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Canadian Military History Since the 17th Century

Proceedings of the Canadian Military History Conference,
Ottawa, 5-9 May 2000

L'histoire militaire canadienne depuis le XVII^e siècle

Actes du Colloque d'histoire militaire canadienne,
Ottawa, 5-9 mai 2000



Edited by/ Sous la direction de : **Yves Tremblay**

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Canada

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RIDEAU HALL
OTTAWA

**THE GOVERNOR GENERAL
GOUVERNEUR GÉNÉRAL**

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work and interest which has come together in order to make this conference possible and to acknowledge the value a conference like this has in our society.

Canadians have forged an identity and a military tradition from the battles fought over the last thousand years both in this country and overseas. In knowing our history we create our story, a story to which all Canadians can turn to discover something of themselves. But without you, the historians and interested members of the public, our story has no voice. Within each paper presented at this conference, our history lives with a voice, and Canada's military traditions continue to be relevant in peacetime. We need the effort expended in a conference like this to not only maintain our identity but to ensure we have the opportunity to learn from the past and to develop institutions which allow Canadians to understand themselves.

I wish to recognize as well the value you add to the heritage of Canada because it is through remembering that we recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by those who gave of themselves so that our country can stand for the values we possess. In knowing our history, we can continue to claim that we strive for what is truly just and free. We truly become Canadian around the knowledge of our past. And from this knowledge, we create a base for our future.

I wish you success in your work, both at this conference and when you return home. I hope that your work continues to be a labour of love because it is in this context that true knowledge and understanding are born, nurtured, and valued.

Her Excellency The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson

RIDEAU HALL
OTTAWA

**THE GOVERNOR GENERAL
GOUVERNEUR GÉNÉRAL**

Permettez-moi de profiter de cette occasion pour souligner le travail et l'ardeur qui rendent ce colloque possible et pour signaler l'apport d'une manifestation comme celle-ci à notre société.

Les Canadiens se sont forgés une identité et une tradition militaire à partir des combats menés durant le dernier millénaire ici même ou à l'étranger. La connaissance de l'histoire nous aide à bâtir l'Histoire, une Histoire vers laquelle les Canadiens peuvent se tourner pour mieux se connaître. Mais sans vous, historiens et public intéressé, l'Histoire resterait muette. Par chacune de vos contributions à ce colloque, vous donnez une voix à notre passé et ainsi la tradition militaire du Canada conserve valeur d'exemple en ce temps de paix. Nous avons besoin du labeur que nécessite un événement comme celui-ci non seulement pour consolider notre identité, mais aussi pour assurer que nous serons toujours en position d'apprendre du passé afin de développer les institutions par lesquelles les Canadiens se comprennent.

Je sais la grande valeur de ce que vous ajoutez aujourd'hui au patrimoine canadien, ne serait-ce que parce que c'est en rappelant les sacrifices et le concours de chacun que ce pays peut défendre les valeurs qu'il chérit. En connaissant son histoire, il devient plus facile de lutter pour la cause de la liberté et de la justice. La connaissance de notre histoire nous aide à devenir vraiment Canadiens et de là à préparer notre avenir.

Je vous souhaite du succès dans vos recherches, ici et après le retour dans vos foyers. Je souhaite également que votre travail demeure une passion, car c'est de cette manière que la vraie connaissance et la vraie compréhension naissent, se développent et nous deviennent précieux.

Son Excellence la Très Honorable Adrienne Clarkson

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

AVANT-PROPOS

This millennium conference on Canadian military history featured over one hundred presentations, too many, unfortunately, to be published in a single volume. Twenty authors chose not to submit a written version of their talk, a fact which eased some of the burden of selection, and a further twenty texts were not accepted for publication according to well established criteria: the originality of the topic, the quality of documentation used (particularly as it related to the use of primary sources), and, more generally, the contribution they made to knowledge did they advance the historiography of their subject. We would like to thank everyone for their co-operation during the editorial process, whether their contributions are published here or not.

The preparation of conference proceedings for publication involves many people other than the authors themselves. The symposium of 2000 is no exception. Dr. Steve Harris, 2nd Lieutenant Hugh G. Henry, Ms Madeline Lafleur-Lamire, Major André Levesque, Ms Danielle Morneau, Dr. Bruce Nesbitt, and Ms Gabrielle Nichigushi all offered help, encouragement, and support in their own unique and important way. We also acknowledge our publisher and printer, who somehow managed to meet our sometimes taxing requirements with the minimum of delay. To all those named above and to anyone whom, through unintended carelessness, we have forgotten, we offer our most sincere gratitude and thanks.

*
* *

Les ors du colloque même, une centaine de communications ont été présentées. Malheureusement, nous n'étions pas en mesure de publier autant de contributions. Vingt auteurs ont choisi de ne pas soumettre de version écrite, ce qui a allégé d'autant le difficile travail de sélection qui a suivi. D'autres textes (encore une vingtaine) ont par la suite été écartés sur la base des critères que voici : originalité du sujet, qualité de la documentation (recours à des sources primaires ou non) et contribution au renouvellement de l'historiographie. Que tous sachent, que leurs textes aient été retenus ou non, que nous avons apprécié leur collaboration au cours du processus d'édition.

La préparation des actes d'un colloque d'envergure suppose les contributions de nombreuses personnes outre les auteurs. Le colloque de mai 2000 ne fait pas exception. À divers degrés, nous avons reçu l'aide ou le soutien du Dr Steve Harris, du sous-lieutenant Hugh G. Henry, de Madeleine Lafleur-Lemire, du major André Levesque, de madame Danielle Morneau, du Dr Bruce Nesbitt et de madame Gabrielle Nichigushi. Finalement, notre éditeur et notre imprimeur ont su répondre, dans des délais admirablement brefs, à nos exigences. À tous ceux-ci, et aussi à ceux-là que nous aurions pu, par une incroyable négligence, oublier, nous manifestons notre plus sincère gratitude.

Y. T.

INTRODUCTION

In 1997, an astute and forward-looking major general asked me, completely out of the blue, what the Directorate of History and Heritage was planning to mark the arrival of the new millennium. My answer was simple and direct: nothing. I then received my marching orders, and within two weeks had a list of suggestions ready, one of which was a proposal for a major conference on Canadian military history, one that would mark the occasion, and celebrate that field of study, in a lasting way. The proposal was approved and became “Canada and War from 1000 to 2000.”

I will spare you the details of how the conference was put together, but I would like to note that the organising committee, Professors Granatstein, Hillmer, and myself, wanted (and hoped) that the conference would be both historical and historic. Scheduled to last five days, and covering a thousand years, it offered an exceptional opportunity to all those interested in Canadian military history. There was a place for everyone, and practically every interest, if only they came.

By spring 1999 we knew we were on to something: we had already received sixty proposals for individual papers (or sessions), all of them worthwhile. And in the end, as you know, almost 400 people participated, and over one hundred presentations were made.

The present volume, which includes about 60 per cent of the presentations, will reach an even wider audience; and, as at the conference itself, readers will find serious discussion of (and challenges to) “conventional wisdom” as well as innovative work in specialised fields associated with (and complementary to) history itself. I must also observe that fully one in six of these texts were originally written and presented in French, a welcome and impressive statistic given that, only a decade ago, very few French Canadians evinced an interest or worked in the field of Canadian military history. For their part, members of the Canadian Forces, past, present, and future, will find here ample material upon which to reflect as well, perhaps, some useful lessons to be learned.

Can a conference of this scope and span – it was a first in Canada – ever hope to be repeated? We have already received considerable encouragement, both written and verbal, to try again, and some have suggested that we should aim for a five-year cycle. We are taking these suggestions to heart. *Rendez-vous 2005?* Let’s wait, see, and hope.

I have received complimentary remarks from all parts of the country regarding the organisation of the conference. Last May I tried, several times, to ensure that participants were perfectly aware of the exceptional effort of those twenty or so individuals who worked “on the ground” behind the scenes to bring the conference idea to fruition. Without them, we would have got nowhere. I acknowledged their work again at the final session – my colleagues Jack Granatstein and Norman Hillmer were, frankly, astounded that so many participants were still there, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the main players again. Major André Levesque, supported magnificently by Carmen Goold, oversaw the “material” arrangements, and together they managed to secure all those “niceties” from sometimes silent partners and sponsors that made the stay in Ottawa so pleasant (and allowed conference fees to be so modest.) Intellectual content, including the editing of these proceedings, was the responsibility of Yves Tremblay.

It goes without saying that without the wholehearted support of the Department of National Defence, Canada and War from 1000 to 2000 would never have taken place. Thank you to my colleagues within the Department for their unfailing encouragement and the trust they placed in the organising team.

And now, good reading to all, including, to return to the beginning, the address delivered by Lieutenant General (retired) Roméo Dallaire, transcribed with care and approved by the author – the very general who asked me whether I had any plans for the Year 2000.

*
* *

En 1997, un major général clairvoyant m'a demandé, à brûle-pourpoint, ce que la Direction, Histoire et Patrimoine avait prévu pour souligner l'arrivée du nouveau millénaire. Ma réponse a été simple : rien ! Mon engagement fut, cependant, qu'en moins de deux semaines je lui ferais parvenir une série de suggestions. Parmi celles-ci, fut incluse une « grande » conférence d'histoire militaire canadienne qui marquerait cette spécialité de façon durable. Ce projet allait devenir *Le Canada et la guerre de l'an 1000 à l'an 2000*.

Je vous épargne les détails reliés à la mise en place de cette rencontre. Le comité organisateur, les professeurs Granatstein, Hillmer et moi-même, voulait que celle-ci soit historique à plus d'un titre. En se tenant sur cinq jours et en couvrant une si vaste période, le colloque allait offrir un rendez-vous exceptionnel à tous les historiens militaires canadiens. Nous voulions attirer les chercheurs aux intérêts les plus divers, du moins nous l'espérions.

Déjà, au printemps 1999, nous avons reçu une soixantaine de propositions de valeur. Comme nous le savons maintenant, ce sont finalement près de 400 personnes qui ont participé à l'événement avec plus de cent communications présentées.

Le présent volume fera maintenant rayonner vers un plus vaste public environ 60 pour cent des échanges qui ont eu lieu à cette occasion. On trouvera, dans les écrits qui suivent, la contestation sérieuse d'idées reçues, aussi bien que l'utilisation de spécialités complémentaires à l'histoire. On y constatera qu'un texte sur six a été rédigé et présenté en français, une proportion respectable lorsque l'on sait que, voici à peine dix ans, presque aucun francophone ne s'occupait d'histoire militaire canadienne. Pour leur part, les militaires canadiens devraient rencontrer, dans ces lectures, ample matière à réflexion et quelques leçons utiles.

Un colloque de ce genre, une première au Canada par la forme et l'envergure, devrait-il être répété ? Nous avons reçu énormément de commentaires positifs, écrits ou verbaux, à son sujet. Certains proposaient de renouveler l'expérience sur une base quinquennale. Nous avons pris bonne note de cette suggestion. Rendez-vous en 2005 ? Nous verrons bien.

Des remerciements me sont arrivés de toutes parts. L'exceptionnelle qualité de l'organisation du colloque me fut maintes fois soulignée. Ce succès est dû à une vingtaine de personnes. À la fin du colloque, j'ai signalé, et vous étiez encore nombreux sur place, à la grande surprise de mes collègues Jack Granatstein et Norman Hillmer, la présence de ces collaborateurs sans lesquels l'entreprise n'aurait pu avoir lieu. Je tiens ici à rappeler

les noms des principaux d'entre eux : le major André Levesque chapeautait la partie matérielle de l'organisation de ce colloque, habilement appuyé de Carmen Goold. Ils sont parvenus, par un travail inlassable, à obtenir de nombreuses commandites qui ont rendu le séjour des participants des plus agréables, en retour de modiques frais d'inscription. Le côté contenu, incluant la publication des présents actes, a été sous l'égide d'Yves Tremblay.

Bien sûr, sans le ministère de la Défense nationale, *Le Canada et la guerre de l'an 1000 à l'an 2000* n'aurait pas vu le jour. Merci à mes collègues du MDN de leur appui indéfectible et de la confiance qu'ils ont mise dans l'équipe d'organisation.

Maintenant, bonne lecture à tous. Et pour commencer par le commencement, voici le texte, retranscrit par nos soins en accord avec l'auteur, du lieutenant général (e.r.) Roméo Dallaire, celui qui m'avait demandé si j'avais des projets pour l'an 2000...

Serge Bernier
Février 2001

OPENING ADDRESS

CONFÉRENCE D'OUVERTURE*

Mesdames et messieurs, collègues et amis, bonjour. Je suis enchanté de voir parmi nous le général Belzile, qui a été un mentor pour moi en différentes périodes de ma carrière.

Aujourd'hui et durant les cinq jours à venir, vous participerez à un impressionnant colloque. En choisissant un thème comme le Canada et la guerre de l'an mil à l'an deux mille, on a décidé d'étudier nos racines en profondeur. En tous les cas, le déroulement de cette semaine prouve un grand intérêt pour l'histoire militaire de ce pays, particulièrement depuis le XIX^e siècle.

Pour ma part, je remarque depuis longtemps que nos études en histoire militaire canadienne portent presque toutes sur le volet tactique. C'est-à-dire que le niveau d'envergure stratégique n'est presque jamais abordé, sauf lorsqu'on parle de la production d'équipement et de munitions. Est-ce que les Canadiens ont pris des décisions de nature stratégique ? Même McNaughton, en son temps, a peu influencé les décisions de la « Cour impériale », si l'on peut dire. La tactique continue de nous hanter et joue un rôle dans l'orientation des officiers qui sont pris dans son carcan avec pour résultat qu'ils ont de la difficulté à développer, articuler, publier et même débattre du volet stratégique canadien, avec les autorités canadiennes, celles d'autres pays ou encore avec des collègues étrangers.

Ce que vous ferez cette semaine va, je l'espère, créer un intérêt et faire comprendre le besoin qu'ont les Forces canadiennes d'évoluer à partir de leur histoire, d'orienter à un niveau intellectuel supérieur les débats militaires. Je remarque aussi que, durant cette semaine, on aura droit à 25% de présentations en français : je considère que c'est un succès magistral pour de M. Bernier qu'a pu regrouper des intellectuels, des historiens, des sociologues francophones, un milieu qui fournit 25% des membres de nos forces, un changement important survenu au cours des trente dernières années chez nous.

*

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I mention the French Canadian, the French involvement in this colloquium particularly because it is, in itself, a significant gesture or movement in terms of presenting that dimension of the study of military history in Canada. It seems to also put to rest an absolutely terrible quotation of my ageing father-in-law who had commanded a regiment in the Second World War. He was in his late 70s when one day, and I considered him to be a of considerable influence on my career, he caught me by complete surprise when, out of the blue, he asked: "Romeo, what do the Canadian forces have too much of in

* As accurate a transcription as possible and approved by lieutenant-general Dallaire, of his presentation made at the opening of the conference. Transcription aussi fidèle que possible, et approuvée par le lieutenant général Dallaire, de la communication qu'il a présentée en ouverture du colloque.

peacetime but never enough of in war?" I thought maybe it's guns or ammunition and so on and he said quite critically, he said "French Canadians." I think over the evolution of the last thirty years there has been movement, often slow, but there has been constant movement to correct that perception; and now this colloquium represents further and significant progress in the way we are studying the profession of arms today and certainly of the past.

The bulk of the material for my presentation came from my work as the CDS Special Advisor of Officer Professional Development. Dr Bernier mentioned that we were doing work on the evolution, nay the reform of the Canadian officer corps, of Canadian officership and generalship, and art of the admiral.

The study of the future Canadian officer corps must begin from a rigorous scientific study and debate of our past, the historical dimension, and from our recent and current actions and assessments. We often hear our military history, as it were, is not as flamboyant as maybe the histories of many of the colonial powers of the 19th century and even 20th century, some of whom believe they are (and in Africa are certainly perceived to be) still colonial powers. Military history, however, or the involvement of the military in the evolution of this nation, is not insignificant and, in fact, is quite colourful when one considers the ministers and generals in both the 19th and 20th centuries who delved, often amateurishly in its activities. Certainly the evolution of the general and flag officer corps that emerged just prior to the First World War is a fascinating example of the stresses and strains between an omnipotent colonial power and the nascent independent and inexperienced indigenous senior leadership. The few who have and continue to write serious books and papers on the Canadian generalship or art of the admiral such as Jack Granatstein, Professor Haycock, Steve Harris and Jack English, papers that are not so much critical of individuals but call on us to recognise that although our regular forces may be well over a century old in some respects, we are still very youthful, if not immature in our approach to the intellectual development of general and flag officers and of professional development in the broader context. As a case in point, our generals and admirals still depend principally on their experiential base despite the fact that we know that that is not going to meet the demands of the future, and despite our suspicion that the lack of a more intellectually profound underpinning may have robbed them of credibility when they have stood in front of the country's political leaders and before the nation at large.

In the 90s, and that is not very far back for you ladies and gentlemen, we see a significant and generalised watershed not only for the Canadian forces but also for a majority of the countries of the Western world, a watershed produced by the end of the Cold War as well, for example, by the Revolution in Military Affairs. At the same time, the Canadian Forces also went through some extensive and traumatic experiences, experiences I hope historians will study in the future, to determine why they happened and what we did as a result of them, which have also had an impact on our credibility. Some of the way forward has been addressed in the many ministerial reports that came out in the 1997 timeframe.

Still, given both the more universal changes and those more specifically related to recent Canadian history, I believe that we must recognise that the current generation of general officers, all officers in fact, must themselves recognize the unique opportunity they have to lead the Canadian Forces in meeting the challenges of the new century and those posed by the events of the last few years of the preceding one. And I would suspect

that if we don't, in fact, lead the forces and influence the government in meeting these challenges that the forces will face, then historians of the future will be quite critical of us for having missed a significant moment of change of reform that could have happened.

However there is a movement – this colloquium is an example of it – within the armed forces and the country at large to examine our heritage, the richness and value of our military history and its links both here in the country and internationally so as to give us a reference point in reforming the CF, the officer corps, and the general officer corps. This is not a conservative approach, one trying to preserve the past in face of the future, but rather an attempt to seek a reference point upon which we risk launching ourselves into the future. Perhaps I can quote, in the context of what we have been doing over the past two years and are still doing, a certain historian who has a mixed reputation in and amongst you of the academic milieu and certainly has an interesting reputation. The individual I'm speaking of is Martin Van Creveld, a very interesting gentleman I first came into contact with when I was at the British Higher Command and Staff Course during the Gulf War – where we dubbed our course (which was at the operational level) “How do you do Schwartzkopf's job?.” Martin van Creveld came to speak to us and spent a number of hours with us and also consumed a number of bottles of port; as I look at the crowd here I am reminded of a statement he made after I don't know how many bottles of port: he said “You know if you give a soldier the choice between actual combat and sex he would probably choose combat as the dimensions of combat and all its total involvement is probably more rewarding in the long run.”

Well, of course, we let that go by. However, when you look at the male dominance of this crowd here you sort of wonder whether there is something in what he said. But that's a personal reflection. I bring up his name because I would wish to make an observation based on his book *The Transformation of War*, published in 1991 just at the commencement of this new post-Cold War era. The words in question – and I am paraphrasing: Over the last few decades some of the best and largest regular armies have failed repeatedly in low intensity conflicts in which they seemed to hold all the cards. Now this should have caused politicians, the military and their academic advisors to take a profound and searching look at the nature of war in our time. However, by the accepted strategic framework, time and time again the losers (who by rights should not have lost) explained away their defeat by citing mitigating factors. Often they invoked an alleged stab in the back, blaming politicians who refused them a free hand or else a home public which did not give them the support to which they felt they were entitled. In other cases they thrust their head in the sand and argued that they were defeated in a political war, a psychological war, a propaganda war, a guerrilla war, a terrorist war – defeated, in short, in anything and everything but war “properly speaking.”

As the 20th century is dawning in its conclusion it is becoming clearer everyday that this line of reasoning will no longer do. If only we are prepared to look, can we see a revolution taking place under our very noses. Just as no Roman citizen was left unaffected by the barbarian invasions, so too in vast parts of the world no man, woman or child alive today will be spared the consequences of the newly emerging forms of war. In other words, war, “properly speaking,” does not encompass all the forms of war that exist today and with which we may very well have to come to grips. But we got wrapped up in war “defined properly speaking” and although our hope for the future should surely be “Never again in ignorance,” the title of a small piece that I co-authored with a colleague, I fear that instead of anticipating and proactively grasping the opportunities and

challenges for reform in the operational, social, resource management information revolution of our time – we may repeat our mistakes.

Who didn't grasp it? And why didn't we grasp it? And, why did we not lead in this anticipatory dimension of what's coming down the road instead of trying to adapt old methodologies from the Cold War or peacekeeping?

A recent publication, however, produced by the senior generals and admirals of the Canadian Forces called the Canadian Forces Defence Strategy 2020 has actually articulated strategic vision, and perhaps there's reason to hope. I quote a small point "We will exploit leading edged doctrine and technologies to accomplish our domestic and international roles in the battle space of the 21st century and be recognized both at home and abroad as an innovative, relevant knowledge-based institution with transformational leadership and coherent management. We will build upon our proud heritage in pursuit of clear strategic objectives."

That's certainly one way of trying to regain the initiative in launching ourselves purposefully into the future in a way that goes beyond the merely experiential "what's next will happen tomorrow type of leadership." We must build on this proud, and at times complex heritage. But to build on it we must know more about it. In that respect, unhappily, many of us are in fact neophytes when it comes to understanding the relationships and the factors that have affected the historic evolution of the Canadian Forces, its influence in Canadian society and the structure and the place of Canada in the world. However, I firmly believe that if we are to risk innovative methodologies, innovative thinking and in fact open the whole dimension of debate at any rank of any component of the military institution, the military structures, the strategic and military evolution of the Canadian Forces and its role in Canada in supporting our national policies we can only do so by ensuring that our history and heritage is understood.

Now we have to consider new components such as the revolution in military affairs, more complex conflict resolution, the revolution in business affairs, and significant sociological and individual ideologies, all of which are coming more and more to the fore are drivers of essential change for and into the information age. So we are faced, as we start to ponder this officer and general officer corps of the future, a rather complex enigma – an enigma which comes from a balance exercise, a balance exercise between technologically based or educated officers, the essence of the Cold War era model, versus a humanities or some might say social sciences based educated officer corps. What's the balance between the two? Or should it be all of one or the other? Is there a balance? And what is it? Is it 40-60, 50-50? What is that balance required of that officer corps? Is it the same balance we see in private sector corporate management. We have officers today who are not sure whether they should go to Staff College or go get an MBA because of the importance of business planning and resource management in a time of significant resource constraints. For it cannot be denied that this time of constraints and a whole new kind of accountability demands some fairly sophisticated thinking, projecting and prioritization of those scarce resources. For a commander today will never achieve his operational objectives and certainly not achieve his operational training objectives if he is not prudent and knowledgeable about how to manage his resources.

What's the balance? Do they need both an MBA and Staff College? Interestingly, if we look at the general officer corps since we were slashed by 50% over the last three or four years we will find that the general officer corps, up to 60%, are involved in corporate activities whose objective is to ensure that the forces have what they need and the

resources are moved appropriately and that we are leading the forces into the future. That suggests the importance of what MBA students learn, because if we lack the skill sets in this area, the deficiency will have a significant influence on the day-to-day operations of the forces and how it will evolve into the future, whether we are speaking of equipment or other things. But so will a lack of operational competence, whether obtained on operations or on exercise. You then have the debate between education and training. How much education? How much training? You will note the education bubble is bigger and that is my perspective and certainly was the perspective and continues to be the perspective of the whole project of officer professional development towards 2020.

