons are of course our changing operational context; the new and more complex training requirements, the NATO agency consolidation from 2012, the strategic shifts in education and training responsibilities between SACEUR and SACT, and last but not least, the analysis of our own lessons learned from training nearly 50,000 personnel.

What makes this review different from those preceding it?

— I think what makes it very different from previous PE reviews is that this is the first time we have really taken a long, hard look at our mission and truly understood the role JWC has to play. Initially, our PE was created based on other national training centre models, and we did not possess the home-grown expertise in the training sphere to really challenge the models being employed. The reviews following that initial position have focused on manning reductions rather than taking a fundamental look at our mission. So in 2012, when we were reduced from 256 to 250 staff, there was no fundamental stock take of what we do, no large scale organizational realignment despite the significant ad hoc resourcing of key functions such as OPRs and MEL/MIL. Therein lies an important lesson from my perspective; waiting for NATO to impose a PE review before optimizing is unrealistic, especially in an area as volatile as training and exercises. I think organizational refinement should be continuous, and NATO has tools to enable such. By constantly assessing the evolving environment and aligning the organization to match, you will avoid the organizational shock experienced when a full blown PE review does take place, and you will be far better situated when the inevitable review does arrive.

What is the purpose of the trial organization?

— During the second phase of the optimization, an academic piece of work was transformed into an organizational chart and in Phases III and IV that chart became our current trial organization. The purpose of the trial is to organize around our key outputs and then assess whether those early designs are valid and if not to refine them. We should not forget the driving concept, from its inception, was to put as much power as possible in the so called "engine



Mr Hargreaves during the trial wargame.
Photo by JWC PAO.

room" whilst retaining critical support functions. There is an inevitable trade off to occur here; the current "answer" is 250, the trial will assess whether we got the balance right within that manpower ceiling.

The restructuring is designed to enhance performance, agility and collaboration in the organization. How does this work in practice?

— The new organization is designed, for the most part, around the key functions that have to exist in JWC to deliver our output. These functions are what define our uniqueness as an entity. When they are able to be dynamically resourced and configured properly, they will be able to provide the agility required, so we do not have to populate a team for worst case scenarios, instead we flex, through pooling and sharing. Our eight key functions, from scenario development to Real Life Support could have resources bolted onto them and so they are much more scalable. That does drive the need for increasing levels of collaboration for leaders throughout the organization. They need to empathize with other areas and come to their aid, knowing that when they are against the wall, help will be close at hand. Performance will also be improved by focusing on our core outputs, adjusting our capabilities within the reorganization so that we can prioritize our key deliverables above all else. We should be able to work on our *blue chips*—our highest value tasks—much more coherently and transparently. Programme Directors must drive the activities of the organization, so that divisional chiefs are able to deploy talent where it is needed and in the right quantities and qualities.

Can you describe the trial organization chart that you have developed?

— Well, first and foremost, we feel we cannot take the credit for developing this chart. It was actually the teams associated with the second phase of optimization who developed it, led by Colonel (Ret.) Kurt Gimre and Colonel Peter Baierl. They did the hard work, what we did

was to use that design and work it through to Military Committee approval. Upon approval, we transformed the design into a physical reorganization, that is, our current trial organization. What is important now is that we are ready to assess and verify that the new organization is able to deliver effectively and efficiently, and if not, we need to come up with recommendations to refine it further, and there is no shortage of "good ideas" already out there.

What does leadership look like in a cross functional planning team such as the ODPT?

— Thick skinned for a start and highly selective in terms of which areas are worth fighting for and which are best left alone. Leadership also needs to be highly responsive to inputs and also to have a feel for when good enough is enough.

Let's talk about JWC "One Team" culture. How much does having a strong corporate culture help during major organizational shifts?

— Significantly, but it's not about having a strong culture at all; it's about having the right culture. History is littered with lessons from the after-effects of strong cultures. Having the right culture, that is, an appropriately aligned culture, is critical. Interestingly, our second lowest score in two full-staff surveys was willingness to change. In spite of the fact that we are a transformational entity and change should be our norm. There is an interesting dichotomy at play here.

Are there things you have learned through this reorganization process?

— A danger of leading a wholesale organizational review like this is that you shine lights into different areas that you would have not seen before. Some of what you see is inspiring; keen, energized people doing everything they can to help to deliver; some of what you see is not so inspiring. I learned that optimization also means compromise. The way NATO functions means that optimization is never really an end state; there will be politics, power plays, caveats, and people posted into roles that are not ideal, yet somehow it all works. So, while optimization may be an impossible goal, it is a very worthy cause. Optimization isn't about the destination so much as the journey, and I hope the journey continues. The people coming here to train, potentially deploying into harm's way soon after, deserve nothing less. ✦