



EDITORIAL

In the fall of 2022, when I began working with Dr. Aditi Malhotra on an urban warfare-themed edition of the *Canadian Army Journal*, we reached out to fellow urban operations scholars and practitioners to contribute articles and book reviews. To our pleasant surprise, we ended up having “catastrophic success”—nearly all responded positively and were pleased to contribute. Given the overwhelming number of contributions, Aditi’s editorial expertise enabled us to expand the urban warfare-themed issue by adding a second urban-warfare themed special feature to the following issue. When organizing the content, I proposed structuring articles around the operational process—the themed edition could focus on subjects that need to be analyzed and conducted during the crucial planning and preparation phase, while the subsequent special feature could shift the focus on the execution phase, addressing the kinds of activities carried out during that phase of an urban operation.

The themed edition was published in late 2024 and has received positive reviews. We are hoping to build on that successful foundation and are now proud to present this special feature that has a number of well-known urban operations experts contributing. We are fortunate to have urban warfare researcher and historian Dr. Charles Knight leading with his initial article on the need for friendly forces to neutralize overmatch in urban warfare by either using overwhelming firepower while still applying the principle of concentration of force, or all things about by using other tools to reduce the amount of collateral damage and casualties occurred, which most believe—perhaps erroneously, he argues—must continue due to it being the historical norm in urban warfare. Next, world-renowned urban warfare scholar John Spencer discusses his findings on the strategically critical battle of Shusha from the Nagorno-Karabakh War in 2020 after he visited that city, reconnoitered the geographic and urban terrain, and interviewed some of the battle’s participants shortly after the conflict concluded.

Furthermore, in the opening days of the Russo-Ukrainian War (2022–present) the attacks on the cities of Kyiv and Kharkiv left many believing that the Russians were completely inept with regards to fighting in urban environments. However, before jumping to that conclusion, it is necessary to understand Russian urban operations doctrine and its positive and negative outcomes. I have attempted to explain these in my article. Following that, Lester Grau and Charles Bartles—internationally known as subject matter experts on all things about the Russian military—provide and analyze an

open-source Russian article from its *Army Digest* periodical on lessons identified in urban operations and a detailed description of their adversarial Ukrainian forces and the urban warfare tactics the latter employed in the beginning months of the war.

It would be incorrect and smug to assume that Western nations are the only countries that have urban operations experience. To highlight the global nature of urban operations and learn from non-Western perspectives, we solicited contributions from experts and practitioners who focus on the Far East and South Asia. As China continues to conduct bold military exercises around Taiwan—an island wherein approximately 80% of the population lives in an urban environment—we have asked Jesús Román García, an accomplished military magazine editor from Spain, to discuss China’s urban operations capabilities and equipment. The 2017 battle of Marawi remains a fascinating case study for urban warfare enthusiasts. To shed light on the case, Ann Bajo, who was a defence analyst with the Armed Forces of the Philippines at the time, offers her in-depth review and analysis of the battle. A rare opportunity to understand some of the urban operations experienced during the relatively less-documented counter-insurgency operations in Sri Lanka in the late 1980s is discussed by Colonel (Retired) Rajesh Singh, who was a company commander during that time. The issue concludes with three book reviews by Noorulain Naseem and Muneeba Nawaz Khan, Colonel (Retired) Steve Macbeth and myself.

Unfortunately for the Canadian Army generally and the *Canadian Army Journal* in particular, Dr. Malhotra is ending her tenure as the editor-in-chief with this particular edition being her last. During her brief time, she has brought a high standard of academic rigour to the editions of which she was responsible in producing, and I along with many other writers have become better scholars as a result. Her warmth and personable demeanour made her a strong partner while we collaborated together on these two issues of the CAJ in particular.

We sincerely hope that you enjoy reading this urban warfare-themed special feature. We also hope that both issues have engaged you intellectually and also motivated you to think about and perhaps integrate more urban operations thoughts and training into your work in order to better prepare our soldiers, sailors and aviators for the inevitable urban warfare battles in which we will be participating.

Major Jayson Geroux, CD
Guest Editor