We also have to deal with all the implications of the information age. Here we must be clear that the information age does not simply imply new technology we have to use but how this will affect the whole philosophy of command. It is possible, for example, that technology will be so advanced that in the machine/man-woman interface of 2020 we may no longer want to use the process of deductive reasoning because there may be a whole new methodology of reasoning dependent on (and possible only because of) future technology. At a more mundane level, the interface may fundamentally alter the possibilities of, say, how you exercise command and control. Since much of what will happen in the information age is clearly going to be driven by the bigger powers, and particularly the Americans, I wonder where we will be able to insert the Canadian philosophy of commander, the Canadian dimension, into what results from this interface. If the information revolution tends to drive us away from the Canadian philosophy of command and control because we are using technologies developed elsewhere, will we, in fact, end up worse than we were between the two world wars when we were unarguably the lackeys of British doctrine and training? Will we again be significantly influenced by US structures as we were in the 1960s? Will we be forced to immerse ourselves in an American system and philosophy of command and control that we don't expect (and may not recognize)? Will we in fact change our philosophy of command to fit the technology even if it comes from somewhere else?

In order to recognize what we are doing (or what is being done to us) we must, of course, understand what *is* our philosophy of command. More broadly, we must also identify, from looking at the past, what is the fundamental Canadian theory of war; what is the final defensive line to cuts, that final defensive line that establishes and articulates the social contract between the nation and those in uniform to defend it and the risk-taking by the government. What will that final defensive line be based on? Three services? A particular role? Will we be asked to undertake what some believe are tasks of the Canadian government at the expense of our military structure? With a few exceptions, we have undergone attrition since the 1964 White Paper; and although we may have fooled ourselves into believing that there was enough money to implement the 1987 White Paper, we in fact were suckered because, coming ten years too late, there was never going to be the money to actually implement that White Paper. Will we be able to stop the attrition battle? Will we be able to articulate our final defensive line between having a military capability and having something else?

How many of us? I was twelve years a general officer and how many times have I written on that subject? How many times have I debated that subject? How many times have we, in colloquium with academics, colleagues and so on, actually gone into the minute details to find examples of, even definitions of, Canadian generalship and art of the Army? From that, what is our theory of war? Is it Clausewitzian, Jominian, or

something else? Is it based on some of the fundamental studies of the past? Or is it, again, only experiential leading us to the conclusion that we'll survive and we'll defend everything we can and hope for the best in the next budget. Well Defence Strategy 2020 is saying that that doesn't work anymore; but the officer professional development 2020 is saying "listen you are going to need an officer corps that can play in that game and certainly playing in that game requires a complete shift in the intellectual basis of your officer corps." No more should the general officer corps be based fundamentally on experiential promotions and jobs. A general officer, flag officer, is a gentleman or lady who is involved in the strategic evolution of the forces and in fact it's the component of the military that must be intimately involved in developing the policies and serving the ambitions of the nation. So the posting a general or flag officer has is important.

But along with good postings for useful experience, there a whole other aspect of general officer career development which demands that every general officer spend time in that intellectual arena. And, in fact, should be fostered in his or her opportunity to do so. I have to admit that on occasions, but dare I say very odd occasions, individuals have had such opportunities, but this has mainly been a haphazard thing. It has not been a structured program, something systematic because it is good for the system.

If we wish to think about a structured and useful professional development program for the general officers and flag officers let us not stick to old "universal" notions. Why not have one or two-stars getting graduate degrees in a number of different disciplines? Why not have a two star or one star go to the Harvard Business School for an MBA? Why not have 10, 15, or 20% of the general officers with PhDs, real PhDs, PhDs that have something to do with the profession of arms and related fields or disciplines – particularly in those social sciences related to or influencing the evolution of the forces and their role. Please understand that I am not in any way putting down technology and the study of technology, engineering, science; I'm not say that they aren't relevant or useful. Creating a better balance, however, between the technology based references that the Forces have often used, I mean the methodology of project management and moving to greater acceptance of and recognition of the social studies is something I believe we must do.

Similarly, if we get these generals who have done research to get their PhD, what is wrong with having them continue to do research after their graduation, after they are back "on the job," so to speak. To publish and in fact teach. And when I speak of general officers here, I ask as well, why not colonels, why not lieutenant-colonels.

Four years ago I presented a paper at the Annual Meeting of the Strategic Chairs that National Defence sponsors in twelve universities. In that session I raised the point of why shouldn't officers be educated and pursue fundamental research, fundamental even when still in uniform. Why not, I asked, and continue to ask, but back then I was nearly heckled out of the room and I certainly was put to task when I said that we probably wanted to have Colonels (Captains (N)) to have post-graduate degrees, real Masters degrees, Masters degrees pertinent to the profession. And not necessarily Masters degrees only to the individual's liking or opportunities; and certainly not only in technical fields – we have a lot of them, in fact. I think that the educational basis, the intellectual vigour of the officer corps is crucial to our being able to lead, face, and anticipate the challenges of the future. As these revolutions continue to evolve and we see actual paradigm shifts coming at us hot and heavy, not only through technology, but through the evolution of humanity, through burgeoning globalism and yes, even human security.

Canada seems to me to be a middle power that is ready to be a world leader in terms of the importance it gives to respecting humanity and human security: The betterment of men, women and children in order for them to gain and even expect at least the minimum of respect and opportunities. As a result of government policies, the Forces allows those of us in uniform to be leaders in this new dimension of the use of force. It is involving the Canadian Forces, kicking and screaming into a realm where the old concepts and doctrines are proving more and more ineffective. That doesn't for a moment mean we can in any way put aside or abrogate our responsibilities as a military force, skilled and experienced in warfighting, that must be ready to defend this nation at home and abroad. Rather, it calls for us to acquire a completely new multi-disciplinary set of skills, to articulate a new conceptual base with its deducted doctrinal preaching that will reduce and hopefully eliminate the post-cold war "ad hocery" in post-modern peacekeeping and conflict resolution. No more of the debate between "train down" and "train up" for conflict-resolution and peacekeeping. Rather, we must think in terms of a new and added set of qualifications and skills to the single focused warfighting based doctrine that many members of the Forces leadership insist on perpetuating, even though they recognise the vacuums in capabilities needed to resolve conflict and establish an atmosphere of security for all concerned; open a whole multitude of other skill sets that are required for the young lieutenant graduating from RMC in the next few years – a graduate who doesn't need to be hobbled by the requirements of Cold War ways of doing things, and to have a five or six year apprenticeship before we allow him to play with the "real toys." Let us instead realize that those young officers who are graduating into a complex era of operations filled with morally demanding and ethically excruciating decisions in their roles and their responsibilities, even in garrison under the demanding transparency code insisted by the people of this country.

I haven't been able to speak about all that I would have like to in the allotted time, but I recommend to you the first draft of Canadian Officership in the 21st century that has been, since January 2000, presented for comment from all venues. It is a compendium of thoughts of the future officer corps and the future general and flag officer corps. Since its publication in January, I gather that extensive work has been done with the involvement of general and flag officers as rarely seen in the past.

Ladies and gentlemen you have been very kind to let me speak like this and I hope that the colloquium will achieve its ambitious aim. Intellectually rigorous, experientially tempered and disciplined debate, with the opportunity to be published, are the catalysts of this unique Canadian military history event. This project is most worthy of being a millennium initiative.

Bravo Dr Serge Bernier ainsi qu'à votre équipe.

Merci à vous tous et bonne semaine.

Lieutenant-general (ret'd) R. Dallaire

Part I

THE CANADIAN MILITARY EXPERIENCE

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Partie I

L'EXPÉRIENCE MILITAIRE CANADIENNE

CANADA AND WAR 1600-2000

Sydney F. Wise

This paper is about two things: first, some reflections on the belief held by most Canadians that our military history has little to do with “real” Canadian history, and second, to suggest a contrary proposition, that virtually from the beginning of European settlement in what is now Canada, it would be difficult to find a generation whose life and development was unaffected by war and the threat of war.

The last years of the twentieth century have been filled with anniversaries of conflict, echoes from the history of the bloodiest century in the human record, a century of terrible suffering, of revolutionary change and of hideous crimes against humanity almost beyond imagining. Because the twentieth century was also one of unexampled technological innovation, we have been granted, unlike former generations, the power of historical recall through sound recording and film. Thus we have heard and seen extraordinary things, peoples crushed, cities levelled, states overthrown, the movements and clashes of vast armies, navies and air forces, and, as well, the faces and the emotions of peoples condemned to defeat and oppression, and of those liberated from that long agony. To the future historian, these events, and such evidences of them, will mark our century as the quintessential era of violence, war, and death.

It seemed to me, at this juncture, and with this conference, a most remarkable outpouring of Canadian military history, an appropriate time to reflect upon the place of war in Canadian history. At first glance it would seem that the burden of war upon us has been light; that somehow we have been granted an exemption from history. The wars, at least of the last century or so, bore most heavily upon Europe, Asia, and Africa. But this is hardly true. Though our part of the world has, over the past century or so, been free of the devastation of war, we know that it was not always so in North America, and we are perfectly aware, historically speaking, that every European conflict of the 17th and 18th centuries had its repercussions in North America, and that early colonial societies, whether French or English speaking, had to place a premium upon military preparedness. The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars brought their North American sequel in the War of 1812. The threat of American aggression remained a concern for most of the 19th century, yet the century closed with volunteer contingents from Canada going off to Africa to fight a people they knew nothing of, for a cause remote from the concerns of their daily lives.

The First World War brought naval battles off the coast of South America, but the whole of the Western Hemisphere was virtually untouched not only during the First World War but in the Second World War as well. Both the United States and Canada had to cope, in their different ways, with German submarines in the two wars, but in fact North America escaped all but unscathed. The Second World War was, in a sense, a vindication of Senator Dandurand’s famous remark to the League of Nations that “Canada lived in a fireproof house, far from flammable materials.” A Japanese submarine

fired a few rounds at the British Columbia coast; German submarines penetrated the Gulf and River St. Lawrence; another U-boat set up an automatic weather station on the Labrador coast (not to be discovered until long after the war by Dr. Alec Douglas); Canadians had to endure the Japanese paper balloon menace, such as it was. Compared to the fate that overtook older lands, these incidents are almost laughably negligible.

Unlike the Americans, who fought in the last century a civil war so terrible that it had an abiding impact upon the national culture and history, with the minor exceptions of rebellions in 1837, 1838 and 1885, we have not had a war on our soil for 188 years. This fortunate exemption has reinforced a powerful element in our national political culture, one that bridges our language divisions, because one of the most durable perceptions that Canadians have had of themselves is that of a peace-loving people, whose chief struggles have been against a harsh environment: Canada is the “peaceable kingdom,” in William Kilbourne’s phrase summing up this aspect of our national psyche. We have earned our reputation internationally as sober, responsible mediators and fixers, and have with diligence and considerable sacrifice established ourselves as the very model of the modern peacekeeper, at least, until very recently.

This self-perception seems to flow naturally from our past: a country of hardy settlers, overwhelmingly preoccupied with wresting an existence from the sea, the forests and the land: so in 1812 Bishop Joseph-Octave Plessis contrasted the American invaders, whom he termed “Goths” or barbarians, with the peaceable habitants of Lower Canada; while the Rev. Egerton Ryerson, in Upper Canada, similarly referred to the “Persian thousands” of Americans, characteristic products of an anarchic and disorderly society, who were repelled by “the Spartan bands of Canadian Loyalist volunteers, aided by a few hundred English soldiers.”¹ “Ordered liberty” was a central belief in late 18th and early 19th century Canada, at least among the colonial elite. George Brown, in the *Globe* in the 1850s, exploited this theme to the full, and predicted explosive violence would overtake the American Union. To Canadians of every region, the American Civil War was a demonstration not only of the violent tendencies of American life and institutions, but a standing contrast to the stability of the Canadian framework of government; it was no accident that “peace, order and good government” is just about the only memorable phrase in the British North America Act of 1867.

That a Canadian, Lester Pearson, and a Canadian-based peace organization, the Pugwash Conference, have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, conveys the highest international recognition of Canada as the peaceable kingdom. George Stanley’s *Canada’s Soldiers: the Military History of an Unmilitary People*, first published in 1953, put the professional historian’s imprimatur upon this aspect of our past. In effect, Stanley was saying that military history, and hence war, was in a sense irrelevant to our history as a people.

In contrast to European societies, we have never had a hereditary military class, dependent upon government-sponsored violence for its social status and employment for its sons, and dedicated to the perpetuation of military institutions and the exaltation of the military virtues. This is not to say that it could not have happened. There were two occasions in our history when the role of the military might have taken a different turning. In New France, after the arrival of the Carignan-Salières regiment of regulars in 1665, an event which gave a military tone to the new royal government, the settlement of discharged regulars in the colony, the endowing of the captains of militia with civil functions, and the posting of the *troupes de la marine* to the colony has led at least one

historian, Ian Steele, to characterize New France as “an authoritarian military culture.” Similarly, when the Loyalist Corps allotted land along the St. Lawrence front, and on the Niagara Frontier of what became Upper Canada, they were settled by unit, with their active command structure in place. In neither case, however, were these pronounced military characteristics continued beyond a generation or so.

Instead, and deriving directly from our perception of the meaning of Canadian experience of war, we have a set of variations on the militia myth. The classic statement of the myth was made by the Rev. John Strachan, following the victories of Detroit and Queenston Heights in 1812:

It will be said by the future Historian, that the Province of Upper Canada, without the assistance of men or arms, except a handful of regular troops, repelled its invaders, slew or took them all prisoners, and captured from its enemies the greater part of the arms by which it was defended.... And never, surely, was greater activity shewn in any country, than our militia have exhibited, never greater valour, cooler resolution, and more approved conduct; they have emulated the choicest veterans, and they have twice saved the country.²

It was the militia, therefore, according to this version of our military history, that put down the Rebellions in 1837-1838, defeated the Fenians at Ridgeway, rallied to the cause and crushed the Northwest Rebellion in 1885, and volunteered in large numbers for service in the eight contingents Canada sent to the South African War. The formidable Canadian Corps of the First World War was the product, not of the tiny pre-war permanent force of about 3000, but of Sam Hughes’ “call to the clans;” almost precisely the same phenomenon took place during the Second World War, when a small professional force was expanded by hundreds of thousands of volunteers for the army, navy, and air force. Even with the Korean War, volunteers from the general population made up the bulk of the Special Service Force first despatched. The assumption underlying this experience has always been that if war is forced upon us, Canadians will respond, from the plough, the shops, the counting houses, the workbench and will do what needs to be done. We have of course paid dearly for this assumption, whether in the slaughter of inadequately trained Canadians at the Second Battle of Ypres in April 1915, at Dieppe in 1942, or in the Battle of Normandy in 1944.

Our geographic and geopolitical situation has shielded the Canadian population from the harshest effects of war, and has also promoted a considerable lack of realism about the nature of war and about the significance of military institutions. Ignorance of our military history is profound at every level of society, including the academic profession, understandable enough, since the subject, if fully entered into, is both technically demanding and of necessity repellent in character. This judgement applies equally to the profession of journalism, if the quality of debate and information over such subjects as the “Valour and the Horror” controversy or the Oka confrontation is any indication. That the Canadian military has been called out in aid of the civil power well over two hundred times since 1867 would probably be a revelation to most journalists.

But if the shelter of our geography has protected us from the full horrors of war or preserved our idealism and naiveté, if you like, there is a sense in which most Canadians are aware that the burden of war has lain heavily upon us. That there have been well over 100,000 dead in the wars in which we have participated is burden enough, not to speak of

the hundreds of thousands more who carried the wounds of battle, physical and psychological, with them for the rest of their lives.

Canadians also know that the impact of war, especially the two world wars, upon our society, politics, and economy has been enormous, even though they might not be quite sure of the details. The Boer War had not only generated a degree of militarism among the Anglo-Canadian elite, as Carl Berger has pointed out, but it re-opened the cleavage between the two great language communities of the country, despite Prime Minister Laurier's best efforts. The First World War, so blithely and unthinkingly entered into, had profound consequences. It enlarged the powers of the central government, as it strove to marshal the war effort. The bureaucracy expanded and began to modernize itself. Government intervened more and more in the economy and into the lives of citizens: controls were extended over labour relations, prices, the supplies of certain materials, and most of all over the people themselves. Massive government borrowing on the American market took place, as well as the imposition, for the first time, of an income tax. The manufacturing and industrial base of the country was enlarged, particularly in heavy industry; ships were built, over 3000 aircraft were produced, munitions factories were expanded or created. At one bound, Canada entered the air age, with more than 20,000 Canadians in the British air services. This was to lead to the rapid development of civil aviation between the wars, as well as the aerial mapping of Canada, geological and forest surveys, and other aspects of the era of the bush pilot. The status of women changed; domestic service, teaching and nursing, and clerical work, the pre-war occupations of women in the work force, were expanded to include work in manufacturing and industry, and thousands of women entered the work force for the first time. In 1917 the franchise was extended to women, or at least those women related to serving soldiers, as the Borden government strove to win an election in which the chief issue was conscription.

Conscription itself, brought about by the heavy casualties suffered by the Canadians in Flanders and on the Somme, divided the country as never before, and its effects, compounded by the Second World War, are with us yet. At the same time, the successes won by the Canadian Corps on the Western Front, with the climax of Vimy in 1917, furthered the national aims of Borden and many other Canadians: to achieve a place for Canada in the Empire and the world. With the admission of Canada and the other Dominions to the Imperial War Council by Lloyd George, a process was begun which was to culminate in the Balfour declaration of 1926 and the Statute of Westminster of 1931, according autonomy all of this, of course, under the shepherding of Prime Minister Mackenzie King, the chief political beneficiary of the conscription crisis.

The Second World War wrought even greater changes in Canada than did the First. In order to understand why, it is important to grasp the dimensions of the Canadian war effort, which in turn drove the government to take unprecedented powers. Canada, a country of 11 millions when the war broke out, fielded not a corps as in the First War but an army. It constructed and launched a navy which at war's end was the third largest Allied fleet. It enlisted a quarter of a million in the RCAF, and formed a bomber group and a tactical fighter group. And, on top of all this, Canada was responsible for the enormous Commonwealth air-training program, the BCATP. In addition, the Canadian resource industry, agriculture, and manufacturing became a vital supplier to the Allied war effort, particularly to Britain. These huge commitments led the federal government to intervene in provincial jurisdictions, to enter tax fields previously enjoyed by the

provinces, to marshal and direct manpower, and to impose a rigorous system of price and wage controls as well as severe rationing of food and consumer goods of all kinds.

During the war, women entered the labour force to a far greater extent than in the First World War – indeed, to a greater extent than women were drawn upon for work in Nazi Germany – and this time their entry into the labour force was permanent, unlike the drop off which occurred in the 1920s. Moreover, the armed services were opened to women, including technical trades previously reserved for men; over 50,000 women served in the three branches of the armed forces.

As with the First World War, the country underwent a conscription crisis in the Second – in fact, two, involving the plebiscite of 1942, when the vote disclosed that while the majority of all Canadians favoured releasing the government from its commitment not to invoke conscription for overseas service, more than two-thirds of Quebecers voted no. The second crisis occurred in 1944, when it became clear that the casualties suffered by the Canadian First Army in Normandy and in the reduction of the Channel Ports necessitated infantry reinforcements beyond the capacity of the reinforcement pool to supply. Ultimately, the government was compelled to invoke conscription for overseas service, and some 2500 conscripts took part in actual operations before the end of the war. It was the consummate political skill of Mackenzie King which averted a breach as serious as that of 1917, but the crisis was a real one, and left a deep imprint.

Canada emerged from the war transformed into a modern industrial state, with the beginnings of a national social safety net, not the least important element of which was the access afforded many thousand Canadian veterans to higher education – a revolution in its own right. And unlike the retreat into isolation and rejection of binding commitments which had characterized Canadian governments of the 1920s and 1930s, Canada swiftly entered into a series of breathtaking military commitments. As early as 1940, following upon the fall of France, Mackenzie King and Franklin Roosevelt signed the Ogdensburg Agreement, establishing the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, and reversing at a stroke the whole course of Canadian history, marking a shift to an American orientation in our foreign and military policy. The rest of the story is familiar to this generation: the formation of NATO, the participation of Canada – following the American lead – in the peace action in Korea, the creation of NORAD, and other aspects of the Cold War from which only recently the world has emerged.

Far from being insulated from the impress of 20th century wars, modern Canada has been shaped and altered by them to an extraordinary degree. Whether or not the burden has been a heavy one has yet to be resolved (although the 20,000 Japanese Canadians who were deprived of their homes and property, moved out of British Columbia, and dispersed across the country would surely disagree). It may yet prove that the impact of the wars has contributed in a fundamental way to the ultimate dissolution of the national union, as Mackenzie King always feared. In any event, it can be argued with considerable validity that the “peaceable kingdom” has been very largely created by war.

The burden of the wars of the last century bore most heavily, of course, upon the more than two million Canadians who took part in them as members of the armed forces. Such a commitment has been a powerful source of national pride and unity in many of the Allied countries who fought in the two wars – Australia is an obvious example. It is not so with Canada. Charles Stacey once contended, during the annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association in 1967 that Canadian nationalism was born on the battlefield of Vimy. I ventured to disagree with him on two grounds: first, that Canadian

nationalism, of whatever variety, had much deeper roots in our history than that, and second, Vimy was a source of national pride only to English speaking Canadians, and to that minority of French Canadians actively involved. War has not contributed to a sense of shared history, but the reverse.

Vimy, though a remarkable achievement, was not the greatest victory won by the Canadian Corps: that was the Battle of Amiens, in August, 1918, which, like the clearing of the Scheldt Estuary in the Second World War by First Canadian Army, is virtually unknown to Canadians. At the risk of departing slightly from my theme, before concluding, I would like to recount the significance of Amiens, and explain why we know so little about it.

After the Canadian Corps, in October-November of 1917, captured Passchendaele village and most of the low ridge upon which it had once stood, thus putting an end to one of the most dreadful campaigns of the war, it returned to its strong lines at Vimy Ridge. During the winter and into the spring of 1918, it continued to train, and to improve those tactics of cooperation of all arms which had already accomplished so much. On March 21, the German army began the great series of offensives intended to end the war, driving a huge wedge between the British 5th Army and the French, and ultimately threatening Paris. When this offensive flagged, General Ludendorff shifted his attention to Flanders, and the British army was placed in a critical situation. During these events, Field Marshal Haig, wishing to stem the German tide, attempted to detach divisions from the Canadian Corps (a normal British practice). All such attempts were resolutely opposed and, as it turned out, successfully resisted by General Sir Arthur Currie, and as a result, the Canadians, occupying the strongest position on the British Army front, were virtually untouched. As General E.L.M. Burns remarked in his memoirs (he was then a staff captain in the Canadian Corps), “a joke was current among the Canadians who continued to hold the only part of the British line that had not been attacked and pierced by the Germans. The story went that the real German strategy was to isolate us by the offensives to the north and south of our sector, and then make a separate peace with Canada.”³

The last spasms of the great German offensive took place on the French front in mid-July of 1918, although no one on the Allied side realized that at the time. Marshal Foch, generalissimo of the Allied Armies, was already planning for the campaign of 1919, when American numbers could for the first time be brought to bear. In June, the Dominion prime ministers began a series of meetings in London with the British Prime Minister and his cabinet and military colleagues, and they too discussed the continuation of the war into the next year, at the same time warning Lloyd George that any further campaign like that in Flanders in 1917 would not be acceptable to them. After a short break for the dominion prime ministers to visit their troops in France, the meetings resumed in late July. Word of a possible Allied offensive had not reached them; Sir Maurice Hankey, secretary to the Imperial War Council, recounts in his diary their first news of it:

The first hint of a coming attack reached the Committee of Prime Ministers on August 1st, when Borden told them that on the previous evening he had learned in the greatest secrecy that the Canadian Corps was being moved from the Vimy region to another part of the line with a view to a coming offensive.⁴

The prime ministers naturally protested that they had not been consulted, feeling that, as Hankey noted, “that at this stage of the war they had a right to know what was the

scope of the intended operation (since) it was they who controlled the dwindling resources of the Empire nations.” The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir Henry Wilson, professed ignorance; he was despatched to find out the scope of the operation. “It transpired,” wrote Hankey, that (the offensive) was limited to a series of attacks intended to rectify the line... which Foch had decided to undertake; no further objection was raised.”⁵

In fact, Foch intended much more than this. In the greatest secrecy, the Canadian Corps, swollen to nearly the size of a British army of the period, moved quietly into position alongside the Australian Corps in the night hours of 7-8 August, while elaborate deception was carried out to convince German intelligence that the Canadians had been shifted to Flanders. To the right and left of the Australians and Canadians, the French and British were also to attack. At 4:20 a.m. the two Dominion corps jumped off from their start lines, accompanied by hundreds of British tanks, an overwhelming artillery barrage (there had been no preliminary bombardment) and mastery of the air by the Royal Air Force and the French air arm. Initially the advance was through heavy fog, but soon, as a watching British staff captain, C.E. Montague, wrote, “then the mist lifted. It rolled right up into the sky in one piece, like a theatre curtain.” Beyond the Somme River,

a miracle, *the* miracle, had begun. It was going on fast. Remember that all previous advances had gained us little more than freedom to skulk up communication trenches a mile or two further eastward. But now! Across the level Santerre, which sun was beginning to fill with a mist-filtered lustre, two endless columns of British guns, wagons, and troops were marching steadily east, unshelled, over the ground that the Germans had held until dawn. Nothing like it had ever been seen in the war.⁶

Unfortunately for Montague’s expectations, it was not the British III Corps he and his staff colleagues were seeing, but the Canadians who had driven eight miles through the German lines, with the Australians closing up alongside them, the largest single day advance by the Allies in the history of the war on the Western Front. Neither British nor French had been able to do so, though on 9 August they were able to move forward. Ludendorff, in his memoirs, declared Amiens “the Black Day of the German Army,” while *Der Weltkrieg*, the German official history, called it “the greatest single defeat suffered by the German Army during the First World War.”⁷ Though the attack ground to a halt a few days later as the Canadians and Australians bumped into German reinforcements securely entrenched in the old Amiens defence lines, momentum was not lost. The Canadians were shifted to another front to tackle the Hindenburg Line, the Germans had suffered a crushing defeat in the field, open warfare had been restored, and, as it turned out, the final campaign had begun.⁸

Why don’t we hear more about Amiens? Richard Holmes, a British historian on the staff at RMC Sandhurst, observes in his fine book, *Fatal Avenue*, “It is a quirk of the British character that poignant defeats or hard-won victories attract an interest denied to well-deserved but cheaply bought success.” (By “cheaply bought,” Holmes means with relatively few casualties.) “Thus,” he continues, “the battle of Amiens attracts far less comment than the Somme or Passchendaele, though its results were arguably greater than those of any other British offensive during the war.”⁹

Much the same question could be addressed to Canadian historians. The explanation does not lie in the failure, for many years, to publish a complete Canadian official history. It is true that Colonel A.F. Duguid’s projected multi-volume history produced only one

lone narrative, carrying Canada's military effort to the formation of the Canadian Corps in September 1915, when in the same period the bulk of the British and Australian official histories had already been published.¹⁰ But despite the absence of an official history for a generation, a sizeable literature centred upon the Canadian victory at Vimy Ridge in 1917. It was a spectacular achievement, won against a most formidable feature which had defeated the earlier efforts of both British and French forces, and it was carried out almost entirely by the Canadians themselves. That it was a victory with only marginal military consequence has never challenged its national primacy, symbolized by the magnificent memorial at Vimy, overlooking the Douai Plain dominated by the Ridge.

Perhaps Amiens came too late in the war. Perhaps the complexity of a joint operation involving four army corps of different nationalities could not compare with the grand simplicity of Vimy. In line, from north to south, were III British Corps, Australian Corps, Canadian Corps (all of Fourth British Army) and XXXI French Corps of French First Army; the opposition was Second and Eighteenth German Armies. Perhaps the involvement of nearly one thousand tanks, more than two thousand French and British aircraft, and one of the heaviest artillery concentrations of the war, was too complicated a story to be told. It is only in relatively recent years that some good short accounts by Canadians of Amiens have appeared.

Most Anglophone Canadians accept that Vimy, at least as achievement, is part of the national history. That is hardly the case with Amiens, and hardly the case, in fact, with the bulk of Canadian military experience in the wars of the twentieth century. The argument of this paper is that our military experience should be very much a part of our history, even experience which took place far from our shores. The First World War was a psychological and cultural event without precedent in the whole of our history, involving directly very large numbers of men and women, and less directly but still acutely, tens of thousands of families throughout the society. The only event larger was the enormous experience of the Second World War. The impact of these wars upon the collective Canadian consciousness has never been adequately analyzed, though we know full well the measure of human damage done by them, if only through the silent testimony of the memorials and the veterans hospitals found almost everywhere in the country. Further in the wars of the 20th century, including the Boer War and the Korean War, Canada was an actor on the world stage, and, particularly in the two world wars, a significant participant. It is not simply that Canadians, as individuals in the two wars, demonstrated that a Canadian upbringing could meet the test of battle. Rather, in both wars, through early trials, Canadian armed forces reached significant levels of military accomplishment, itself a testimony to the strengths of Canadian society. It is not military glory, either personal or collective, that the historian should be investigating, indeed, the wars of the last century have taught the bitter lesson that "*dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*" rings hollow in most ears, but what gives rise to military effectiveness. That is as much a measure of our society, in a world in which state violence is far from having been eliminated, as the United Nations index of social indicators. Amiens was a demonstration of the degree to which the Canadian Corps had reached high professional effectiveness, arriving at that point through the most bitter and bloody experience from its militia beginnings in 1914. That Amiens was militarily important in the winning of the First World War, with all its results for human history, including our own, should not be unknown in Canada. Similarly, given the crucial significance of the port of Antwerp to the advance of the Allied Armies in 1944-1945, the role of the First Canadian Army in

freeing the Scheldt Estuary was highly significant historically, and deserves to be well-known in our schools and to Canadians generally.

NOTES

- ¹ Mgr J.-O. Plessis, "Mandement pour des prières publiques," 29 October 1812, in H. Têtu and C.-O. Gagnon, *Mandements, lettres pastorales et circulaires des Évêques de Québec*, 3 Vols. (Québec, 1888), III, pp. 86-97; Egerton Ryerson, *The Loyalists of America and their times, from 1620 to 1816*, 2 Vols. (Toronto, 1880), p. 379.
- ² Quoted in J.M. Hitsman, *The incredible War of 1812: a military history* (Toronto, 1965), p. 93.
- ³ E.L.M. Burns, *General Mud: memoirs of two world wars* (Toronto, 1970), p. 66.
- ⁴ Lord Hankey, *The supreme command*, 2 Vols. (London, 1961), II, p. 829.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 830.
- ⁶ C.E. Montague, *Disenchantment* (London, 1968 edition), p. 126.
- ⁷ Richard Holmes, *Fatal Avenue: a traveller's history of Northern France and Flanders, 1346-1945* (London, 1993), p. 160.
- ⁸ See S.F. Wise, "The Black Day of the German Army: Australians and Canadians at Amiens, August 1918," in Peter Dennis and Jeffrey Grey, eds., *1918: Defining Victory*, Proceedings of the Chief of Army's History Conference, Canberra, 29 September 1998, (Canberra: Australian Department of Defence, 1999), pp. 1-33.
- ⁹ Holmes, *Fatal Avenue*, p. 158.
- ¹⁰ Duguid, A.F. *From the outbreak of war to the Formation of the Canadian Corps Vol. I, Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1938); Colonel G.W.L. Nicholson published an able, one-volume official history in 1962, *Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1939* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer). See also S.F. Wise, "Canadian official history: the end of an era," in Jeffrey Grey, ed., *Official Army History in the Commonwealth and the United States* (New Jersey: Greenwood Press, in the press).

CANADA'S MILITARY EXPERIENCE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Desmond Morton

War has touched many Canadians in this century, often painfully. About 1,743,000 Canadians served in Canada's twentieth century wars, about 200,000 of them as conscripts: 103,257 died.¹ As many more came home permanently maimed in mind or body, wives were widowed, children orphaned and parents left bereft. Innumerable hopes were unfulfilled. No one will ever know what life-enhancing talent was lost. Canada's national debt quadrupled between 1914 and 1919 and, despite a pay-as-you-go policy, grew three-fold between 1939 and 1945.²

Some of the debt represented wartime investment in industrial plant and technical instruction, and the resulting industrial mobilization fostered a post-1945 affluence greater than any Canada had ever known. Yet, as the Toronto political economist, Lorne Morgan argued, war was a stupid route to prosperity. There should have been a better reason to process Sudbury nickel in Canada than hatred of the Kaiser. Leaving a brilliant student unemployed until he could train as a pilot, be given four-engine bomber and sent to destroy German cities had to be something only Homo the Sap could conceive. And the student, needless to add, died.³ The wars also left a residue of bitter memories. In wartime, majorities felt entitled to impose their will while minorities felt helpless and betrayed. In the two world wars, conscription broke earlier promises and left a deep fissure between French and English Canadians.⁴ Wartime paranoia, fed by pre-war racism, hurt German and Ukrainian Canadians in the First World War and Japanese Canadians in the Second.⁵ Perhaps the divisions were deeper because Canada's commitment to its twentieth-century wars was so largely a matter of political choice. In 1899 and 1914, Canada was at war because the British Empire was at war but in both cases, as much as in 1939, Canadians could decide how deeply to commit themselves to the struggle. They were not endangered by the Boer republics, nor by North Korea, Iraq or Serbia. Canada was at the outer limit of even German geopolitics. However they might squirm at the responsibility, Canadians exercised the choice to become engaged. Why?

For much of the twentieth century, Canada was virtually invulnerable on three sides and, as its political leaders had recognized, indefensible on the fourth. On either coast, the world's two greatest navies, the British and subsequently the American, successively guaranteed that if an invasion came, it could not come by sea. Until the 1940s, it was inconceivable that any attacking force could cross the Polar icecap and, until the 1950s, it was impracticable.⁶ If Canada was so immune from external assault, why did so many of its people have to fight and die? Why did a complex country of many and potentially conflicting allegiances force itself into the brutally divisive atmosphere of war, not once but often? Most other nations of the Western Hemisphere avoided more than a brief and nominal engagement in the world wars. Why did Canadians, liberated from threats after so many violent and destructive centuries of alliance warfare, feel obliged to engage themselves? Spared from consuming security, why did Canadians feel bound to be providers?

The answer was linked to Canada's great vulnerability. To the south, Canada was as open to attack as Poland. Abenaki, Iroquois, Saulteaux, Sioux, English colonists, British regulars, and soldiers of the United States had flowed over that border to kill, pillage and conquer. The endless land frontier between Canada and the United States ranked with India as the great defence problem of Queen Victoria's empire. Well into the 1860s, Britain's treasury poured out millions in fortifications and strategic canals to solve it. In 1865, the Colonial Secretary, Edward Cardwell, assured Canada that if it was "ready to devote all her resources, both in men and money to the maintenance of her connection with the Mother Country, the Imperial Government fully acknowledged the reciprocal obligation of defending every portion of the Empire with all the resources at its command."⁷ This and a guarantee for a \$2 million fortification loan made helpful arguments in the Confederation debates. The Civil War made it all obvious: there could be no successful rematch of the War of 1812. On 11 November 1871, after a brief delay to fend off Fenians and ensure an orderly transfer of the Red River colony to Canada, the last British troops left Quebec. Britain might respect Cardwell's 1865 commitment but there would be no hostages to guarantee it.

We have never sufficiently appreciated the wisdom of that commitment. The British liberated themselves from a hopeless military commitment. Free to invade Canada whenever they wished, Americans chose not to and Canadians chose not to provoke them. Another British gift was an agreed boundary with the United States. In 1871, the British took Sir John A. Macdonald to Washington and "wiped the slate" of outstanding Anglo-American issues, at some expense to Canada. The lesson was obvious: keeping peace with the Americans might be annoying but the alternatives were worse. Britain's fortification loan guarantee helped build the Intercolonial Railway. When a disorderly prairie frontier threatened to bring US cavalry north, Canada created a police force and sent it west, literally to keep the peace.⁸

For ninety years Canadians were spared a serious investment in their home defence. A British general named Ivor Herbert established two framework principles for Canada's defence forces which we now recognize but nobody attributed to him. First, Herbert had warned us to conduct our military affairs in both languages. It took two conscription crises and almost a century to establish the point.⁹ Herbert laboured to create a tiny, efficient permanent force that in 1899, 1950, 1990 and 1999, provided the personnel for our limited wars, and peacekeeping; while the reserves recruited the larger forces mobilized for the world wars. Happily, the obvious inefficiency of these forces spared Canada serious participation in the dangerous, even disastrous engagements of the first part of any war. Hong Kong and the second battle of Ypres are the revealing exceptions.

Throughout the twentieth century, some Canadians – most eloquently but not exclusively Henri Bourassa, the pan-Canadian nationalist and founder of *Le Devoir* – insisted that Canada had no obligation to send soldiers, sailors or even bomber pilots to fight in European or Asian wars. National self-interest, better recognized in Quebec than elsewhere, might have kept Canada from all but symbolic and superficial participation in either world war. From Uitlanders to Kosovars and East Timorese, people whose misfortunes Canadians left home to avenge might have been more cheaply comforted by humanitarian aid and a judicious selection of immigrants, as was done for Hungarians after 1956.

Was Canada's contribution essential? Apart from Canadians, chroniclers of the century's wars and peacekeeping seldom mention Canada's contribution. Someone else could have captured Vimy Ridge in 1917 or defended the muddy slopes of Hill 677 in 1951 or risked their lives to save Serbs in the Medak Pocket in 1993.¹⁰ Without Canadians, Hong Kong would just as certainly have fallen in 1941, although the disastrous Dieppe Raid eight months later might have been scrubbed. Britain and the United States would have pursued their bomber offensive against German cities without the RCAF's 6 Group and its 8,200 aircrew deaths.¹¹ Canadian escorts were so marginal at the height of the Battle of the Atlantic that they were withdrawn for badly needed training.¹² Happily, Canada's marginal role in the wars was matched by the impact of those wars on Canada's welfare.

Of course, Canadians went to war for reasons that seemed indisputable to most people at the time. Feeble and disorganized at the outset, Canada's ultimate contributions were substantial. By 1918, a population of about eight million had enlisted the 630,000 men needed to keep 100,000 fighting men on the Western Front for as long as it took to win. Despite a widespread conviction that Canada must never do any such thing again, most Canadians were ready once more in 1939. By the summer of 1945, Canada had supplied the Allies with the world's third largest navy, the fourth largest air force and a field army more powerful than in the previous war.¹³ In Korea, Canada supplied more troops, per capita, than any other UN participant except the United States. Even in the Kosovo campaign, Canadian fighter-bombers flew almost a tenth of the missions against Serbia.¹⁴

Why?

1. There were worms in the apple of Canada's security. However remote the risk, Americans had attacked before. Endowed with a general staff by Elihu Root, the US War Department developed "color plans" for possible wars. Canada was part of "Red" – war with Britain. Canada had plans too, at least since 1898, though the last of them was burned in 1928. "Red" survived.¹⁵ Of course few knew about such plans; even fewer took them very seriously. Still, a country that often defined itself as *not* American was always attentive to threats. Canadians felt a need for insurance – we still buy more than most people – and we found it in alliances.

2. More important in shaping Canada's military responses than fading fears of an American invasion were Canada's multiple loyalties. No revolution, civil war, or cataclysm had created Canadians. Since 1763, Canada's primary allegiance had been officially directed to Great Britain. After the 1770s and particularly after 1815, Britain was the emotional homeland or birthplace of a rising number of Canadians. *La Presse*, more straightforward, acknowledged that some Canadians were different: "We French Canadians belong to one country, Canada. Canada is for us the whole world; but the English Canadians have two countries, one here and one across the sea."¹⁶ In 1911, British Canadians formed 56% of the population. In 1941, British and French Canadians together still formed an overwhelming 80% of the population. Only 10% were defined as "Other Europeans." Canada was, effectively, a two-nation country. Loyalty to Canada alone remained controversial among British Canadians well past the mid-twentieth century.¹⁷

George Washington had warned his countrymen against "entangling alliances." Napoleon concluded that he would rather fight allies than have them. Canada's military

commanders soon learned to revel in alliances. Unable to make a peacetime case for the defence of Canada and dependent, even in wartime, for alliance roles, admirals, generals and air marshals welcomed Britain and then the United States as a reinforcing pressure. NATO was as providential for them as it was for the Department of External Affairs, and each service worked out distinct and unrelated roles. NATO in the 1950s gave each service a “golden age.” Alliance commitments opened federal coffers and, for once, gave Canada’s peacetime armed forces whatever they needed. Service at allied headquarters gave officers professional experience and promotions unimaginable for their pre-war counterparts. Even peacekeeping, the one universally popular role of Canada’s armed forces after 1945, served alliance needs. From observing the India-Pakistan truce in 1948 to replacing the Americans in Haiti in 1995, Canadian forces served alliance goals. Giving Canadians a sense of their own importance was a collateral benefit.¹⁸

A feature of continuous peacetime military alliances was their value for military leaders and their allies in making a domestic case for added resources. Colonel Chauvin ceased to be even a remote suitable military stereotype. If the price was submission to British and American military authority, Canadian admirals, and generals grumbled and paid. Belonging to NATO and NORAD gave Canada’s navy, army and air force a continuing claim on the costly resources necessary to operate in the world’s top military league. In 1963, the RCAF could count on some indiscreet words from General Lauris Norstad, the retiring NATO commander, to undermine Diefenbaker’s credibility. When the Trudeau government balked at new tanks, the German chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, hinted that they might be the admission charge for Canada’s inclusion in the Group of Seven. NATO insistence that only forces-in-being would matter in a nuclear hot war forced Canada to abandon its traditional leisurely mobilization of ill-trained militia. European countries filled their ranks with conscripts but any form of military compulsion was anathema in Ottawa. Instead, Canada recruited 120,000 costly regulars. With such an investment, the once-proud Reserves became almost irrelevant except in a nuclear or natural disaster.

Between 1949 and 1952, when Cold War rearmament hit its peak, annual Canadian defence spending quintupled to \$1,972 million, slid down to \$1,536 million by 1959, and then maintained a steady state as inflation took over.¹⁹ Faced with recession, the Diefenbaker government tried to make cuts and the Pearson government in the 1960s froze the defence budget in an effort to make the three services sort out real priorities. Their answer, with the aid of allies, was to scold Ottawa for spending less of its GNP than most of its NATO partners. (See Table 2) Was this relevant? In defence spending, Canada usually ranked sixth among NATO members.²⁰ The money did not have to be carefully spent. Remember the Avro Arrow? A splendid airframe without avionics, a weapon system, or a proven engine was quite literally an arrow with neither a bow nor an archer.²¹ Canadian-made strategy was another matter.²² World War III would be fought with nuclear, biological and chemical weapons that would make Europe and perhaps much of the world a wasteland. Was this what Canada wanted? Rival service chiefs defended distinct alliance roles and his service’s hardware priorities. A chairman of the chiefs of staff committee was merely *primus inter pares*. Paul Hellyer, uniquely bull-headed, integrated the command structure, created a unified, single-uniform Canadian Forces and won a lasting reputation for bull-headedness,²³ but the new “environments” kept their old alliance roles and Hellyer’s successors got no more help than his predecessors.²⁴

In 1968, a new Prime Minister inherited Canada's defence problems. Pierre Elliott Trudeau inherited many of Henri Bourassa's views about Canada, bilingualism and defence. He had travelled the world but he felt no need for Canada to defend it. The Cold War, he suspected, had been unnecessary and the arms race was dangerous. Trudeau made defending Canada Priority One, with the 1970 October crisis as Example One.²⁵ One of his defence ministers, Donald S. Macdonald, solved the problem Hellyer had missed by inviting civilians, with no vested interest in submarines or tanks, to play key policy-making roles in defence. By century's end, distinct uniforms and separate Maritime, Land and Air Force commands had been restored, but the civilians were entrenched.²⁶ Some of Canada's allies had done the same.

Elected in 1984, Brian Mulroney proclaimed that his priority was good relations with Ronald Reagan's America. Torn between tax cuts and White House pressure to improve Canada's defences, the Mulroney government adopted a new labour market discovery: part-time workers could cost less. Adopting an American-born "total force" concept, the Canadian reserves would supply men and women to "augment" regulars. Washington killed another Canadian initiative, killing the nuclear-powered submarine idea, though Canadian critics did the job for them. Americans would tell Canadians whatever they thought Ottawa needed to know about activities under the Polar icecap.²⁷

In 1989, the Cold War whimpered to a close. For a time, little changed. Only in 1993 did we disband our forces in Europe. In 1990, we added six more big patrol frigates. Jean Chrétien's Liberals cancelled the submarine-hunting helicopters that made the new ships effective. And did we need either? The 1990s evolved into one of the most murderous decades of a brutal century. We were witnesses, even participants, in the Gulf War, Croatia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia, Cambodia, Haiti, Kosovo, East Timor, and the list is incomplete. The roles, as ever, have been those of a dependent but sovereign ally, as in 1918, taking orders, protesting our autonomy, masking dependence in idealism, living the little white lies of self-importance, concealing the costs from ourselves.²⁸ In 1999, upgraded Canadian CF-18s flew NATO missions against Serbia, and the army provided its only state-of-the-art equipment, reconnaissance helicopters and vehicles for a British armoured brigade.

What armed forces did Canada need at the century's end? The world had exploded in conflicts but not in Canada's neighbourhood. Pressed to explain the current threat, NORAD – now the North American Aerospace Command – warned of computer hackers, and the possibility of missile development by North Korea and other "rogue" regimes.²⁹ In Congress, one faction urged a revived anti-ballistic missile defence system against such a threat; others demanded a total commitment to a "Homeland Defence" in which Canada was featured as too easy a route for terrorists, heroin smugglers and mere illegal immigrants. Would twenty-first century Canada have to conform to a paranoid view of the world, or find itself on the glacis outside a new Fortress America?³⁰ "Soft power," urged as a Canadian alternative by Canada's last foreign affairs minister of the century, Lloyd Axworthy, seemed an ironic description of bombing Serbia and Kosovo.³¹

The century has had its consistency. From 1899 to 1999, Canada's military and naval contingents served at the behest of others: Ottawa liked to be kept informed but it did not overtly interfere. In return, Canadians emerge from the twentieth century with generally benign memories. We remember wordy conflicts over conscription, internment, and the very few defeats we acknowledge – Dieppe, Hong Kong, and Second Ypres. We

had no counterpart to Pearl Harbour, Oslo Fiord, Rotterdam, or Stalingrad. Can we match Gallipoli or Malaya with the Australians? Our defence policies may have been ambivalent, colonial-minded, pusillanimous, and shortsighted, but they had succeeded. If it had not quite been Canada's century, the twentieth had been a much safer century than several of its predecessors had.

As for the future, only God knew, and she wasn't telling.

NOTES

- ¹ The 1951 census found 1,227,945 veterans of the world wars, ranging from 4.4% of Quebecers to 14% of British Columbians. *Census of Canada*, 1951, Table 64; *Historical Statistics of Canada* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1983, 2nd ed.), pp. A-2, 7, 12. On other casualties, see Desmond Morton, *A Military History of Canada* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), 3rd ed., pp. 117, 163, 235; Desmond Morton and J.L. Granatstein, *Victory 1945: Canadians from War to Peace* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1995), p. 19.
- ² Historical Statistics, p. H-50.
- ³ Lorne Morgan, "The Permanent War or Homo the Sap" in Hugh R. Innis (ed.), *Selected Readings in Economics* (Toronto: Pitman & Sons, 1960), pp. 7-37.
- ⁴ Elizabeth Armstrong, *The Crisis of Quebec, 1914-1918* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974); J.L. Granatstein and J.M. Hitsman, *Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford, 1977); Jean-Yves Gravel, *Le Québec et la guerre* (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1974); Paul-André Comeau, "Conscription, 1942," *Cap-aux-Diamants*, Vol. 29 (printemps 1992), pp. 10-13.
- ⁵ On internment in the First World War, see Desmond Morton, "Sir William Otter and Internment Operations in Canada during the First World War," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. LV, No. 1 (March 1974), pp. 32-58, and *Silent Battle: Canadian Prisoners of War in Germany, 1914-1919* (Toronto: Lester Publishing, 1992). On the Ukrainians: Frances Swyripa and John Thompson, (eds.) *Loyalties in Conflict: Ukrainians in Canada During the Great War* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1983); and on Japanese-Canadians: Patricia Roy, J.L. Granatstein, Masako Iino and Hiroku Takamura, *Mutual Hostages: Canadians and Japanese During the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Peter Ward, "British Columbia and the Japanese Evacuation," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. LVII, No. 3 (September 1976).
- ⁶ Though Arctic over-flight was discussed in *Popular Mechanics* and kindred magazines in the 1930s, the region is not mentioned in the relevant volume of the official history of the RCAF, W.A.B. Douglas, *The Creation of a National Air Force: The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force*, Vol. 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986). See also, however, the same author's "The Air Defence Dilemma in Canada, 1939-1943," *Canadian Defence Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Autumn 1984), pp. 33-38.
- ⁷ Public Record Office (PRO) C.O. 42/693, 380-1: Papers Relating to the Conferences which have taken place between Her Majesty's Government and a deputation from the Executive Council of Canada Cardwell to Monck, 17 June 1865. On British defence of Canada, see Kenneth Bourne, *Britain and the Balance of Power in North America, 1815-1908* (London: Longmans, 1967); J.M. Hitsman, *Safeguarding Canada, 1763-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968); C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the British Army, 1846-1871: A Study in the Practice of Responsible Government* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963, rev. ed.).
- ⁸ Desmond Morton, "Cavalry or Police: Keeping the Peace on Two Adjacent Frontiers, 1870-1900," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Spring 1977), pp. 27-37.

- ⁹ See Morton, *Ministers*, pp. 94-111.
- ¹⁰ On Vimy, see Pierre Berton, *Vimy* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1986); Herbert F. Wood, *Vimy* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1967); on Kap'young, Wood, *Strange Battleground: Official History of the Canadian Army in Korea* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1964); J.R. Stone and Jacques Castonguay, *Korea, 1951: Two Battlefields* (Ottawa: Balmuir Book Publishing: 1988). On the Medak battle, Scott Taylor and Brian Nolan, *Tested Mettle: Canadian Peacekeepers at War* (Ottawa: Esprit de Corps, 1998), pp. 123-143 ff.
- ¹¹ Brereton Greenhous et al., *The Crucible of War, 1939-1945: The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force, Vol. 3 Air Policy and Operations Overseas* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), especially pp. 523-527. See also David Ian Hall, "Black, White and Grey: Wartime Arguments for and against the Strategic Bomber Offensive," *Canadian Military History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Winter 1998).
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- ³⁰ See, for example, Stephen S. Rosenfeld, "Hard Choices in Homeland Defense," *Washington Post* (3 May 1999), p. A-33.
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Part II
THE COLONIAL ERA

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Partie II
L'ÉPOQUE COLONIALE

Strategy and Tactics Before 1760

Stratégie et tactique de la guerre coloniale

FRENCH STRATEGIC IDEAS IN THE DEFENCE OF THE COD FISHERY 1663-1713

F.J. Thorpe

In this paper, the chronology of the defence of the French cod fishery in late 17th Century Newfoundland, and the personalities pertaining to it, are mentioned only incidentally because, by and large, various historians have already discussed them.¹ First we must ask: what had to be defended?

Merchants of ports from the Bay of Biscay to the Channel employed hundreds of ships and thousands of men every summer, in what one official called “the most profitable trade in the world.” Since the navy was manned by personnel trained in the merchant marine, and since many more cod-fishery sailors were trained and survived their voyages than those sent to tropical destinations, the industry acquired the famous sobriquet “nurse for seamen.”² They worked chiefly in two areas: the Petit Nord, on the east coast of the northern peninsula, and the south coast from Cape Race to Cape Ray, including St. Pierre and Miquelon. Others ventured up the west coast to St. George’s. The English, who dominated the east coast from Bonavista to Cape Race, seemed uninterested in the Petit Nord but showed signs of coveting the south coast where, in 1662, a sedentary fishery became a royal colony, a province of New France. Its chief port, which was on Placentia Bay and was known to the French as Plaisance, had a very long gravel beach and was ideal for the dry fishery; for elsewhere, to lay the cod flat, structures such as flakes had to be built. The French were convinced that nothing the English possessed was comparable.³ Unsurprisingly, Plaisance was chosen as the capital of the colony and its harbour, with a narrow entrance that could be fortified, was to be a safe haven for the ships of the annual fishing fleet.

Escorts

Not until 1669 were naval vessels available as escorts for *terreneuviens*.⁴ Until then, only a privately owned armed ship had been hired as an escort and that, only after letters patent had been obtained in 1647 following a 37-year campaign in the courts. The *armateurs*⁵ of St. Malo engaged the ship to defend Bretons in the Petit Nord, apparently from Labrador Inuit.⁶ In the 1660s, Jean-Baptiste Colbert in his capacity as minister of marine was only beginning to build what he intended to be the predominant navy of Europe. Accordingly, during the Anglo-French war of 1666-1667, he refused escorts for

terreneuvers bound for Marseille, on the grounds the enlistment of merchant seamen for the navy had priority;⁷ but in 1669, a squadron was sent to protect St. Malo *terreneuvers* from the Barbary pirates of Algiers.⁸ During the Dutch war, the French were successful enough in the Mediterranean to spare a few vessels for the Atlantic. After escorts had been provided in 1674 from Toulon to the Strait of Gibraltar for a convoy of St. Malo *terreneuvers*,⁹ in 1675 and again in 1676, two naval vessels were ordered to ensure the safe passage of *terreneuvers* from France, to protect them in Newfoundland waters from privateers, and to arrange their safe voyage home. In 1676, whereas most captains of fully laden vessels welcomed an escort back to Europe, those of St. Malo at the Petit Nord thought they were strong enough to defend themselves.¹⁰

Privateering, indeed, had become commonplace among the French and Sébastien le Prestre de Vauban had long since matured his ideas on the subject by 1695, when he wrote his famous treatise. According to a recent biography,¹¹ by advocating *la guerre de course* as the *chief* medium of maritime strategy, he was emphasizing defence. If so, attack to him was its best form, for he wanted English and Dutch merchantmen captured or sunk wherever they could be found. As director-general of fortifications, he asserted that the French navy alone could not assume such a task without jeopardizing coastal defence. (Needless to say, that comprised the ports and arsenals he had fortified.) But when he said French overseas trade was trifling and of no interest to enemy privateers, he underrated its value and their hostile acquisitiveness; and whether he realized it or not, this was particularly true of the fishery. He was nevertheless right on one score: in wartime, *armateurs* might give themselves over completely to *la course*, if they expected it to be more profitable than trade.¹² Their co-operation was indispensable. When Vauban cautioned Jérôme de Pontchartrain, the minister of marine, in 1699 that the navy had been stretching itself thin by attempting to rival the maritime powers in all parts of the globe, the minister replied that the navy had more than enough officers and seamen to sail anywhere.¹³ Yet in that same year, when he wanted to enrol in the navy 1400 merchant seamen from the region of St-Malo, he was told there were too few to provide for both fishing and naval service; anyway, if war broke out, the *armateurs* wanted to drop fishing in favour of privateering.¹⁴ At St-Jean de Luz, marine officials excused captains of *terreneuvers* and the sons of bourgeois from naval service.¹⁵

Plaisance

The military evolution of the colony was inextricably bound up with its economy, society, and governance, for unless the settlements survived it was futile to talk of forts and garrisons. Yet that was what Colbert and his son, the Marquis de Seignelay, and their officials did – in a lukewarm, sermonizing sort of way. They wanted to populate the colony by encouraging marriages and have it become economically diversified and self-sufficient; but when they eventually discovered that fishing was the colonists' only means of livelihood, that they had to compete with metropolitans for drying room and indentured labour and pay prohibitive prices for European goods, the ministers wrung their hands but did little or nothing to impose fairness. The early forts were little more than batteries and, in an emergency, the defenders consisted of a levée of the male population supporting a corporal's guard facetiously called a garrison. By 1687 the colony's population comprised 640 men, women, and children, 256 of whom lived at Plaisance.¹⁶ After the port was easily taken in 1690 by a band of freebooters who crossed the Avalon Peninsula from Ferryland, and after Phips's abortive attempt on Quebec, provisional measures enabled Plaisance to stave off one naval attack; but long-term plans

had to be worked out.¹⁷ For, in addition to its importance to the fishery, Plaisance was on the route between France and Quebec; also, ships returning to France from the West Indies could benefit from such a haven of retreat.¹⁸

As only about 23% of the total military budget was available to the navy and colonies in 1692,¹⁹ the Court contracted out the development and maintenance of the colony's defence, including salaries and wages and the supply of food and other necessities. In return, the navy lent the contractors armed naval vessels for fishing, trade, and privateering. To paraphrase Professor Pritchard, no naval vessel *fitted out by the state* sailed to Plaisance as her primary destination between 1689 and 1697.²⁰ The decision in 1695 to establish a part-time military engineer, and to build all fortifications in masonry, conformed to the theories of Vauban, although he barely mentioned the cod fishery in his writings on colonies, and seemed to ignore the forts of Plaisance.²¹ In any event, as was the case with the defences of the ports of France, enemy assaults were to be deterred as much by the wise use of the harbour's natural site as by the ramparts that from 1697 to 1710 were built, damaged by winter storms and rebuilt, and never completely finished.²² An inspector sent in 1698 from Rochefort²³ recommended the overhaul of administration, supply by the Crown of the colony's basic needs, replacement of unsuitable members of the garrison, promotion of underpaid valuable specialists, improvement in the construction of fortifications and the installation of a hospital.²⁴ As the shortage of funds led the ministry to order the *armateurs* to help with the logistics of building those works, the merchants' response prompted subtle political debate,²⁵ as did their reaction to naval inscription whenever they thought it deprived them of too many sailors.²⁶

Plaisance became a base for launching offensives. One proposal was to have naval vessels participate in attacks on English settlements, including St. John's, before escorting *terreneuviers* back to France.²⁷ In 1694, this notion evolved into a mixed squadron of naval vessels and privateers financed largely by merchants of the Basque ports; a squadron which, following a mishap at Ferryland and a chain across the entrance to St. John's harbour, accomplished no more than its escort duty.²⁸ Combined operations, including specialists in guerrilla tactics, were thought to be the answer, although assembling a squadron of three frigates and accompanying vessels, and a land party of 50 French soldiers, 100 *Canadiens* and 150 Indians from Acadia, entailed coordinating the movements of parties from France, Plaisance, Acadia, and Quebec.²⁹ That proposal was for a summer campaign, whereas Louis-Hyacinthe Plomier de la Boulaye of Bayonne echoed in January 1695 Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville's two-year old idea³⁰ to deploy *Canadiens* in the winter, for "like the *sauvages*, they know how to make war in the snow."

La Boulaye's wintertime concept, however, was that of a mopping-up operation, not his main campaign. Designed to round up settlers who fled to the interior, it was to be the aftermath of a naval attack on the English ports. His proposal comprised two options. The one he preferred was to destroy ports and take ships at the beginning of the fishing season, long before enemy naval vessels arrived to escort the fishers back to Europe. Since there would be no profit in that for privateers, his second option was to have a strong naval force "forestall" and, if necessary, outgun the escorts while the privateers captured the laden fishing vessels. That, he said, could be very profitable.³¹ Be that as it may, the wisdom of winter overland warfare and the shortcomings of purely naval assaults on ports with good natural defences were borne out by Iberville's well-published successful offensive of 1696-1697.³² Iberville's exploits inspired the offensives of Daniel

Auger de Subercase in 1705 and Joseph St-Ovide de Brouillan in 1708. There had been skirmishes in 1702, a raid in 1703 against Fermeuse and Ferryland, rumours of an English plan to attack Plaisance; and the defences of St. John's were reported to be quite weak.³³ In the campaign of 1705 the winter overland assaults by *Canadiens* and Indians carried the day although the forts of St. John's were not taken, and the troops of the Plaisance garrison were predictably less efficient, having neither snowshoes nor skill in their use.³⁴ The Court, impressed by the effectiveness of Cape Breton Micmacs employed by Subercase, would have preferred to remain ignorant of their methods. Was the objective not to level and pillage English settlements and remove their inhabitants? Philippe Pastour de Costebelle, the successor of Subercase, became awkward, wanting to send the warriors back to Cape Breton because of inhumane conduct. The politically expedient minister registered limp acquiescence.³⁵

Although defence was the chief preoccupation³⁶ because of the success of British privateers and the decline of the French fishery, an assault on St. John's was decided in 1708 as the best form of defence.³⁷ After it was taken (which this time it was), holding it would have precluded the return of the British, so it was thought; but retention was unfeasible without endangering the defence of Plaisance. St. John's was levelled and abandoned.³⁸ Over the next few years a British attack was feared but did not occur, not even in 1711, before or after Sir Hovenden Walker's abortive attempt on Quebec.³⁹

Conclusion

France lost Plaisance in 1713, not because of her Newfoundland strategies but as a result of negotiations leading to the Peace of Utrecht. For fifty years, the Court's priority had been territorial expansion and frontier defence in Europe and (to cite a period for which we have figures) from 1690 to 1710 that consumed an average of about 83.5% of the total military expenditure.⁴⁰ And yet, in that very field – the war on land in Europe – battles such as Ramillies and Oudenarde were bargaining chips held by France's adversaries. Renain, a chip held by France, when combined with other factors, may have helped her at the negotiating table.

So what must we conclude about the strategies? If there is any truth at all in the myth that the English tended to muddle through whereas the French were logical planners, the ideas we have discussed were exceptional. The defence of the cod fishery was the constant objective; but to achieve it, trial and error, and improvisation, was the order of the day.

In contrast to the grand plans of Louis XIV to round out his European frontiers to the east and north, which evolved, step by step, in the 1660s, 1670s and 1680s, as his armies marched and his engineers built and besieged fortresses, there is little evidence the strategies that concern us here were ever more than responses to perceived risks. In wartime, there was potential danger to the fishing fleets from the time they left their home ports early in the spring until they arrived back late in the autumn or in the winter. Their routes brought them across the Atlantic to fish in Newfoundland waters, to wait for the cod to be prepared, and to load their cargoes for the eastbound journey. Then, either they returned directly home or, if they had markets in the Mediterranean, they sailed through the Strait of Gibraltar to unload their cargo at Marseille or Civit  Vecchia, for example, and through the Strait again to go north to their home port. As long as the enemy's goal was cargo as well as ships, the greater threat loomed any time after the fish had been loaded. What was the response? To provide escort vessels whenever and

wherever it was feasible to do so. It was not always feasible, but at least by 1690 large privately owned convoys were usually in a position to defend themselves.

We have mentioned that privateering was part of the contracting-out policy of the Court during the war of 1689-1697. One of the best-known French privateering enterprises was that of Jean Bart of Dunkirk, which began during the Dutch War as a response to Dutch privateering. It was confined to European waters but impressed Vauban so much he thought using privateers anywhere should be adopted as national policy. He did not appreciate the growth rate of enemy privateering because he minimized enemy interest in French ships and cargoes. Not only did French *corsaires* take British ships, but also, during the War of the Spanish Succession, attacks on *terreneuvers* by British privateers restricted the growth of the French cod fishery. That tended to increase the number of *armateurs* who took up privateering as a more profitable investment. The long-term effect, in conjunction with naval reduction, was to legitimize *la course* during wars of the 18th Century.

The best kind of fortified safe haven at Plaisance would have been, from the outset, a well-manned naval and military base. The ministry of marine lacked the funds for that, but the alternative – making it dependent upon the establishment of a viable civilian colony – proved hopeless. It languished for thirty years. From 1690 to 1710, defence improvements and overland attacks on English settlements discouraged the idea of besieging Plaisance. The assault of 1690 had come by land, which suggested to the French that they, too, could go on the offensive. The navy thought the English settlements were so indefensible that landing parties could, with impunity, ransack and destroy one after another. They were wrong. Much more successful were overland attacks in winter, featuring *Canadiens* and Indian allies moving on snowshoes. The offensives of 1696-1697, 1705, and 1708 were enough to determine the British at Utrecht to get rid of French military bases on Newfoundland once and for all, but the successes of the French helped them salvage their cod fishery, which blossomed in the 18th Century, and provided them with a new base on Cape Breton Island.

NOTES

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- ² For a fuller explanation, see Jean-François Brière, *La pêche française en Amérique du nord au XVIII^e siècle* (Montréal, 1990), pp. 222-223. A number of Brière's interpretative remarks on the 18th Century are valid for the 17th.
- ³ AN, Cols., C^{11C} 3, ff. 229v-237v.
- ⁴ The fishing vessels that went to Newfoundland.
- ⁵ Merchants who owned, fitted out and, if necessary, armed vessels.

- ⁶ BN, mss., n.a.f., Collection Arnoul 21395, f. 39v. La Morandière, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 20-22, 386-389. For a different view, see Vatican Archives, De Propaganda Fide, Series 3, Vol. 418, ff. 234-235.
- ⁷ BN, mss., n.a.f., Collection Arnoul, 21307, ff. 8-9, 21-22.
- ⁸ BN, mss., n.a.f., Collection Arnoul, 21309, ff. 227, 243-245.
- ⁹ BN, mss., n.a.f., Collection Arnoul, 21316, ff. 98, f. 394.
- ¹⁰ AN, Marine B³ 30, ff. 98-100; B⁴ 7, ff. 204-207v. Cf. James Pritchard, "The Franco-Dutch War in the West Indies, 1672-1678," in W.M. McBride and E.P. Reed, eds., *New Interpretations in Naval History. Selected Papers from the Thirteenth Naval History Symposium held at Annapolis, Maryland, 2-4 October 1997* (Naval Institute Press, Annapolis), p. 9.
- ¹¹ Anne Blanchard, *Vauban* (Paris, 1996), pp. 338-339.
- ¹² Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban, "Mémoire concernant la caprerie" (30 Nov. 1695) in Rochas d'Aiglun (ed.) *Vauban, sa famille et ses Écrits. Ses Oisivetés et sa correspondance*. (2 Vols. Paris, 1910), II, pp. 454-461.
- ¹³ Louise Dechêne (ed.) *La Correspondance de Vauban relative au Canada* (Québec, 1968), p. 34.
- ¹⁴ AN Marine B³ 108, ff. 142-145; 112, ff. 186-189v, 195-200v, 202-205v.
- ¹⁵ Archives municipales de St-Jean de Luz, EE 3, liasse 7 (23 Dec. 1704).
- ¹⁶ Fernand-D. Thibodeau, Recensements de Terre-Neuve et Plaisance. *Mémoires de la Société généalogique canadienne-française*: Vol. 13, No. 10 (October 1962), pp. 204-208.
- ¹⁷ For an analysis of the colony to 1690, see Humphreys, *op. cit.*, *passim*. AN, Cols. B 2, ff. 61-63; B 3, f. 44; B 16, ff. 19-24v; AN Cols. C^{11C} 1, ff. 24-26v, 137-138v, 203-204v. AN, Cols., F³ 54, ff. 294-295v. BN, mss.; Mélanges de Colbert 144, ff. 523-524; 163, ff. 249-252v. BN, mss., n.a.f. 22253, f. 11^{bis}.
- ¹⁸ AN, Cols., C^{11C} 3, ff. 229v-237v.
- ¹⁹ Henri Legohérel, *Les trésoriers généraux de la marine (1517-1788)*, (Paris, 1965), p. 182.
- ²⁰ AN Cols., B 16, ff. 82v-87v; Marine B³ 70, ff. 216-219v. Pritchard, "Le profit et la gloire," *op. cit.*
- ²¹ Rochas d'Aiglun (ed.) *op. cit.*, I, pp. 413-420. Louise Dechêne, ed., *La Correspondance de Vauban relative au Canada* (Québec, 1968), pp. 23-42.
- ²² Thorpe, "Fish, Forts and Finance," *op. cit.*; AN, CAOM, DFC, AS, ctn 2, No. 106 (14 October 1695); AN, C^{11A} 120, ff. 28-32 (1698); AN, C^{11C} 3, ff. 229v-237v (1702).
- ²³ Brisacier: his first name is apparently unknown.
- ²⁴ AN, Cols., C^{11E} 1 (NAC transcript, pp.67-68); C^{11C} 2, ff. 176-180v. France, MAE, Corr. pol. Angleterre, Vol. 208, ff. 42v-44v.
- ²⁵ Thorpe, "Fish, Forts and Finance," *op. cit.*
- ²⁶ E.g., Archives municipales de St-Jean de Luz, EE 3, liasse 7 (1688) and liasse 8 (1690).
- ²⁷ AN Cols., B 16, ff. 19-24, 82v-87v, 121v-124v, 151-151v; C^{11C} 1, ff. 203-204v. Marine B³ 70, ff. 216-219v, 328-329.
- ²⁸ Pritchard, "Le profit et la gloire," pp. 14-15.
- ²⁹ AN Cols., C^{11C} 2, ff. 28-37.
- ³⁰ G. Frégault, *Pierre le Moyne d'Iberville* (reprinted Montréal, 1968), p. 147.
- ³¹ AN, CAOM, DFC, AS, Ctn.2, no. 104. For an example of the interception of English merchantmen by a French naval vessel en route to Plaisance, see AN, Marine, B³ 97, ff. 359v-360v.
- ³² A. Gosselin, *Les Normands au Canada: journal d'une expédition de d'Iberville* (Évreux, 1900), pp. 31-69; G. Frégault, *Iberville, op. cit.*, pp. 147-163; B.A. Pothier, *DCB* II, p. 395.
- ³³ AN Cols. C^{11C} 3, ff. 229v-237v; 4, ff. 6-9, 17-22.
- ³⁴ R. Leblant, ed., *Histoire de la Nouvelle France: les sources narratives du début du XVIII^e siècle et le Recueil de Gédéon de Catalogne* (Dax [1948]), pp. 252-258. *RAPQ* 1922-1923, pp. 293-297. AN Cols. B 27, ff. 117v-125; F³ 54, ff. 409-414v.
- ³⁵ AN Cols. C^{11C} 4, ff. 195-226v; 5, ff. 41v-42, 96, 130-130v. B 27, 314v-322v; 29, ff. 151v, 167-167v, 451.

- ³⁶ Thorpe, "Fish, Forts," *loc. cit.*, AN Cols. B 29, ff. 147v-158, 166-167v. C^{11C} 5, ff. 90-97, 215v-217, 118-125, 342-344.
- ³⁷ AN Cols. B 29, ff. 448v-461; C^{11C} 6, ff. 85-89v.
- ³⁸ AN Cols. B 30, ff. 304-319.
- ³⁹ AN Cols. C^{11C} 7, ff. 69-72v, 89-96v. CAOM, G³ 8/176, an 1711, pièce 86.
- ⁴⁰ Legohérel, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-183.

CANADA AND THE DEFENCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND DURING THE WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION 1702-1713

James Pritchard

French policy overseas during the War of the Spanish Succession aimed to protect and exploit Spanish America rather than defend French colonies or ruin those of France's enemies. Both Acadia and Placentia possessed only limited strategic value to France, but the fall of either seriously weakened the security of Canada and the North Atlantic cod fishery. The effect of geography and policy left the French colonies in North America on their own, and forced the governor of New France to pay greater attention than before to the defence of the two smaller French colonies on Canada's eastern seaboard.

Conditions in Canada had changed considerably in the decade before the war. With the decline of the navy already apparent, Governor Vaudreuil sought to preserve Iroquois neutrality when he acceded to office in the spring of 1703.¹ By threatening to throw the full force of Canadian strength against the Five Nations should they ally themselves with the English of New York, Vaudreuil effectively preserved the peace in the crucial central Canadian theatre of operations.² Fortunately, the Iroquois pursued a similar policy of remaining neutral in the face of war between white men.³ The ruinous state of the Canadian fur trade aided the preservation of this peace. Canadians increasingly smuggled beaver pelts to English merchants at Albany via domiciled Iroquois at Montreal and naturally sought to preserve conditions that encouraged the flow of furs from western Indians.⁴

Though the decline in Canada's maritime carrying trade with France had started before the war in response to problems in the fur trade, shipping between France and New France dropped by almost half soon after war broke out.⁵ Trade to Canada and other northern colonies virtually ceased. While the largest volumes of colonial bound traffic ever to depart La Rochelle left in 1705 and 1708, few ships at all sailed to Canada.⁶ By 1707 the King's ship, an armed transport which sailed annually to the colony, was the only vessel returning directly to France, thus making it terribly difficult for hard pressed merchants to acquire sufficient trade goods for subsequent years.⁷ Economic conditions in New France, the government's financial difficulties, and new commercial opportunities elsewhere relegated Canada to a stagnant backwater in which few were interested. But these same conditions led colonial merchants at Quebec, perhaps encouraged by low wheat prices, to initiate shipbuilding, privateering and commercial ventures to Acadia, Newfoundland, Martinique, and even Europe, and these remarkable local maritime initiatives aided the integration of both Placentia and Acadia into Canada's defence of New France.⁸

The opening of hostilities placed the security of the eastern seaboard seriously at risk. Acadia remained as defenceless as it had been during the previous war, and like Newfoundland soon found itself abandoned by France. Governor Vaudreuil really had no

option but to renew his predecessors' policies of exploiting Abenaki grievances against the incursions of New England settlers, disrupting native negotiations with Massachusetts's representatives, and promoting border raids by distributing gifts and sending Canadian war parties in support of his appeals to join in attacks on the new, ever expanding settlements. All of the horrors of "the little war" were once again visited on the near helpless settlers.

In August 1703, Lieutenant Alexandre Leneuf de Beaubassin led a small detachment of French, mission Indians and 500 Abenaki into New England laying waste along a fifty-mile line from Wells to Casco, killing and capturing more than 160 persons.⁹ Sporadic attacks continued during the autumn and in March 1704, Jean-Baptiste Hertel de Rouville and 50 Canadians, Iroquois from Caughnawaga, and 200 Abenaki attacked Deerfield, Massachusetts, in response to requests for support from both the governor of Acadia and the Abenaki who had been recently attacked. Fifty-four settlers were killed and 120 taken prisoner. Later the same year Rouville led another group of Abenaki, this time to Newfoundland where they visited the same horrors on English fishermen.¹⁰ Canadians visited Newfoundland's English settlements thrice more in 1704, 1705 and 1709, and during the remainder of the war smaller parties continually attacked New England settlements. In 1708 Rouville and Jean-Baptiste de Saint-Ours Deschailons led 100 Frenchmen and 60 Abenaki in an attack on the harmless village of Haverhill which they laid waste. The next year, Rouville also returned to Deerfield in support of the colony's native allies, and Governor Vaudreuil reported that two-thirds of all the fields north of Boston were untended.¹¹

The lack of naval protection at Newfoundland immediately impacted the fishery. Though some historians have incorrectly claimed that fishing expeditions to Newfoundland were halted, their number was substantially reduced.¹² The number and tonnage of ships departing from Saint-Malo declined to less than 30% of the average during the five years between 1698 and 1702 and remained below that level during the remainder of the war.¹³ More than 150 French fishing ships compared to 88 West India merchantmen were taken as prizes to England during the war to which must be added those taken into English colonial ports and captured by the Dutch. These declines and losses coincide loosely with a French claim in 1709 that 250 fishing vessels sailed annually in peacetime, but only 120 in wartime.¹⁴

Even before the beginning of hostilities Quebec ships carried building materials and foodstuffs to Placentia.¹⁵ Colonial merchants had been developing trade downstream along the north shore of the St. Lawrence as far as Labrador, and it was a simple extension of an already existing pattern to sail to Placentia after the war began, especially when scarcity drove Governor Daniel Auger de Subercase to dispatch a ship to Quebec in 1703 in search of supplies.¹⁶ In May, Joseph Riverin and Louis Aubert Du Forillon formed a partnership to acquire a ketch and send it with provisions to Placentia.¹⁷ Antoine Pascaud also sent a bark to Placentia, and Jacques Cochu sailed to Port Royal with ten thousand livres worth of supplies and munitions.¹⁸ Similar ventures continued, attracting colonial merchants such as Antoine de La Garde, Louis Landrin, and Nicolas Martin. At Placentia, colonial vessels found trans-ocean cargoes off-loaded by ship captains from France unsure of finding return cargoes in Canada and seeking to avoid the long treacherous voyage up the St. Lawrence River.

Shipbuilding also contributed to colonial defence. Louis Prat's *Le Joybert*, a 50-ton brigantine, built in 1704 may have been the first Canadian ship of that size to be built by

private enterprise in the colony.¹⁹ The next spring, Jean Petit, clerk of the Treasurer General of the Marine at Quebec and Pierre Plassan, a former bondsman recently become merchant, purchased a quarter share of a ship of 100 tons, formerly of Martinique, for a commercial venture; Antoine Pascaud also held a quarter interest in the vessel.²⁰ In 1706, Denis Riverin built *La Notre Dame de Victoire* of 80 or 90 tons. That same year, after the naval flute, *La Hollande*, arrived at Quebec leaking very badly the intendant sold it to Joseph Riverin and three associates who repaired the old, 250-ton vessel and sent it to Martinique during the next two years. Few sailors could be recruited among Acadian farmers, and the next year a Canadian crew sailed to Port Royal to man *La Biche*, a newly built vessel there. In 1708, Petit and Plassan owned a quarter share in another Quebec ship, *Le Saint François*, in addition to their interests in four other ships.²¹ Louis Prat built *Le Pontchartrain* of 130 tons in 1709, and two years later sent it on the first of three voyages to Martinique.

Shipbuilding was not accomplished easily in the colony. In 1707, construction of Prat's second ship halted for want of materials and labour, and Intendant Raudot was unable to send supplies to Baie Verte owing to the lack of shipping. He warned Pontchartrain not to expect too much in light of high labour costs and cautioned that government subsidies to freight iron, sailcloth, and cordage from France were necessary. Colonial shipbuilding arose from depressed conditions in the fur trade and the war. What little construction that followed was centered chiefly on ketches and other small craft. Nevertheless, this little known burst of maritime activity increased the colony's ability to contribute to both Acadia and Placentia.

Wartime shipbuilding led naturally to privateering. Hope of booty and dreams of easy money can not have been entirely absent from the minds of usually hard-headed merchants. In June 1704, several from Quebec, including Nicolas Dupont de Neuville, a member of the colony's Superior Council, Louis Prat and Antoine Pascaud, invested in two locally built vessels, *Le Joybert* and *Le Phélypeaux* commanded by Jean Léger de La Grange and Claude Pauperet, respectively, to attack English settlements in Newfoundland. La Grange found at least 26 men willing to sign on as crew with their own weapons for a share of prize money.²² On 29 August the Canadians descended on Bonavista where they burned one small ship, ran another a ground, and captured the *Pembroke Galley*, a substantial merchantman of 250 tons. After being sailed to Quebec, the prize and cargo were sold for 61,700 livres.²³ Later each man received about 40 écus from the sale of the cargo. Such a valuable first prize undoubtedly encouraged other ventures, but, in general, privateering proved unprofitable without a base in commerce or fishing.²⁴

Lieutenant Jacques Testard de Montigny, like Léger de La Grange, was a colonial-born veteran of Iberville's raids on New England and Newfoundland during the previous war. Indeed, his family of Montreal merchants was connected to the Le Moynes. He was experienced in all the tactics of forest warfare and an ideal choice to revisit the "little war" on English fishermen in Newfoundland when Governor Subercase decided the time was ripe for his campaign. In 1704, Subercase made his plans known to Vaudreuil who sent a mixed force of Canadians and Micmac Indians to Placentia in the fall. In January they were part of a French force of 450 under command of the governor that besieged St. John's, and though the French failed to take the fort, the attack was a great success.²⁵ Between March and June, Lieutenant de Montigny led some 72 Canadians and Indians on a destructive raid against the English settlements on the Avalon peninsula, capturing

shallops, a brigantine and boats, and using them to move along the coast from Ferryland through Trinity and Conception Bays to Bonavista. Subercase later complained that the raid yielded a miserable 2,600 livres in booty, but it cost the English an estimated four million livres in damages to the fishery. Moreover, Montigny may have shipped more booty directly to Quebec from the bottom of Trinity Bay.²⁶

Despite his grumbling Governor Subercase reaped the chief benefits from Montigny's success for Louis XIV made him a knight of St. Louis and in the spring of 1706 appointed him Governor of Acadia vacant since the death of the incumbent the previous September. Philippe Pastour de Costebelle, King's Lieutenant since 1695, succeeded Subercase as governor of Placentia, and like his predecessor concerned himself with strengthening the port's fortifications and defences. Lacking any resources to launch another attack on the English, Costebelle reached an unspoken agreement with them simply to exchange prisoners for the next two years.

At the same, he encouraged a vigorous privateering campaign that caused more distress than has been previously acknowledged. Admiralty court records indicate that the chief base of operations was Placentia where more than one hundred prizes were brought in during the war. The court dealt with twenty-three prizes and ransoms between 1702 and 1705, but thereafter the number grew by 81 until the war's end.²⁷ Between 1702 and 1713, the total value of all prizes and ransoms disposed of at Placentia amounted to over 681,000 livres.²⁸ Unfortunately, a fire on 7 June 1710 consumed the papers belonging to the Admiral's receveur at Port Royal and destroyed similar evidence for Acadia.²⁹ The surviving evidence is chiefly anecdotal.

Despite the exploits of several local privateers, Acadia actually suffered from a lack of sailors. In 1707, it was a group of Quebec merchants who financed the cruise of *La Biche*, newly built at Port Royal, and dispatched a crew of 60 Canadians under command of Louis-Denis, Sieur de La Ronde. They arrived along with an Abenaki war party led by their chief, Bernard d'Abbadie de Saint-Castin, just in time to assist in the defence of Port Royal in June. The Abenaki and Canadians also assisted in repelling a second New England attack in late August. After sailing to France in the fall with news of the successful defence, however, *La Biche* proved unfit for the return voyage and Sieur de La Ronde contracted with the navy for a small frigate, *La Vénus*, which he intended to employ cruising off Massachusetts during the next year.³⁰ Also in 1707, the accomplished war leader, Leneuf de Beaubassin, formed a partnership with Joseph Riverin and another Quebec merchant, Guillaume Gaillard. Riverin furnished his new brigantine, *La Notre Dame de Victoire*, in return for one-quarter of the gross sales of any prizes. Gaillard, who victualled and fitted out the vessel for sea, was to receive half the remaining prize money and Captain de Beaubassin, who led the terror raid to Wells and Falmouth four years earlier and was to recruit the crew and command the expedition, was to obtain his share from the remaining half allotted to the officers and crew. Intendant Raudot, who invested in the venture, later claimed that few ships were at sea and little booty was to be had, but another report claimed success off Newfoundland where several prizes were taken.³¹ Captain La Ronde in *La Venus* encountered bad luck in 1708, garnering only one prize after cruising off the Virginia Capes for two and a half months. Afterwards, the admiralty judge at Placentia confiscated it because La Ronde had neglected to obtain the Admiral's commission.³²

New England's response to Indian attacks on the frontier and the depredations of colonial privateers was to attack Acadia. Massachusetts possessed neither men nor any

Indian allies to course through the wilderness to attack far distant Canadian settlements, and, surprisingly in view of the colony's strong maritime presence, seemed equally ineffective in defending its fishery and local trade. In July 1704, a maritime expedition led by Colonel Benjamin Church destroyed the Acadian settlements of Grand Pré, Piquit and Cobequid in the Minas Basin but failed to attack Port Royal though it was poorly fortified. The success in withstanding two New England assaults in 1707, however, could not hide the fact that the northern colonies had been abandoned. Indeed, Port Royal had been rescued in August by a crew of buccaneers from Saint Domingue when one week before the New England attack Pierre Morpain, sailed into Port Royal with several captured ships carrying more than 600 barrels of flour which he delivered to Governor Subercase.³³

In Newfoundland, a similar hand to mouth existence limited the colonists' efforts at privateering. By late 1708, however, Governor de Costebelle had assembled a ragtag collection of soldiers, sailors, fishermen, privateers, and settlers – 170 men – under the command of the new King's Lieutenant, the veteran Joseph Monbeton de Brouillan dit Saint Ovide, to attack St. John's a second time.³⁴ Even the Quebec merchants' frigate *La Vénus* was appropriated for the sea-borne portion of the venture. At the end of December, the colonial force moved overland from Placentia and at dawn on New Year's Day struck the town. All resistance ceased after a few hours, but Saint-Ovide was at a loss about what to do with 800 prisoners. Finally, in March, with the onset of the fishing season, Governor de Costebelle abandoned the English settlement. Guns, shot, and powder were shipped to Placentia, the forts were blown up, and the French withdrew. Their success was a mixed blessing at best, for it brought fears of a counterattack. It was all Pontchartrain could do to rush 200 regular troops and two warships to Placentia in June. But the feared counterattack never arrived, and during the final years of the war Costebelle fell back on his earlier two-fold policy, of reaching an unspoken accord with the English authorities at St. John's while encouraging privateering.

Military defeats in Europe which shattered the prestige of French arms, and the collapse of the French navy left the northern colonies increasingly on their own. In 1708, on the other hand, the thoroughly beaten New Englanders appealed to Great Britain for aid which finally arrived off Port Royal two years later in the form of a fleet of 34 vessels including seven warships and a landing force of 1,500 troops.³⁵ Governor Subercase mustered less than 300, including 150 men of the garrison, to oppose them. A week later, after the British went through the formalities of a siege, setting up batteries and opening trenches, Subercase signed a capitulation and with his garrison marched out of the fort with all the honours of war.³⁶ Pontchartrain toyed with the idea of retaking Acadia in 1711, but it was far too late to give credence to the proposals.³⁷ In July, Louis XIV was already resigned to ceding Acadia, Placentia, and Hudson Bay to Great Britain, so anxious was he to achieve peace.³⁸ By November, Pontchartrain knew the colonies were to be sacrificed in order to make up for military defeat and financial exhaustion at home and to preserve the unity of the state and the territories gained through European conquests earlier in the reign.³⁹

A similar fate to Port Royal almost befell Quebec. A maritime expedition from New England failed to reach the French colony in 1709, and as with Acadia, appeals to Great Britain gave rise to a major invasion force bound for Quebec. The expeditionary force of 15 warships and 31 transports carrying 5,300 troops under command of Admiral Sir Hovenden Walker sailed into Boston harbour in June 1711, and departed for Quebec at

the end of July reinforced by 1,200 colonial soldiers. It was supported by a land army of 2,300 colonial militia under command of the conqueror of Port Royal, Colonel Francis Nicholson. But the campaign was a repeat of Sir William Phips's 1690 expedition. The land army never reached New France and nature intervened to emphasize the defects of inadequate preparations and lack of knowledge. Gales and fog made navigation increasingly difficult as the expeditionary force moved into the St. Lawrence River in late summer. On the night of 23 August the ships found themselves amongst the surf, rocks and Islands of the north shore near Ile aux Oeufs where eight transports, a sloop, and 884 soldiers and sailors were lost.⁴⁰ Admiral Walker sailed to Cape Breton Island to consider an attack on Piacentia. But in view of an intercepted letter from Governor de Costebelle to Pontchartrain that his garrison numbered 2,000, Walker, instead, erected a cross on the shore of his anchorage and after claiming the surrounding territory for Queen Anne sailed for England.

The people of Quebec, who knew they owed precious little to Louis XIV, understood whom to thank for their deliverance. Even "the least devout were closely affected by the enormity of the miracle," recorded Mother Juchereau de Saint-Ignace, superior of the Religious Hospitallers of Quebec's Hotel Dieu. Merchants subscribed 6,000 livres for a public devotion for seven masses dedicated to the Virgin, and thanking the Blessed Mother once again for their preservation, the colonists rededicated their parish church henceforth to be known as Our Lady of Victories.⁴¹ This time, however, Louis XIV did not order a medal struck in celebration.

Between 1702 and 1712, colonists successfully defended the northern colonies and carried the war to their enemies with the resources they had on-hand. They pursued no campaign of imperial aggression. Colonists preserved peace with the Indians in the western interior and with their greatest enemies, the Iroquois. They took the war to the enemy as the best means to defend themselves. Though Port Royal was lost, Acadia was not. At the war's end, Placentia had yet to be attacked. Not once but twice, Canadians laid waste the English settlements of Newfoundland. By 1712 New Englanders dared not venture beyond their fortified strong points. All of this was a credit to colonial resources, leadership, and diplomacy. From a colonial viewpoint nothing accounts for the huge surrenders of French territory in America that arose from the Treaty of Utrecht that France signed with her European enemies on 12 April 1713. In light of clauses of the Treaty of Utrecht it might be thought the loss of French colonies was due to Allied successes.⁴² But though Great Britain gained Hudson Bay, Newfoundland, Acadia, and other French possessions in America, these prizes arose from France's general exhaustion and military defeat in Europe rather than the execution of a successful British strategy in America.⁴³ The British failed to defend successfully either their trade in the West Indies or their fishery and settlements in Newfoundland or to capture Guadeloupe or Canada or Hudson Bay. Indeed, for the next fifty years, from 1713 to 1763, France knowingly sacrificed its colonies in America in order to improve and consolidate its position within the competitive state system in Europe. Despite the successful colonial defence of Newfoundland, the War of the Spanish Succession confirmed French leaders in their belief that America was won or lost in Germany.

NOTES

- ¹ On the decline of the French navy before the war see Jan Glete, *Navies and Nations: Warships, Navies and State Building in Europe and America, 1500-1800*, 2 vols. (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1993), Vol. 1, p. 229.
- ² Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier, 1534-1760* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press rev. ed., 1983, 1969), p. 133. Much that follows is indebted to Dale Miquelon, *New France, 1701-1744: "A Supplement to Europe"* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), pp. 33-48; also see Yves F. Zoltvany, *Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, Governor of New France, 1703-1725* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), pp. 33-8, 46.
- ³ Francis Jennings, *Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from its Beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744* (New York: Norton, 1984), pp. 208-13.
- ⁴ Thomas F. Norton, *The Fur Trade in Colonial New York, 1686-1776* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), pp. 128-35; Zoltvany, *Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil*, p. 37.
- ⁵ For more on the decline of Franco-Canadian traffic during the war, see Miquelon, *New France, 1701-1744*, Table I, p. 72.
- ⁶ John S. Bromley, "Le commerce de la France de l'ouest et la guerre maritime, (1702-1713)" in *Corsaires and Navies*, p. 404.
- ⁷ RAPQ, 1939-40, pp. 402, 463 Vaudreuil and Raudot to Pontchartrain, 15 November 1707 and 14 November 1708.
- ⁸ Miquelon, *New France, 1701-1744*, pp. 72-3.
- ⁹ Kenneth M. Morison, *The Embattled Northeast: Elusive Ideal of Alliance in Abenaki-Euramerican Relations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 158; Zoltvany, *Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil*; Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier*, p. 139 gives 160 persons.
- ¹⁰ Raymond Douville, "Hertel de Rouville, Jean-Baptiste," *DCB*, 2:285.
- ¹¹ Zoltvany, *Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil*, pp. 79-80; Douville, "Hertel de Rouville," *DCB*, 2:285; and C.J. Russ, "Saint-Ours Deschaillons, Jean-Baptiste de," *DCB*, 3:579; and Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier*, p. 139.
- ¹² E.g. Patrick Crowhurst, *The Defence of British Trade, 1689-1815*, (Folkstone: Dawson 1977), p. 17.
- ¹³ Delumeau, *Le Mouvement de port de Saint-Malo*, p. 273.
- ¹⁴ Bromley, "Le commerce de La France de l'ouest," p. 403.
- ¹⁵ E.g. Col., C11C 3, f. 56 Durand de La Garenne to Pontchartrain, 18 October 1700.
- ¹⁶ RAPQ, 1838-1839, pp. 20, 24, 57, 96-7, Vaudreuil and Beauharnois to Pontchartrain 15 November 1703, 17 November 1704, and Vaudreuil to Pontchartrain 3 April 1704 and 19 October 1705; and Col., C11A 22, f. 32.
- ¹⁷ C.J. Russ, "Aubert de la Chesnaye, Louis," *DCB*, 3:22.
- ¹⁸ Chamballon 2:15, 16, 23, 63; and Col., F1A, 13, f. 21.
- ¹⁹ Paragraph based on J.S. Pritchard, "Ships, Men and Commerce, a Study of Maritime Activity in New France," Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1971, pp. 275, 282-92. Also Miquelon, *New France, 1701-1744*, p. 73.
- ²⁰ J.F. Boshier, "Partners of the French Navy in Supplying Canada 1701-17 13," in *Business and Religion in the Age of New France, 1600-1760: Twenty-two Studies* (Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press, 1994), pp. 292-4.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 294.
- ²² Pierre G. Roy, "Un corsaire canadien, Jean Leger de La Grange," *BRH*, Vol. 24 (1918), 41-43 reprints the acte de société, dated 4 January 1704.

- 23 A.N., G⁵, 213 [NAC transcript], pp. 72-81 procès verbal, Quebec, 18-27 October 1704.
- 24 David Lee, "Léger de La Grange, Jean," *DCB*, 2:387-8.
- 25 Col., C11C 4, ff. 188-91 Costebelle to Pontchartrain, 14 August 1705; and Col., F³, 54, ff. 409-14 Costebelle to Pontchartrain, 22 October 1705; and Baudry, "Auger de Subercase," *DCB*, 2:36.
- 26 Louise Dechêne, "Testard de Montigny, Jacques," *DCB*, 2:625; *RAPQ*, 1922-1923, pp. 293-8, "Journal de Sr de Montigny."
- 27 Archives Nationales, G⁵, Vols. 234 to 257 [NAC Transcripts] contain most of the judicial records for the Placentia Admiralty court during the War of the Spanish Succession, but see next note.
- 28 Calculated before the Admiral's tenth and adjudication costs were deducted from *Ibid.*, Vol. , 213 [NAC transcripts], pp. 90-112. "Etat du produit de la vente des prises faites sur les ennemis de 1702-1710" and the sum of prizes sales during 1711, 1712 and 1713 taken from *ibid.*, ff. 142-7 1.
- 29 A.N., G⁵ [NAC transcripts] procès verbal, 7 June, 1710; see also René Baudry "Loppinot, Jean-Chrysotome," *DCB*, 2:445.
- 30 *RAPQ*, 1939-1940, p. 385, Pontchartrain to Vaudreuil, 19 October 1707; Noel Belanger, "Amiot de Vincelotte, Charles-Joseph," *DCB*, 2:17-18; and Bernard Pothier and Donald J. Horton, "Denys de La Ronde, Louis," *DCB*, 3:176-9.
- 31 Col., C11A 26, f. 240 Rauclot to Pontchartrain, 13 November 1707; and Dièreville, *Relation of the Voyage to Port Royal in Canada or New France*, translated by J.C. Webster (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1933), p. 215.
- 32 A.N., G⁵ [NAC transcripts] p. 247, f. 169.
- 33 Robert Le Blant, "Un corsaire de Saint-Domingue en Acadie," *Nova Francia*, Vol. 6 (1931), pp. 195-6; Bernard Pothier, "Morpain, Pierre," *DCB*, 3:374-6.
- 34 Georges Cerbelaud de Salagnac, "Pastour de Costebelle, Philippe," *DCB*, 2:511.
- 35 George A. Rawlyk, *Nova Scotia's Massachusetts: a Study of Massachusetts – Nova Scotia Relations, 1630-1784* (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's Press, 1973), pp. 108-19 discusses the lengthy plans and preparations for this attack.
- 36 René Baudry, "Auger de Subercase, Daniel," *DCB*, 2:38-9.
- 37 Col., C11D, 7, ff. 126-7, "Projet d'un armement pour reprendre l'Acadie...," joined to Beauharnois to Pontchartrain, 11 January 1711; and Col., B33, ff. 262-5v, Pontchartrain to Beauharnois, 30 March 1711.
- 38 The terms of the secret peace talks in July and August are found in Matthew Prior's memorandum of his meetings with the French foreign minister, the Marquis de Torcy, in Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on the Mss. of His Grace the Duke of Portland, (London: 1899), Vols. 34-41, reprinted in *The Century of Louis XIV*, edited by Orest and Patricia Ranum, (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), pp. 439-51; and the Marquis de Torcy's own account of the meeting printed in *The English historical Review*, Vol. 29, (1914), pp. 525-32.
- 39 Marine, B³, 194, f. 160, Champigny to Pontchartrain, 3 November 1711, printed in La Morandière, *Histoire de la pêche française de la morue*, 1:505. See also *RAPQ*, 1947-1948, pp. 149-50, Pontchartrain to Vaudreuil and Bégon, 26 June 1712.
- 40 Graham, *Empire of the North Atlantic*, pp. 92-102, and his collection of documents, *The Walker Expedition to Quebec, 1711* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1953) provide details of the expedition.
- 41 Jeanne-Francoise de Juchereau de Saint-Ignace and Marie Andrée Duplessis de Sainte-Hélène, *Les Annales de l' Hotel Dieu de Québec, 1636-1716*, éd., Dom Albert Jamet, (Quebec: a L'Hôtel Dieu, 1939), pp. 365, 369-70. I thank Dr. Kenneth Banks who provided this reference.
- 42 See for example E.H. Jenkins, *A History of the French Navy From its Beginnings to the Present Day* (London: MacDonald and Jane's, 1973), p. 105, for the claim that almost all

French ships were taken in the West Indies and that “every French overseas possession lay at England’s mercy.”

43

For a critical view of British strategy in America see the posthumously published work by Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, *The Navy as an Instrument of Policy, 1588-1727* (Cambridge: University Press, 1953).

THE MILITIA LEGEND: CANADIANS AT WAR 1665-1760

Jay Cassel

The Canadian militia has become a legendary military force. Leading historians – Eccles, Fregault, Stanley – as well as many popularizers present an awe-inspiring picture, often reinforced by carefully selected contemporary reports: everyone was a crack shot, eager to serve, the men knew the countryside well, and produced a prodigious series of victories large and small. Surveys regularly quote certain perceptions of the men. In 1708 the intendant reported that Canadians were “more skilled at shooting muskets than any others in the world” and in 1749 the Swedish botanist Pehr Kalm thought that “all the people born in Canada are the best marksmen in existence and rarely miss, there are not one or two of them who are unable to shoot remarkably well and do not possess a musket.”¹ Somewhere along the way the hyperbole got recast as fact. The militia became so bound up in the stories of heroic efforts to fend off the Iroquois, conquer a new land, and beat back the English that its actual military character is now rather difficult to discern. This problem is compounded by the fact that of the three fighting forces in New France – the militia, the marines and the regulars – the militia are the least well documented.

It is difficult to engage with this legend because it serves particular social and political functions. The nineteenth century saw the rise of French-Canadian nationalism, which had to contemplate the memory of the Conquest. In the twentieth century Quebecois nationalists had to grapple with the painful issue of military service and conscription during the Great War and then all over again during World War 2. The history of the militia enabled Quebecois historians to build the case that French Canadians were excellent fighters when fighting for their own land. This line of thinking reached its fullest expression in Guy Fregault’s *Francois Bigot* (1948) and *La Guerre de la Conquete* (1955). There we learn that France let down the Canadians, sending a corrupt intendant, a defeatist general and a decadent army; the militia always did well. The theme, with variations, would be repeated by English historians, most notably W.J. Eccles. The idea of militia excellence had immense appeal to Canadian nationalists of various stripes. It fit into the mid-twentieth century preoccupation with French Canadian honour in face of Anglo-Canadian condescension. Furthermore, the militia showed up their American opponents at every turn, supplying valuable material for another stock-in-trade of Canadian nationalism: anti-Americanism, here practiced with relentless enthusiasm by Bill Eccles. He gave the legend added potency by associating the Canadian militia with a phenomenon that gained intense interest during the Vietnam era: guerilla warfare. And militiamen were peasant warriors, so the legend appealed to left-wing historians as well.

When I began to study the French armed forces as a complex adaptive system, I was attracted to the idea that French settlers in Canada confronted a talented enemy, the Iroquois, and adapted effectively. As part of my survey, I made a detailed table of every military operation, large and small. I also set out to evaluate quantitatively other aspects

of the military system. The results upset some of my assumptions and altered my views substantially. Here I wish to offer some respectful revisions.

Canadians preferred a fusil de chasse, manufactured at Tulle by the Abbe La Combe.² These were hardly rapid-fire deadly-accurate devices of destruction.³ The range and accuracy of these muskets depended on several factors, most notably: irregularities in each barrel; the fit between ball and barrel (since it was loose, the force of the powder was diminished, the ball glanced off the sides and its angle of exit varied); the shape of the ball, which was made of cast lead and usually had spurs or slight lumps that unbalanced it, producing an irregular trajectory; the quantity, quality, and coarseness of the powder used; and the quality of the flint. As a result, the ball was unlikely to travel exactly as designed, and it did not have a long range. The chances of hitting some part of a man's body only became good when he was 100 metres away. For accuracy and penetration, it was best if the target was less than 60 metres away.

Everyone had to wrestle with the muskets tendency to misfire.⁴ Jamming was the greatest worry. In the seventeenth century it produced a misfire rate of 1 in 7. Improvements in the lock design around the turn of the century increased reliability but did not eliminate the problem. Flints wore out rapidly. Moist powder from earlier shots built up on the frizzen and flint, requiring several snaps of the lock before the gun would go off. Dampness, whether from humidity or rain (both common in north-eastern North America), adversely affected the powder, and the touch-hole became clogged, rapidly increasing the chances misfire. Fouling was a perpetual concern. Black powder left a residue in the barrel and after a few shots the weapon had to be cleaned out otherwise it could not be loaded, or, worse still, the ball might jam. After a quick succession of shots, the barrel could become dangerously hot and had to be left to cool, and at some point it was necessary to pause, or move, to allow the thick smoke to clear.

Enemy casualty figures are astonishingly low. If the militia were very good shots, there ought to be many dead and wounded among the Iroquois and the English. Yet there were not.⁵ Between 1666 and 1754 the highest number of enemy casualties are recorded for surprise assaults on English towns in 1690, 1708, 1745 and 1747. Most of the English died not in a firefight but in the nighttime assault on dwellings. Attacks on Iroquois settlements produced very few casualties because the Iroquois withdrew in advance of the attackers. In most engagements, the number of enemy casualties was small (less than 40 killed and wounded, and on occasion none), whether the engagement involved large or small forces. But the destruction of property could be high. That underlines the other aspect of Canadian military operations: these were often marauding raids; the aim was to discourage the Iroquois and the English by destroying dwellings and food supply.

The ultimate test came at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. Much has been made of Canadian marksmen, both the snipers in the two hours or so before the main battle began and the militiamen who covered the retreat. If there were 1,500 sharpshooters (as Townshend reported), or somewhere around 800 as seems more likely, and if the Canadians put up stiff resistance as the British pursued the retreating French (shredding the Scots Highlanders) how is it that the British emerged from all the shooting that day with only 61 killed and 598 wounded?⁶ For a best-case estimate, let us assume that one third of British casualties took place before the battle; allow the sharpshooters to fire at a rate of once every ten minutes (a very slow rate) for two hours; then 800 men fired 9,600 shots, producing 23 hits per 1,000 shots, while 1,500 men would get off 18,000 shots for a rate of 12.2 hits per 1,000.

The condition of the muskets deteriorated considerably over a relatively short time.⁷ Black powder corroded the metal of the barrel. Rough terrain, the hazards of river travel, and the severe climate lead to heavy wear and tear. Muskets were largely hand-made. Parts were not interchangeable. After numerous repairs the lock was often entirely unserviceable.

Each decade the weapons of many habitants were reported to be poor.⁸ In 1756, as he prepared for what he knew would be a major war, Governor-general Vaudreuil reported that most militiamen went out to meet the enemy with “very bad” weapons, and in 1757 it was necessary to make a great many repairs before the militiamen could head out on the Lake Champlain offensive.⁹ From one decade to the next, the minister expressed his dissatisfaction with the number of repairs that had to be made and what he considered the inexcusably rapid deterioration of muskets among both the marines and the militia. He blamed the officers and men, ignoring other explanations.¹⁰ The arms industry of France was well able to meet the needs of the colony, but the Marine was reluctant to spend money arming its soldiers and militiamen.

Nationalist narratives have often suggested that “the entire male population was armed.”¹¹ The number of men who actually bore arms was substantially lower than that. In 1711 Louvigny reported that many militiamen were poor and could not afford a musket.¹² During the long peace, reviews of the militia produced disappointing figures.¹³ In 1721 8,000 militiamen had to make do with 5,263 muskets. The governor-general and the minister were both disturbed and large shipments followed. When the governor pointed out that many men were too poor to purchase a suitable musket, the minister agreed to a limited distribution from the king’s stores on generous terms of credit. But after that supplies were allowed to diminish – as an economization in time of peace. In 1744, when war with the English resumed Canada could produce 11,285 militiamen but they had only 7,260 muskets, and “one should not flatter oneself that the ones on hand will actually work.”¹⁴ That year the colony received very few muskets, and in 1745 it received none. At the end of the 1745 campaign, Governor General Beauharnois reported that a third of the militia had no weapons, and a quarter of the muskets on hand could not be expected to last very long even though he “took the precaution to have all muskets reconditioned.”¹⁵ At the end of the war, La Galissonniere, the new governor, reported that the militia was still in urgent need of muskets. Like Beauharnois he asked for 4000. He received 500.¹⁶

During the Seven Years War some observers thought that crafty militiamen saw an opportunity to acquire a good gun from the king, a form of fraud akin to that perfected by the Intendant. To sustain the militia legend, historians go along with this reasoning.¹⁷ It is possible but widespread fraud is doubtful. Over preceding decades many different observers noted that militiamen arrived poorly armed without going on to make the accusation. Fraud is all the more doubtful because the king seldom gave away muskets to militiamen, and no one would want to go into battle with a poor weapon – unless they did not want to fight at all. (That would upset another pillar of the militia legend: the widespread will to fight.) Muskets required frequent repair and the 1750s were a period of economic difficulty following on a period of limited supply of muskets. The shortage of good weapons is really not surprising.

There is an important key to this question: the 1750 roll of the militia company from cote St Michel.¹⁸ Of the 80 militiamen, only 38 had a musket, a state of affairs even worse than the picture for the colony as a whole. Yet this was a “model” company,

selected to serve as an example of how the rolls should be maintained. Officials did not find the numbers astounding. It is not hard to see why: all but one head of a family had his own musket. So did most (16/20) of the eldest sons. Those without were the younger sons. For many peasant households, one or two muskets would suffice. In short, age and economic resources account for the number of men without muskets. During the Seven Years War, observers like Bougainville often explained distressing facts by blaming individuals, and historians have worked creatively with the allegations. The reality appears to be that Canada's resources were limited and the French government was reluctant to make up the shortfall.

When he established the regulations for the Canadian militia in 1669, Louis XIV ordered that all men aged 16 to 60 could be called for duty. Not all were considered fit for long-range expeditions. This is remarkable because the physical condition of colonists in general seems to have improved over that of people in France. Officials repeatedly noted that Canadian men were "naturally big" "well-proportioned, agile, vigorous" and "able to withstand all sorts of fatigue"¹⁹ During the Seven Years War Pierre Pouchot, an engineer turned infantry officer, wrote that "the Canadians are very well built, very robust & active, with an admirable capacity to endure hard work & fatigue" adding – and this detail is important – that they were accustomed to such labour "through long & arduous journeys connected with their trading activities."²⁰

Against these generalizations there is little by way of precise information. The 1750 Roll for Cote St Michel notes who is fit for service. The rule was that men older than 45 were generally not suited. The ideal then, as now, was a man in his 20s and 30s. The roll separates out those aged 15-18 and labels them "enfants" and "jeunes gens." Few of these were considered "bon" – fit for service in expeditions. Several young men were also not considered suitable for expeditions. Two of the twenty families in the roll were entirely unsuited, even though their members were aged 22 to 48. The reasons are not given. They could relate to physical limitations. For example, myopia is common today, and being a developmental defect, it was likely that the prevalence was much the same in New France – a good many men would be found to have deficient long-range vision. Crippling injuries were also common. In all, only half the men in the Cote St Michel who were liable for service were deemed fit to serve in expeditions.

This state of affairs is really just what should be expected. The militia drew on the total population. Only a fraction of that population would be suited for military service. And only a fraction of that fraction would have real expertise. Those are the men around whom the legend grew.

The militia relied heavily on experience in the field for acquiring knowledge. Much is made of this by historians such as W.J. Eccles. But how many men gained experience fighting? After the preceding discussion, it may be obvious that the total was well below the sum of all bodies aged 16 to 60.

What proportion of the men involved in combat operations were militiamen? Here, for sake of brevity, I will average it out (speaking initially about the period 1665 to 1748). In large operations (500-2,500 men), militiamen made up 35% of the force (minimum of 11% maximum of 57%), while in medium sized expeditions (100-400) they made up 32% (minimum 11% maximum 70%). Warparties (5 to 40 men) were predominantly composed of Amerindians. Of those actually counted by the French, 45% were made up entirely of Amerindians, 10% had a member of the troupes de la marine attached to them (the rest being natives) and 45% were heterogeneous with 1, 2, 5 or 6

militiamen among the members. If the warparties sent by Amerindians on their own are factored in the number involving Frenchmen would diminish substantially.

There were not many large operations between 1665 and 1748: 2 in 1666, 12 between 1684 and 1697, only 3 between 1703 and 1713, 4 against the Fox between 1715 and 1730, 4 against the English in the 1740s. There were 16 medium-sized expeditions between 1684 and 1697, but only 6 between 1703 and 1713, and 10 between 1745 and 1748. The French evidently participated in 6 to 12 warparties a year during the 1690s, about 20 in 1746 and 30 in 1747.

So how many militiamen saw action? We can form an estimate of the maximum number possible by surveying the peak years. In 1687 the total for all militiamen in all combat operations was 1,225 out of a total of 3,100 militiamen in the colony. The peak in the 1690s (1696) was 1,280 out of 4,400 militiamen, and in the 1700s (1709) 1,100 out of 4,700 and in the 1740s (1746) 1,350 out of 11,300 militiamen. For most war years the total number of men in the field was much smaller.

The catch is in estimating how many militiamen went on several missions. It is reasonable to assume that experienced men would be chosen to serve on later missions. (There is ample evidence of this in lists of officers from the troupes de la marine.) That would have the effect of depressing the total number of militiamen who gained combat experience. So, the maximum percentage of militiamen who could possibly have seen combat declined from a peak of 40% to 23% and eventually to 12%. In most years the numbers were far lower. There were four exceptional moments, in 1690, 1709, 1711 and 1746, when thousands gathered to defend Quebec. But they saw no action. (Only a few fought the English landing force on the Beauport flats in 1690.)

These conditions changed radically during the Seven Years War. The total number of militiamen in operations exceeded 4,220 in 1757 (28%) and 6,630 in 1758 (44%). Some 11,170 gathered to face the English at Quebec in 1759. But what military expertise did they bring?

The military experience of militiamen in general diminished with time. The wars with the Iroquois were effectively over in 1697. With the small number and small size of most operations against the English between 1704 and 1711, far fewer men had a chance to gain experience in combat. During the long peace from 1713 to 1744 the great majority of the younger generation was not out campaigning. In 1734 Governor Beauharnois concluded that “the Canadians are not as good as they were in the past.”²¹

The statistical analysis of military operation leads to the conclusion that most of the Canadian militia was not engaged in “la petite guerre” – guerilla party warfare. Most militiamen who saw action in the field were part of larger forces that operated along more conventional European lines – in the defence of Quebec and the invasion of Iroquoia. And they served for relatively short periods of time. This conclusion does, however, draw our attention to a particular group.

Within it, the Canadian militia had an elite. This core was what the Canadian high command relied on for the most important military projects. In the 1680s Denonville and Champigny noted that *coureurs de bois* were best suited for war against the Iroquois.²² In 1716, when he prepared for his successful campaign against the Fox, Louis de La Porte de Louvigny selected 225 marines and militiamen in Montreal and added 200 at Detroit and Michilimackinac.²³ The militiamen who excelled at war were a smaller core of tough fighters, many of whom spent their time out west – as Pouchot tells us. This group

sustained the militia's reputation for combat effectiveness. Recognizing this enables us to make sense of comments by French observers in the 1750s whenever militiamen did something unimpressive: "these Canadians were not the good sort."²⁴ The seemingly uneven performance of the militia during the Seven Years War has much to do with the steep increase in the number of men called upon to fight and the limitations in the military experience of many militiamen.

For years observers had noted that Canadian militiamen had an aversion to regular warfare. In 1709 Governor Vaudreuil reported that Canadians found European-style battles needlessly dangerous, and fought well "only in entrenchments." One could count on their bravery, he said, but should misfortune lead to an assault by regular infantry, the city of Quebec would almost surely fall because one could not ask the militia to hold their ground in that kind of combat. The same warning was sounded during the 1740s.²⁵

Canadians consider themselves to be brave. French observers, often none too impressed by the Canadian way of war, were prepared to agree.²⁶ But courage is not unchanging and depends to an important extent on the circumstances in which the man finds himself. In 1756, the Chevalier de Montreuil, bitter at the turn of events in Dieskau's battle, wrote that the "braggart" Canadians were "very brave behind a tree and very timid when not covered"²⁷ Bougainville was impressed by their spirit but added that Canadian courage, like that of the Amerindians, consisted in exposing themselves as little as possible, setting up ambushes, and fighting tenaciously behind a screen of trees. French officers concluded that the Canadians were brave but undisciplined, and they would not stand their ground in the open.²⁸

Militiamen occupied two different places in the French line on the Plains of Abraham: on the flanks among the militia companies and within the ranks of the regular troops. Canadians were incorporated in the regulars with little retraining. Major Malartic records his view of the battle: "The regiments advanced with good spirit. They had not gone one hundred paces when the Canadians who formed the second rank and the soldiers behind them fired without orders, and following their usual practice the Canadians lay on the ground to reload. This false manoeuvre broke up all the battalions."²⁹ And when they got up, some men went to the edge of the field to join the skirmishers in the woods. That undoubtedly unnerved the French regulars. This episode was so embarrassing to Guy Fregault that he employed a narrative sleight of hand to get through the action: he referred to the central formations as the "regulars" and contrasted their behaviour with the skirmishers at the start of the battle and the militia who would fight a rearguard at the end.³⁰ This impedes comprehension by failing to probe the causes of the disorder and disintegration of the French formations. The issue is training, not nationality.

The critical moment is recorded with remarkable agreement by eyewitnesses on both sides: Brig. Gen. Townshend wrote: "When our troops were within 20 or 30 yards of closing, the whole French line turned their backs, from [the French] right to left, almost at the same instant."³¹ Marcel, Montcalm's aide de camp, recorded that the troupes de la marine and the militia from the gouvernement of Quebec (the French right) made a half-turn, pressed by fire from the English who made a move to envelop them, and this set off a succession of retreats along the French line.³² Such a disaster had been anticipated by Vaudreuil pere in 1709. The Canadians may well have intended to fight on from the cover of the woods but the French troops perceived this as abandonment and were unnerved.

One might imagine that the effort was over. Yet in 1760 the very same army would defeat the very same army in the very same place, at what has since been called the Battle of Ste Foy. During the winter Levis reorganized the army.³³ One third of the men were Canadian. He recognized the limitations in the performance of the troops and now drilled them carefully, imparting the necessary military knowledge in the men who would have to fight. On April 28, the Canadians served as light infantry skirmishing in front of the regular infantry and on the flanks, and as infantry in the line. This time Major Malartic was impressed: "The Canadians of the four brigades of the right, those who were in the intervals or in front of the brigades, fired a long time and most opportunely. They did a lot of harm to the English."³⁴ And they earned the praise of Levis and several other French officers.³⁵ Rearmed with new knowledge, these men proved to be very effective. And had things gone slightly differently, Murray's army would have been enveloped and the British would have been obliged to capitulate.

It was much harder to compensate for the serious shortages in military hardware – muskets, cannon and powder, to say nothing of food and other materiel. After winning the battle they could not carry the siege. Ste Foy, the often-overlooked battle for Quebec, reveals much of what worked well in the French army, and what did not.

NOTES

Abbreviations:

AC: Archives des colonies, Archives nationales, Paris

AG: Archives de la guerre, Service historique de l'armée, Vincennes

AM: Archives de la Marine, Archives nationales, Paris

AR: Archives du port de Rochefort, France

CML: Collection des manuscrits du maréchal de Levis, ed. H.R. Casgrain (Montreal et Quebec 1889-95)

RAPQ: Rapport de l'archiviste de la province de Quebec

¹ Raudot, 1709, and Pehr Kalm, 1749, quoted by Rene Chartrand, *Canadian Military Heritage* (Montreal, 1993), 76 and 98.

² Ministre a Begon, 12 mars 1698, AC B 20: 33; Ministre à Ramezay, 20 juin 1703, AC B 23: 239; Beauharnois au ministre, 18 jan 1720, AR 1E 349: 14; Givry au ministre, 14 fév 1750, 1E 378: 45. Russel Bouchard, "The Trade Gun in New France, 1690-1760" *Canadian Journal of Arms Collecting* 15 (1977) 3-12 and "Les Fusils de Tulle en Nouvelle France : 1691-1741" *Journal des armes* (1980).

³ Robert Held, *The Age of Firearms* (Northfield, 1970); B.P. Hughes, *Firepower* (London, 1974); M.L. Brown, *Firearms in Colonial America, the Impact on History of technology, 1492-1792* (Washington DC, 1980); Brian Given, *A Most Pernicious Thing: Gun Trading and Native Warfare in the Early Contact Period* (Ottawa, 1994).

⁴ Given, *Pernicious Thing* Ch 7.

⁵ Data on military engagements appear in Appendix B of my forthcoming book. Predominantly Amerindian forces massacred large numbers of Fox between 1711 and 1730, but usually after the defenders were overwhelmed, and often not using muskets.

⁶ Townshend to Pitt, 20 sept 1759, G.S. Kimball ed., *Correspondence of William Pitt when Secretary of State* (New York, 1906), 2: 166; John Johnson, "Memoires of the Siege of Quebec" in A. Doughty and G.W. Parmelee eds., *The Siege of Quebec and the Battle of the Plains of Abraham*, 5: 104; John Knox, *An Historical Journal of the Campaigns in North America* (Toronto, 1914), 2: 99. The British managed to kill 220 and wound 424.

- ⁷ Denonville au ministre, 13 nov 1685, AC C11a 7: 87-8; Champigny au ministre, 5 nov 1687, C11a 9: 194v and 4 nov 1693, C11a 12: 267-9; Beauharnois au ministre, 28 juin 1711, AR 1E 340: 177; Beauharnois et Hocquart au ministre, 15 oct 1730, C11a 52: 54v; Beauharnois au ministre, 10 oct 1734, C11a 61: 303-13v and 13 sept 1742, C11a 77: 98-9; Lee Kennett, *The French Armies in the Seven Years War* (Durham NC, 1967), 115; Gabriel Coste, *Les anciennes troupes de la marine* (Paris, 1893), 132-3.
- ⁸ e.g. Champigny au ministre, 16 nov 1686, AC C11a 8: 243; Begon au ministre, 12 nov 1712, C11a 33: 132-v; Beaujours au ministre 2 oct 1735, C11a 64: 254; Beauharnois et Hocquart au ministre, 17 oct 1744, C11a 81: 51-v.
- ⁹ Vaudreuil-Cavagnial au ministre, 15 juin 1756, AC C11a 101: 30v, 47-8; Montcalm, *Journal*, CML 7: 174; Bougainville, *Adventure*, 94.
- ¹⁰ e.g. ministre à Beauharnois, 14 mai 1728, AC B 52: 493v-4, 10 mai 1735, B 63: 504-5 and 24 mars 1744, B 78: 316; ministre à Hocquart, 6 mars 1748, AC B 87: 223.
- ¹¹ W.J. Eccles, "The Social, Economic and Political Significance of the Military Establishment in New France" in *Essays on New France* (Toronto, 1987), 112.
- ¹² Louvigny au ministre, 31 Oct and 5 Nov 1711, AC C11a 32: 231-2.
- ¹³ Canada, *Census*, 1871: 52-7.
- ¹⁴ Beauharnois et Hocquart au ministre, 17 oct 1744, AC C11a 81: 50v-1, *Recensement général des Milices du Canada*, *ibid.*: 177.
- ¹⁵ Beauharnois au ministre, 1 nov 1745, C11a 83: 111-2.
- ¹⁶ La Galissonnière au ministre, 21 oct 1747 C11a 87: 257.
- ¹⁷ Bougainville, "Milices du Canada, Janvier 1759" RAPQ 1923/4: 29. René Chartrand, *Canada's Military Heritage* (Montreal, 1993), 1: 98 "Canadians and the authorities were playing a little game of hide and seek. ...one could hide the old one or present himself for service armed with a musket so bad that the authorities were obliged to provide another. ...the governors general were not unhappy to see this excellent militia armed with new muskets."
- ¹⁸ Role de la Compagnie de la Coste St Michel, AC C11a 95: 350-v. This is the only detailed roll that survives.
- ¹⁹ Mémoire de l'État présent du Canada [1712], RAPQ 1922/3: 45; "Mémoire sur l'État présent du Canada, 12 Déc 1715," *ibid.*, 59, 64; Mémoire, 1719, *ibid.*, 75; Champigny au ministre, 15 oct 1697, AC C11a 15: 120; Mémoire, 1737, AC C11a 67: 95; Hocquart au ministre, 1^{er} oct 1746, C11a 85: 328.
- ²⁰ Pierre Pouchot, *Memoirs on the Late War in North America*, B.L. Dunnigan ed., M. Cardy trans. (Youngstown NY, 1994): 321.
- ²¹ Beauharnois au ministre, 10 oct 1734, AC C11a 61: 306-v.
- ²² Champigny au ministre, 6 nov 1687, AC C11a 9: 13; Denonville au ministre, 27 oct 1687, *Ibid.*, 133; Callières au ministre, 1688 AC C11a 10: 148-9.
- ²³ Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 oct 1716, AC C11a 36: 72v.
- ²⁴ Bougainville, *Adventure*, 238.
- ²⁵ Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 nov 1709, AC C11a 30: 45, 62v-3; Hocquart au ministre, 1 oct 1746, AC C11a 85: 328.
- ²⁶ e.g. Mémoire, 1737, AC C11a 67: 95v; P. Kalm, *The America of 1750: Peter Kalm's Travels in North America* (New York, 1966), 492; Bourlamaque "Mémoire sur le Canada" CML 5: 102; Pouchot, *Memoirs*, 321; du Plessis, "Journal de la Campagne de la Sauvage ...1756" RAPQ 1928/9, 221.
- ²⁷ Montreuil à Argenson, 12 June 1756, AG A1 3417: 140. Martin Nicolai, "A Different Kind of Courage: the French Military and the Canadian Irregular Soldier during the Seven Years War," *Canadian Historical Review* 70 (1989) 53-75.
- ²⁸ Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle France," RAPQ 1923/4, 58; "Situation du Canada" RAPQ 1923/4, 9; Bougainville to Herault, 20 Feb 1758, Bougainville *Adventure* 333; Pontleroy, "Mémoire et observations sur le projet d'attaquer les postes ennemis" 18 jan 1760 CML 4: 199; DCB 4: 739. La Pause, "Mémoire et observations," RAPQ 1931/2, 66.
- ²⁹ A.J.H. Maures de Malartic, *Journal des campagnes au Canada* (Dijon, 1890), 285; compare A. Joannes, "Mémoire sur la campagne de 1759" in Dougherty and Parmelee, *Quebec*, 4: 226.
- ³⁰ Frégault, *Guerre de la conquête* (Montréal, 1955), 347-9.

- ³¹ Townshend, "A Journal of the Siege of Quebec" in Doughty and Parmelee eds., *Quebec*, 4: 269-70.
- ³² [Marcel] "Journal abrégé d'un aide de camp" Doughty and Parmelee, *Quebec*, 5: 298; Joannes writes: "enfin, après s'être approchée à la portée du pistolet, et avoir fait et essayé trois ou quatre décharges, la droite [française] plia et entraîna le reste de la ligne." Ibid., 4: 226. Pouchot, writing much later and probably summarizing the French officers' analysis of events, recorded that Canadian skirmishers had earlier served very effectively against the waiting British, but now "the enemy fire, which had torn gaps in the column, stopped it in its tracks & shook the nerve of the Canadians, who had little experience of being under fire without cover. They broke ranks & fled. The soldiers immediately retreated in confusion." (*Mémoires*, 242).
- ³³ Levis Journal, CML 1: 243-58; La Pause, "Mémoire et observations" 107; "Relation de l'expédition de Québec," CML 11: 221-3; Relation des affaires du Canada depuis le 1^{er} Xbre 1759 AG A1 3540: 122; Bernier, "Événements du Canada depuis le mois d'octobre 1759 jusqu'au mois de sept 1760," AG A1 3574: 112. Nicolai, "Different Kind" 73-5.
- ³⁴ Malartic, Journal, 319.
- ³⁵ Levis, Journal, CML 1: 267; Fournerie de Vezon, "Événements de la guerre en Canada depuis 13 7bre 1759 jusqu'au 14 juillet 1760" RAPQ 1938/8: 6-7.

**French and British Privateers
in the Colonial Era**

**Les corsaires, du régime français
au régime anglais**

**FOR KING AND PROFIT:
LOUISBOURG PRIVATEERS
1744**

B.A. Balcom

On the morning of July 4, 1744,¹ Joannis d'Olobaratz, commanding the Louisbourg privateer, *Le Cantabre*, was cruising 15 leagues off Cape Cod. He had sailed three weeks earlier in consort with another privateer. Weather had separated the two, but now d'Olobaratz spotted a snow "laying too" in the calm winds and guessed it to be a British merchantman.² Confident in his 94-man crew, 8 carriage guns and 8 swivels, d'Olobaratz approached under English colours. He then raised French colours and fired to demand the vessel's surrender. The supposed merchantman was actually the *Prince of Orange*, a Massachusetts coast guard, armed with 20 carriage guns and a 150-man crew. It responded by hoisting English colours and firing a broadside that raked the French vessel. D'Olobaratz had his sloop tack about, had its oars run out and rowed off in the light winds. Captain Edward Tyng of the *Prince of Orange* quickly followed suit and a wearisome chase ensued into the early morning hours. Tyng felt his pursuit was aided by four lanterns the French left lit in the rigging, but these may well have been a signal for assistance intended for *Le Cantabre's* consort. In an attempt to gain the upper hand, d'Olobaratz finally turned and tried to board the Massachusetts vessel. As the vessels closed, the French crew avoided a New England broadside and small arms volley by sheltering below, but a shot seriously damaged the sloop's mast. Unable to now flee or fight effectively, d'Olobaratz had to take his long boat to the *Prince of Orange* to surrender his sword and commission.

Tyng kept d'Olobaratz and his officers on board the Massachusetts snow, and took the now dismasted sloop under tow. Although the *Prince of Orange* was a provincial coast guard, prize money was still a consideration. The vessels' arrival in Boston that same day (July 5) created a sensation, as this was the first French privateer taken off the New England coast.³ Tyng received the gratitude of the town and a silver cup weighing one hundred ounces, while his crew received a bonus of £267 amounting to £3 each. A newspaper noted "Tis remarkable that notwithstanding the ... great Number of Men on

either side ... there was not one kill'd or wounded.”⁴ This was a premature observance, as a later report noted four French had been killed and buried at sea prior to the surrender.⁵ Another Boston paper remarked that d'Olobaratz was “a Gentleman well known in Town, and has a Son at School about six miles off.” As d'Olobaratz had “been kind and serviceable to the English on many Occasions at Louisbourg,” the paper happily reported that he was now being “civilly treated himself.”⁶ He and his men spent the summer and early fall in Boston as prisoners awaiting exchange, with some working as farm labourers. A less happy fate awaited four Irish soldiers from the British garrison at Canso, who had been recruited into the privateer's crew, while prisoner in Louisbourg. Recognized by sailors on the Massachusetts snow, they were sent to their regimental headquarters at Annapolis Royal, where three were subsequently sentenced to death.

The story of *Le Cantabre* touches on many aspects of privateering – the regulation of war, acceptable uses of deception, the lure of prize money, difficulties in recruiting crews and the sometimes ambivalent nature of war between Louisbourg and Boston. Privateering was one of the principal means for Louisbourg to project power. As a heavily defended port, Louisbourg was well equipped to act as a strong point, but like other 18th century fortresses, it was not anticipated that Louisbourg could hold out indefinitely in the face of a sufficiently large and well-supplied attacking force. It was anticipated that its strength would deter attack and that the fortified town would act as defensive bulwark for French interests in the region. To be truly effective, however, Louisbourg had to project its power against its British colonial rivals. Privateers, naval vessels, Native alliances and military expeditions all provided means for offensive action. After reviewing competing French naval priorities for the late summer of 1744, James Pritchard has shown that “sending direct aid to French colonies in America was the least important naval concern of all.”⁷ The lack of metropolitan naval support in 1744 and 1745 seriously compromised the military expeditions against mainland Nova Scotia and by extension the Native alliances. Recognizing the limited naval resources available, the Minister of Marine instructed Louisbourg officials on the declaration of war to immediately encourage the outfitting of privateers. Privateers were then a well-established wartime routine for Europe's colonial powers as the tremendous expansion of overseas trade made it a desirable, if not a necessary, wartime target. In March 1744, Louis XV's declaration of war greatly expanded in terms of scale and geography the already existing privateer war between Britain and France's new co-belligerent, Spain.

News of the outbreak of war reached Louisbourg on May 3, approximately three weeks before Boston learned the news. Blank privateering commissions had been thoughtfully forwarded to Louisbourg, but shortages of light cannons, pistols, swords and boarding axes restricted the number of vessels outfitted.⁸ The town also faced food shortages that spring, and the governor and *commissaire ordonnateur* initially withheld encouragement of privateers. The two readily available armed vessels were used instead on an early strike against the British post at Canso, a day's sail from Louisbourg. Canso's capture opened a badly-needed supply route to the Acadian farms of Nova Scotia and would, with the planned later capture of Annapolis Royal, restore Acadia to France. Following Canso's destruction, Louisbourg privateers outfitted against British colonial commerce and fishing interests. The privateers' theatre of operation stretched from the shores of Newfoundland to the Delaware capes. No Louisbourg privateer went as far as the Caribbean, which was the war's busiest, and most lucrative, colonial theatre.

The work of historians, such as Bromley, Starkey and Swanson, has established useful parameters for analysing the efforts of Louisbourg's privateers.⁹ Swanson has provided the most comprehensive study of privateering in the Americas during the War of the Austrian Succession by analysing privateering accounts in British colonial newspapers. While Swanson covers French and Spanish privateering actions, his work naturally focuses on the actions of British American privateers. This study utilizes a more modest data base – the 1744 records of the Louisbourg Admiralty Court as confirmed and summarized by the *Conseil des Prises* in Paris. The relative completeness of these records is attested by a list of Louisbourg prizes compiled by *commissaire-ordonnateur* François Bigot, in mid-October, 1744. The *Conseil des Prises* records noted 34 prize actions (including 2 shore raids), while Bigot's list details 38 prize actions, including 7 on shore establishments; all actions related to a single year – 1744.¹⁰ Each list noted several prizes not included on the other, with the two sources indicating a total of 45 successful prize actions for Louisbourg private and public vessels of war. Are these numbers significant? Yes, they are – they represent close to, if not the total number of successful French prize actions in the Northwest Atlantic, and compare favourably with the 61 successful, and unsuccessful, British prize actions, identified by Swanson, for the more numerous British colonial privateers and Royal Navy vessels for that same year and theatre.¹¹ The time frame is also significant as Louisbourg's early blockade and capture the next year changed trade patterns and greatly reduced privateering actions in this theatre.

Privateers had considerable appeal to governments as they mobilized private force against the enemy at minimal or no cost to the Crown. As Swanson has further argued, privateering particularly appealed to the dominant mercantilist thinking of the time by adding to national wealth at the same time that it decreased that of others.¹² The popularity of privateers necessitated their regulation; a process complicated by its occurrence on the ocean – a great common – rather than on a nation's territory.¹³ Like other aspects of the conduct of war, combatant nations had to reach generalized consensus on the legitimacy of both predators and prizes. Otherwise, what distinguished the legitimate privateer operating as an arm of the state, from the lawless pirate, who could expect no mercy upon capture. Broadly speaking, privateers had to carry a proper government commission and could capture enemy ships and cargoes in time of war. The prizes then had to be declared lawful in Admiralty court before they could be sold for the benefit of the captors. The French marine law regulating Louisbourg privateers required 10% of the prize value be paid to the Admiralty court, while English privateers received the full value of their prizes, less regulated Admiralty court fees. Swanson has shown that Admiralty courts in the British colonies frequently charged fees above the regulated schedule, but also rendered judgements overwhelmingly favourable to privateers.¹⁴ The *Conseil des Prises* Louisbourg decisions also favoured predators in all but one of 29 recorded judgements. The exception involved a small privateer operating under a local post commander's authorization rather than a proper commission. Finding the captor to lack appropriate authorization, the prize was nevertheless determined to be "de bonne prise" but was confiscated to the court's benefit.¹⁵

Louisbourg's war against British seaborne commerce involved several types of predators, of which privateers were the most important. In 1744, the port outfitted seven privateers compared to nine for Boston, 15 for New York and 19 for Newport.¹⁶ The *Conseil des Prises* records identified Louisbourg's privateers as bringing 20 prizes to the port's Admiralty court, while Bigot indicated an additional five Louisbourg predators of

unidentified status as bringing in one prize each.¹⁷ These latter five prizes were all small – likely fishing vessels captured in the early hectic days of the war – and their captors were probably privateers. Armed merchantmen commissioned *en guerre et marchandises* (the equivalent of English letter of marque vessels) also made opportunistic captures during the course of their trading voyages. While their commissions enabled them to take legitimate prizes, merchant trade remained their economic focus. Privateers, by contrast, were interested in prizes not trade. Louisbourg officials also hired a private vessel for four months to act as a coast guard, with Pierre Morpain, a renowned privateer in Acadian waters during the War of the Spanish Succession and now serving as Port Captain in Louisbourg, as captain. Morpain brought in two prizes while commanding the coast guard vessel. Naval warships comprised a fourth predator type, with two warships arriving from France, and a third, newly built at Quebec, finishing its outfitting at Louisbourg. These vessels, like the coast guard schooner, were used primarily for the defence of the seaways off Louisbourg from British predators. The warships captured four prizes including, in fulfilment of their mandate, two New England privateers. Louisbourg officials also engaged private vessels for the military expeditions against Canso and Annapolis Royal, but the prizes taken at each location were treated differently. The military officer leading the attack on Canso initiated the Admiralty court proceedings against the two vessels captured there. By contrast, the two prizes made at Annapolis Royal were decided in favour of the letter of marque vessel making the capture.

Louisbourg's privateering war in 1744 took place in two distinct phases, between early May when news of the declaration of war reached the port and mid-autumn when shipping in the North Atlantic entered its annual winter slowdown. The expedition against Canso delayed privateering outfits until the last week of May but was followed by an intense flurry of captures until early July. Most of the 18 captures recorded by the Admiralty Court for this period were small (average tonnage was 54.6 *tonneaux*) and many were New England fishing vessels taken on the nearby fishing banks. Three of the four largest prizes were taken by French letter of marque vessels on route to Louisbourg, with one of the captures occurring before the port even received news of the war.¹⁸ The capture of d'Olobaratz' *Le Cantabre* on July 4 and the capture of three small vessels by its consort the following day marked the end of the first stage. Now New England privateers threatened Louisbourg's sea lanes, the easy bank pickings were gone and Louisbourg privateers sought larger, and often more distant, prizes. The port's Admiralty Court noted only 11 captures during this second period ending in late October but at 105.4 *tonneaux* the average prize tonnage was almost twice that of the earlier period. As noted earlier, financial administrator Bigot reported an additional 11 undated prizes, including 5 involving shore raids, beyond those noted in the *Conseil des Prises* records. By late summer, Louisbourg officials responded to the threat of New England privateers with patrols by coast guard and naval vessels and by an embargo on shipping out of the port.

Louisbourg's marine predators depended on force or the treat of force to accomplish their captures. Armament was a prime concern in outfitting privateers as these vessels were not typically armed in peacetime. Louisbourg's initial privateering efforts were restricted by a shortage of light artillery and small arms and, consequently, the armament of the port's privateers varied greatly. The sloop *Le Signe* was armed initially only with muskets, while *Le St. Charles* had two carriage guns and *Le Cantabre* eight carriage guns and eight swivels. *Le Brasdor*, Louisbourg's largest privateer, had 10 carriage guns and 20 swivels.¹⁹ Even English colonists recognized the restrictive effects of Louisbourg's

arms shortage and feared for when it was alleviated. Benjamin Franklin, remarking on the capture in only a few days of four vessels off the Delaware capes, wondered what damage a dozen sail, each making three or four cruises a year, would inflict. His concern was amplified by the reported boast “that during the War [the French] would have no Occasion to cut Fire Wood, for that the Jackstaves of English Vessels would be a Supply sufficient.”²⁰

The potential exercise of force to affect a capture raises questions about the frequency with which it was actually applied. The *Conseil des Prises* records for Louisbourg provide some answers.²¹ Private men of war were naturally less likely to sink or damage a vessel they hoped to capture for profit than was a warship. All of Louisbourg’s predators covered by these records, whether private or not, were involved only in the capture of enemy vessels, not their destruction. In the 34 prize actions listed, gunfire either as musket or cannon or in combination, figured in just over half (18) of the actions. They were divided almost equally between musket (8 instances) and cannon (9) with only one example of combined fire. Gunfire was used most often as a warning or for intimidation. In only four instances did casualties occur and these were restricted in three cases (by musket fire) to a single casualty – either the captain or helmsman. In the one instance of casualties by cannonfire, losses were still light, with only the captain killed and a sailor wounded. The court records did not contain information on damage to vessels.

A more unusual aspect of war in the Ile Royale/Newfoundland theatre of operations was the number of prize actions that took place on land. *Commissaire ordonnateur* Bigot identified seven prizes of fish and fishing supplies as being made on land in Newfoundland outposts and the *Conseil des Prises* records gave details on two of them. In both cases, transport vessels accompanied the privateers to take back the anticipated captures of dried or wet-salted fish and fishing and food supplies. The raid by Louisbourg privateers Joannis d’Olobaratz and Philippe LeNeuf de Beaubassin was probably typical. Sailing in consort with an accompanying sloop as transport, the two privateers approached a fishing station near “Capsite,” Newfoundland in late June. Beaubassin pursued and captured two fishing boats, while d’Olobaratz’s men looted first a fish stage and then a storehouse. Goods captured included dried cod, fish oil, salt and seal nets, all of which were loaded on board the transport sloop for conveyance back to Louisbourg. New England privateers also raided some of the Ile Royale fishing outposts “burning their Works & Houses as the [French] did Canso.” Governor Shirley saw this as a just retribution remarking that such actions “they now think wrong, and repent of setting the Example.”²²

Enemy cargos as well as vessels were subject to seizure and confiscation. Most disputes over cargo dealt with neutral shipping carrying enemy cargo or what neutral goods might legitimately be declared as contraband.²³ Yet other anomalies might occur in the very nature of what constituted cargo. Such a case occurred with the capture of the ship *Le Guillaume Mary* (undoubtedly the *William and Mary*) sailing from Dublin to Philadelphia with 45 young Irish women on board, sailing as indentured servants.²⁴ A Louisbourg privateer captured the ship off Long Island on July 31, the same day that it captured a whaler. Lacking supplies, an undetermined combination of 28 passengers and/or crew were put on the whaler and freed. The ship and the remaining prisoners were taken to Louisbourg. The prisoners were subsequently included in a major exchange of prisoners organized between Governor Duquesnel of Louisbourg and Governor William

Shirley in Boston. Subsequently, the selectmen of Boston “sent up to the Almshouse sixteen girls and three boys and a woman arrived here yesterday from Cape Breton who were taken about six weeks since by a French Privateer, being bound from Ireland to Philadelphia.”²⁵ Their arrival in Boston was not joyous for the women as their former captain sought to reassert his right to sell them as indentured servants. On hearing of their plight, Duquesnel maintained the captain’s desire was neither just nor lawful as he had lost his power of disposition once they had been taken.²⁶ Shirley agreed with Duquesnel’s sentiments and personally reassured the women of their freedom and further informed the captain that the use of force to secure new engagements would not be tolerated²⁷. While humanity played its part, Duquesnel’s decision had a legal basis in the indentured servants being considered cargo lost to its owners.

Obtaining timely recruits of sailors was a problem that affected all privateers. At Louisbourg the problem was alleviated when an embargo was placed on coastal shipping out of the port. As the summer dragged on, there were large numbers of underemployed sailors in the port including those of a half dozen *compagnie des Indes* vessels waiting for the fall convoy to France. At least two of the *compagnie des Indes* officers, Louis Winslow and Sieur de la Malbonnet, temporarily joined the crew of the *Le Caribou*, with both subsequently serving as prize officers.²⁸ Another more riskier source, at least for the recruits themselves, was the growing pool of English prisoners in the town and Irish Catholics, with a shared bond of religion with the French, may have been the most fertile recruiting ground. Four of the crew of *Le Cantabre* captured by the *Prince of Orange* were Irish members of Philipps’ regiment captured at Canso. They were later tried at Annapolis Royal – one, a Protestant, got off by offering evidence that he had been recruited drunk and had tried to get out of his engagement when he sobered up. The other three, presumably Catholics, were sentenced to death. When the Louisbourg privateer *Le Brasdor* was captured in October 1744, twelve of its crew were reported to be British subjects. Two of these were reported to have been killed in action.²⁹ Subsequently, a special Admiralty court was held in Boston to try nine subjects of Great Britain “for entering French service and committing divers acts of hostility against His Majesty’s Subjects.”³⁰ The French had similar concerns about their own subjects. A sailor of one of the captured New England privateers thought to resemble someone from St. Malo. When at his trial, the man claimed to be Spanish, but was then unable to answer questions in that language, he was sentenced to death.³¹ Shirley sent Duquesnel proof of the man being an English subject and hoped Duquesnel would render satisfaction in the case.³²

The prisoners from Canso and captured vessels strained Louisbourg’s already precarious food supplies. Duquesnel responded by trying to arrange a prisoner exchange in Boston. In the meantime, the prisoners enjoyed a relaxed confinement. One British regular was recruited into d’Olobaratz’s privateer while drinking in a tavern. When the prisoners returned to Boston in the fall, their reports of weaknesses in Louisbourg’s fortifications and the disaffection of its garrison gave impetus to organizers of the expedition against the town. Yet French prisoners in Boston enjoyed equally amenable conditions. While some of his men worked on local farms, d’Olobaratz sought information on the defences of Boston, Newport and Philadelphia.³³ His assessments of Boston and Newport were based on direct observation and inquiries, including a six-day trip to Newport where he visited the island battery defending the harbour. For Philadelphia, he depended on accounts from individuals, such as an Irish Jesuit, whose information he assessed to be accurate. He also tried to arrange for the purchase of 1000 barrels of flour to be delivered to Louisbourg the following April. His contact was

from Bayonne but had been living in New England for the past six months. Both men believed the transaction feasible and d'Olobaratz issued one of the safe conduct passes he had previously received from Bigot. D'Olobaratz still found time to join Lodge One of the Masons in Boston, where the processing of his application was sped up due to his impending return to Louisbourg.³⁴ Upon his return, d'Olobaratz discounted the likelihood of many New Englanders joining an expedition against Louisbourg. He believed them persuaded "that there were more blows to be received than lousis d'or to be won."³⁵ Events in 1745 would prove d'Olobaratz assessment to be wrong, although even Governor Shirley might not have disputed it too much when it was written.

The success enjoyed by Louisbourg's privateers and other predators in the summer and fall of 1744 was a significant factor to the surprising popular support in New England for the expedition against the port. Support from Marblehead and other ports arrived at a critical juncture in revitalizing the flagging campaign to win popular support for the expedition. The success enjoyed by Louisbourg's privateers in 1744 led in on small way to their removal the following year with the port's capture. Yet in their time, Louisbourg's predators had operated in a manner consistent with, and at relative parity, with their more numerous British counterparts. In terms of the absolute numbers of prizes, Louisbourg's predators were almost as successful as their British rivals. The loss of two Louisbourg privateers was matched by the gain of two from New England. But the smaller French marine could not afford to trade even blows with the British, and certainly not a less than even rate of exchange. Ultimately, it was Louisbourg, not Boston, that was forced to enact an embargo on shipping out of the port, and Louisbourg that was captured in 1745 while Boston escaped unscathed from the d'Enville expedition the following year. Louisbourg's privateers had won many battles but were not numerous enough to win the war.

Appendix 1

Louisbourg Predators identified in Admiralty Court Records – 1744

Type	Rig	Name	Captain
Cstgd	Schooner	Le Succès	Morpain
Ltrmq	Ship	L'Atlas	Descombes
	Ship	L'Ondromaque	Fleury
	Ship	Le Phelypeau	Durable
	Ship	Le Tourneur	Hamel
MilEx		Canso Expedition	Duvivier
Prvtr	Brigantine	La Tempeste	St. Martin
	Schooner	La Marie Joseph	Detcheverry
		Le St. Pierre	Guildy
	Skiff	La Magdeleine	Fougère
	Sloop	Le César	Beaubassin
	Sloop	Le Signe	St. Martin
	Sloop	Le St. Charles	Baron
	Ship	La Brador	Le Gras
Trnsp	Sloop	Le Hazardeux	Harnois
	Sloop?	Le St. Joseph	Briant
Wrshp	Ship	L'Ardent	Meschin
	Ship	Le Caribou	Morpain

Cstgd – Coastguard; Ltrmq – Letter of Marque; MilEx – Military Expedition; Prvtr – Privateer; Trnsp – Transport; Wrshp- Warship.

Source: “Conseil des Prises, Louisbourg, 1745-46,” France, Archives Nationales, Section Ancienne, G5, Carton 258, Amirauté.

Appendix 2 Prizes in Louisbourg Admiralty Court, 1744, with Capture Dates and Captors

Capture Date	Rig	Name	Tonnage	Captor
Apr 30	Brgt	L'Omble	130	Durable
May 4	Slp	Le Penbrock	80	Fleury
May 24	Slp	La Marie	50	Duivier
	Slp	La Catherine et Marie	[50]	Duivier
May 31	Schr	L'Indever	45	Guildy
Jun 4	Slp	Le Dauphin	25	St. Martin
Jun 7	Schr	La Marie	26	St. Martin
Jun 8	Schr	L'Indever	35	St. Martin
Jun 10	Schr	Le Philipe	55	St. Martin
Jun 11	Schr	La Sifleur	28	Fougère
	Schr	Le Bety et Emoly [released]		St. Martin
Jun 12	Brgt	Les Deux Frères	80	Detcheverry
	Schr	L'Elizabeth	36	St. Martin
Jun 14	Schr	Le Franchip	38	St. Martin
Jun 15-18		Fish, supplies and boats		Baron
Jun 18	Brgt	La Madera	100	Hamel
late June		fish and supplies		d'Olobaratz and Beaubassin
Jun 29	Schr	La Suzanne	60	Hamel
Jul 5	Slp	Le Hanna Elizabeth	40	Beaubassin

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Capture Date	Rig	Name	Tonnage	Captor
Jul 5 (Cont)	Slp	Le Yark	64	Beaubassin
	Slp	Sans nom	[40]	Beaubassin
Jul 8, 1744	Slp	Le Kinsbury	89	Morpain
	Snow	Le Nancy	120	Morpain
Jul 22	Brgt	Le Hop	[130]	Meschin
Jul 31	Ship	Le Guillaume Mary	180	St. Martin
	unkn	Whaler [released]		St. Martin
Aug 5	Ship	Le Legot Jutem	60	St. Martin
Aug 14	Ship	La Sainte Claire	140	Morpain
	Schr	Le Fley	[50]	Morpain
Sep 11	Brgt	La Victoire	100	Meschin
Sep 26	Snow	Le Severe	140	St. Martin
Oct 14	Ship	L'Olivier branche	?	Le Gras
Oct 26	Schr	L'Ordnance Tender	90	Descombes
	Slp	Le Hauppoel	60	Descombes

Source: "Conseil des Prises, Louisbourg, 1745-46," France, Archives Nationales, Section Ancienne, G5, Carton 258, Amirauté. Bracketed figures are from "État des Bâtiments qui ont été faits sur les Anglois et conduits au port de Louisbourg Pendant La présente année 1744," Bigot, Louisbourg, 12 octobre 1744, AN, Colonies, C11C, vol. 16, série 2, no. 2.

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Appendix 3

Casualties in Louisbourg Predator Prize Actions – 1744

Captor's Surname	Prize	Musket Fire	Cannon Fire	Casualties
Baron	deux chaloupes	n	n	none
Beaubassin	Le Hanna Elizabeth	n	y	killed captain, wounded sailor
	Le Yark	n	y	none
	Sans nom	n	n	none
Descombes	L'Ordnance Tender	n	n	none
	Le Hauppoel	n	n	none
Detcheverry	Les Deux Frères	n	n	none
Durable	L'Omble	y	y	none
Duvivier	La Catherine et Marie	n	n	none
	La Marie	y	n	killed captain
Fleury	Le Penbrock	n	n	none
Fougère	La Sifleur	y	n	killed helmsman
Guildy	L'Indever	y	n	killed captain
Hamel	La Madera	n	y	none
	La Suzanne	n	y	none
D'Olobarartz and Beaubassin	fish and supplies	n	n	none
Le Gras	L'Olivier branche	n	y	none
Meschin	La Victoire	n	y	none
	Le Hop	n	n	none

Captor's Surname	Prize	Musket Fire	Cannon Fire	Casualties
Morpain	La Sainte Claire	n	n	none
	Le Fley	n	y	none
	Le Kinsbury	y	n	none
	Le Nancy	n	y	none
St. Martin	L'Elizabeth	n	n	none
	L'Indever	n	n	none
	La Marie	y	n	none
	Le Bety et Emoly	y	n	none
	Le Dauphin	n	n	none
	Le Franchip	y	n	none
	Le Guillaume Mary	n	n	none
	Le Legot Jutem	n	y	none
	Le Philipe	y	n	none
	Le Severe	n	n	none
	Whaler	n	n	none

Source: "Conseil des Prises, Louisbourg, 1745-46" in France, Archives Nationales, Section Ancienne, G5, Carton 258, Amirauté.

NOTES

¹ All dates have been converted, if necessary to the modern Gregorian calendar then used by the French and adopted by the British in 1752.

² The following account of the capture of *Le Cantabre* is drawn from *The Boston Weekly News-Letter*, June 29, 1744 (OS) unless otherwise cited.

³ Howard M. Chapin, *Privateering in King George's War*, Providence, p. 76.

- ⁴ *The Boston Weekly News-Letter*, June 29, 1744 (OS).
- ⁵ Chapin, *Privateering*, p. 76.
- ⁶ *The Boston Evening Post*, 2 July 1744 (OS) quoted in Donald F. Chard, "The Impact of Isle Royale on New England," Ph.D thesis, University of Ottawa, 1976, p. 69.
- ⁷ James Pritchard, *An Anatomy of a Naval Disaster: The 1746 French Expedition to North America* (Montreal: 1995), pp. 24-5.
- ⁸ A.J.B. Johnston, *The Summer of 1744: A Portrait of Life in an 18th Century Town* (Ottawa: 1983), p. 11. Johnston contains the most extensive study of Louisbourg privateers during 1744.
- ⁹ John S. Bromley, *Corsairs and Navies, 1660-1760* (Hambleton Press: 1987); David Starkey, *British Privateering Enterprise in the Eighteenth Century* (Exeter: 1990) and Carl E. Swanson, *Predators and Prizes: American Privateering and Imperial Warfare, 1739-1748* (Columbia: 1991).
- ¹⁰ "Conseil des Prises, Louisbourg, 1745-46," France, Archives Nationales (hereafter cited as AN), Section Ancienne, G5, Carton 258, Amirauté and "État des Bâtiments qui ont été faits sur les Anglois et conduits au port de Louisbourg Pendant La présente année 1744," Bigot, Louisbourg, 12 octobre 1744, AN, Colonies, C11C, vol. 16, série 2, n^o. 2.
- ¹¹ Swanson, *Predator and Prizes*, p. 135.
- ¹² Swanson, *Predators and Prizes*, pp. 18-21.
- ¹³ John B. Hattendorf, "Maritime Conflict" in Michael J. Howard *et al*, editors, *The Laws of War: Constraints on Warfare in the Western World* (New Haven: 1994), p. 98.
- ¹⁴ Swanson, *Predators and Prizes*, pp. 40-7.
- ¹⁵ "Conseil des Prises," pp. 45-6.
- ¹⁶ French figures from "Conseil des Prises" and the British figures are from Swanson, *Predators and Prizes*, p. 122.
- ¹⁷ "État des Bâtiments qui ont été faits sur les Anglois et conduits au port de Louisbourg Pendant La présente année 1744," Bigot, Louisbourg, 12 octobre 1744, France, Archives Nationales, Colonies, C11C, vol. 16, série 2, n^o. 2.
- ¹⁸ See Appendixes 1 and 2.
- ¹⁹ See Johnston, *Summer of 1744*, p. 35 and *The Boston Weekly News-Letter*, September 20, 1744.
- ²⁰ Leonard W. Labaree, ed., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 3 (NewHaven: 1961), p. 56.
- ²¹ See Appendix 3.
- ²² Shirley to Newcastle, Boston, September 22, 1744 (OS) in C.H. Lincoln, ed., *Correspondence of William Shirley: Governor of Massachusetts and Military Commander in America, 1731-1760* (New York: 1912), vol. I, p. 148.
- ²³ Hattendorf, "Maritime Conflict," pp. 105-8.
- ²⁴ While the legal status of the Irish girls was not defined in the *Conseil des Prises* records, subsequent threat to have them sold like slaves makes their status as indentured servants abundantly clear.
- ²⁵ Carl Boyer, ed., *Ship Passenger Lists National and New England 1600-1825* (Newhall, California: 1977), p. 189 quoted in Kenneth Donovan, "Subjects of Sectarian Prejudice and Imperial Rivalries: The Irish in Cape Breton 1713-1768" Paper delivered at the Great Irish Famine Conference, Saint John, 29 June 1997.
- ²⁶ Duquesnel à Shirley, 15 Septembre 1744, Louisbourg in *Collection de Manuscrits Contenant Lettres, Mémoires et Autres Documents Historiques Relatifs à la Nouvelle France*, vol. 3 (Quebec: 1884), p. 204.
- ²⁷ Shirley à Duquesnel, 27 Octobre 1744, Boston in *ibid.*, pp. 208-9.

²⁸ “Navire la Ste Claire, Conseil des Prises,” pp. 49-51 and “Goélette corsaire Le Fley, Conseil des Prises,” pp. 62-3.

²⁹ *The Boston Weekly News-Letter*, November 8, 1744 (OS).

³⁰ *Ibid.* November 23, 1744 (OS).

³¹ *Ibid.*, November 8, 1744 (OS).

³² Shirley a Duquesnel, le 27 octobre 1744, Boston, *Collection de Manuscrits*, p. 210.

³³ “Mémoire sur la Nouvelle Angleterre par Monsieur Delabaratz,” Louisbourg, le 19 novembre 1744, *Collection de Manuscrits*, pp. 211-5.

³⁴ R. V. Harris, “Freemasonry in Canada Before 1750,” *Canadian Masonic Research Association*, No. 31, pp. 564-5.

³⁵ “Mémoire sur la Nouvelle Angleterre” p. 215. The passage reads “ils sont persuadés qu’il y a plus de coups à recevoir que de louis d’or à gagner.”

NAVAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF NOVA SCOTIAN PRIVATEERS 1793-1805

Dan Conlin

“Our readers should be informed, that the loyal Province of Nova Scotia in America having suffered severely in the early part of the war from the cruisers of the enemy fitted out a number of privateers to retaliate ... one half of which are owned by the little village of Liverpool, which boast the honour of having launched the brig *Rover*, the hero of our present relation”¹

In 1801 the *Naval Chronicle*, the widely read and semi-official magazine of the Royal Navy published “a very modest relation of a very gallant action” between a privateer brig from Nova Scotia called the *Rover* and four Spanish vessels off the coast of Venezuela. It was indeed a gallant action. The 38 men in *Rover* confronted a 120 men aboard a large Spanish provincial navy schooner supported by three Spanish gunboats. Without the loss of a single man, the *Rover* boarded and captured the Spanish schooner and severely mauled the gunboats. Remarkable beyond the odds of the battle itself was the attention paid to this engagement with the *Naval Chronicle* singling out this distant colonial action for acclaim amidst the huge scale of naval battles during the heart of the Napoleonic Wars. The privateersmen from Nova Scotia had clearly attracted respect and attention of naval figures in their time which merits some consideration today. This paper explores the naval contribution of privateering made to Britain’s North America war at sea with France and Spain in this period of the French Revolutionary Wars. The scale and achievements of privateers in this period challenge traditional assumptions that privateers were quasi-legal pirates and suggests instead that they be considered as a very ambitious sea-going militia who made valuable contributions to the sea war in British North America.

Privateers were privately owned warships licensed by government in wartime to capture enemy ships and keep the proceeds as long as they adhered to regulations administered by the Court of Vice Admiralty. To 20th century eyes, the notion of directly profiting from battles seems vaguely immoral and is often equated with piracy. However it is important to remember that state navies, such as Britain’s Royal Navy also rewarded their crews with shares of captures as the chief reward and incentive to naval service.² Privateers were a privately owned, locally based and volunteer alternative to the navy, following the same rules and regulated by the same Vice Admiralty Court which by the late 18th century was an elaborate and carefully regulated system, making privateers a law abiding and respected supplement to naval warfare.

Privateering was especially important for weak naval powers or colonies where naval forces were thinly stretched or often absent. Atlantic Canada was no exception and its communities sent forth privateers for almost century and a half, from French privateers based in Port Royal, Quebec and Newfoundland in the late 1690s to the final

peak of privateering by Nova Scotian and New Brunswick in the War of 1812. This study examines privateering during the Wars with Revolutionary France from 1793 to 1805, a useful period for study as the records for this time are more rewarding and the privateering operations were among the most ambitious and intensive ever mounted from the region.³ Discussion of Canadian privateering has long been overshadowed by popular writers in the 1920s and 30s such as C.H.J. Snider and Thomas Raddall. In reaction, some professional Canadian historians have dismissed privateering as a marginal and irrelevant activity. However a growing body of international scholarship on privateering now has counterparts in Canada such as Faye Kert's work on the War of 1812 which examines both privateering and the Royal Navy in the same business of "prizemaking" and concludes privateering was effective, respected, well regulated and community based.⁴ The 1793-1805 period differed significantly in its use of larger warships and capture of fewer but larger prizes much further from home. In short, the stakes were higher and the investment of human and material capital was greater. To review the strategic environment Britain went to war with Revolutionary France in 1793. France's navy remained mostly blockaded and the French turned to widespread use of privateers to attack British commerce. The war on commerce was a key element to strategy in the 20 years of war that followed with blockades and decrees mounted to cripple the trade and war effort of the belligerents. In North America, the French did not pose a strong danger until they began to re-establish their West Indies presence with the recapture of Guadeloupe in 1795, a threat which grew a year later when Spain joined France against Britain. British North American merchants who had shown no interest in privateering amidst the boom in wartime trade, now suffered terrible losses in West Indies waters, described in newspapers as "swarming with French Privateers."⁵

One of the communities in British North America most affected by this crisis in trade was the town of Liverpool, 120 kilometers southwest of Halifax. Deprived of their West Indies trade and hit by a related crisis in the fisheries, Liverpool lacked the compensatory army and navy spending being lavished on Halifax. Merchants and mariners instead replied to threat against their West Indies trade with a fleet of privateer vessels. A custom built full rigged ship of war, the *Charles Mary Wentworth* was soon constructed, armed by the Halifax Naval yard, and sent south. It did well on its first cruise and enjoyed spectacular returns on the second cruise, paving the way for seven other Liverpool privateer vessels, along with three from Halifax and one from near-by Shelburne. Another thirty merchant vessels were commissioned for self defence and took a few prizes as well. The dozen privateer vessels from Nova Scotia captured at least sixty enemy vessels in this period and dominated privateering from British North America. (Quebec was too far up the Saint Lawrence for West Indies privateering and Newfoundland too pre-occupied with the fishery.) Almost all square-rigged, deep-sea vessels, they waged a distant war in the West Indies, 2000 miles to the south. The province's privateer fleet enjoyed success for three years, mounting ever more ambitious operations, cruising together in flotillas, attacking enemy land forces and remaining at sea for up to six months. Privateering had to be scaled back starting in 1801 as few enemy ships were left to capture and the remaining French and Spanish trade sought shelter in neutral ships which posed legal difficulties in seizure, enough that by 1805 privateering paused altogether until the War of 1812 brought fresh opportunities against American trade.

Overall Military Value of Privateering

The military value of Nova Scotia's privateering fleet can be measured in two ways: its imperial value and its local or community value. The first involves privateering's contribution to Britain's offensive war with France and Spain. The second involves privateering's contribution to the defence of Nova Scotia.

The primary purpose of privateering was to destroy the enemy's trade, and with their 60 captures, the privateers of Nova Scotia made a useful contribution far out of proportion to their small resources. The Vice Admiralty Court required details of each capture, including position and cargo and cross checked this with prisoner interrogations.⁶ Four main hunting grounds emerge from this evidence. The most popular was "the Spanish Main," the Venezuela coast of South America, specifically the coast between Margarita Island and Puerto Cavello. These captures yielded outbound cargoes of cocoa and indigo and inbound cargoes of wine, brandy and flour.

Many captures were also made amongst the islands of the Caribbean, with the Mona Passage, between Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo being the most popular location. Vessels with sugar, rum and tobacco from Caribbean islands were frequently taken here. A third group broadly encompassed the mid-Atlantic and included vessels from both the Spanish Main and the islands, bound with cargoes for Europe. A related fourth interception area was off the coast of the United States. These were usually vessels with enemy cargoes of cocoa, sugar and other produce of French and Spanish colonies, which had been transhipped in American ports to evade the British blockade.

The Nova Scotian contribution was also valuable in its focus, which was felt most strongly by the Spanish Colonies in South America. The small privateering squadrons conducted an effective blockade of northern Venezuela for weeks at a time, often shutting down important harbours such as La Guaira, the port of entry for Caracas. This was a significant contribution as France had intended Spain to be a useful ally for its naval resources and rich colonial revenues, and the potential of Spain's resources was a "nightmare prospect" feared by British strategists. The severe losses to Spanish shipping to its American colonies in the late 1790s was "the most damaging in the history of the Spanish Empire" and ended for good the Spanish monopoly on trade with its own colonies as the neutral ships, especially American, became a permanent fixture.⁷ Privateers accounted for over a third of the 158 prizes taken before the Vice Admiralty Court in Halifax during this privateering era. Privateers actually outdid the navy in 1799 and came close to equalling navy captures in 1800. Interestingly, the drop in navy captures in 1799, was almost equal to the rise in privateer prizes. In a broader strategic sense this could be seen as taking the commerce-destroying role from navy ships and freeing them for more urgent naval tasks such as seeking enemy warships or convoy protection. This drop in naval captures could also reflect the reassignment of Royal Navy ships from the fluctuating Halifax station. Both navy ships and the privateers felt the legal hurdles posed by neutral ships, with their captures falling off in 1801, but the navy, unlike the privateers, did not depend on captured ships to operate, so its commerce raiding continued, albeit at a lesser rate.

Privateers were a useful supplement to Royal Navy blockade operations as they tended to cruise areas, such as the coast of Venezuela, that were poorly patrolled by the navy and they proved adept at capturing smaller vessels that the navy would not catch.⁸ Naval cruisers were larger and had deeper draughts than privateer vessels. They operated

poorly in coastal areas and could seldom catch swift, shallow draught vessels. The Royal Navy had a chronic problem operating smaller warships thanks to bad ship design, high desertion rates and demoralised crews, especially in colonial theatres.⁹ This problem was later addressed, in large part by copying and converting captured privateers.¹⁰

Aside from their primary role of commerce destruction, the Nova Scotia privateers made other direct military contributions. In total they captured about 60 enemy cannon. Some of this ordnance was eagerly sought by the Halifax dockyard for navy use, especially six pounder guns were apparently in short supply.¹¹ The capture of Spanish batteries along the Spanish Main destroyed at least 23 more cannons as well as capturing scores of muskets and gunpowder. The *Rover's* victory on the coast of Venezuela in 1800 took a large Spanish provincial marine schooner, capturing seventy soldiers and seamen and killing at least thirty.¹² The Nova Scotia privateers also had some success against enemy privateers, taking one French privateer schooner and capturing a large ship newly built for Spanish privateers.¹³ In all Nova Scotian privateer vessels fought at least ten engagements with French privateers. In two cases larger French privateers tried, unsuccessfully, to take the Nova Scotian vessels. However in most cases the Nova Scotian privateers seems to have aggressively sought them out; evidently they were under orders from their owners. Thomas Parker, captain of the *Duke of Kent*, felt compelled to offer apologies and explanations to the owners in a report where he described two unsuccessful chases of French privateer schooners, "I am veary sorry to enform you that we have lost 2 French privateers mainly owing to our ships being crank, not having sufficient ballast, and that of the right kind."¹⁴ On other occasions, French privateers escaped by dashing into the safety of Guadeloupe's harbour, even through the Nova Scotians pursued them until bracketed by the fire of heavy shore batteries.¹⁵

In a similar vein, Nova Scotia privateers also made several remarkable attacks on land fortifications in this period. They were all located on islands, capes and bays on the "Spanish Main," what is today the coast of Venezuela.

Date	Location	Target	Attacked by	Outcome
July 17, 1799	Cumana Bay	Spanish Fort with 18 cannon	C.M Wentworth	Fort taken without casualties. Cannon spiked and pushed into sea. Powder, muskets, artillery equipment captured. ¹⁶
July 22, 1799	Conama Island	Spanish Fort with 5 cannons	C.M. Wentworth	Fort taken, 1 privateer killed, 5 Spanish prisoners taken. Guns spiked & pushed over cliff. Powder and Muskets captured. ¹⁷

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Date	Location	Target	Attacked by	Outcome
Dec. 31, 1799	Blanquilla Island	Spanish battery	Duke of Kent & Lord Spencer	Battery destroyed with little opposition, most of garrison away. ¹⁸
Jan. 27, 1800	Cape Horn Bay	Spanish battery	C.M. Wentworth & Duke of Kent	Unable to land due to heavy surf and stiff enemy fire. ¹⁹

Both the attacks on enemy privateers and on shore targets raises some interesting questions. Attacking fortifications and enemy privateer vessels offered little financial return since such targets yielded little reward in cargoes and prize money but were risky and costly to attack. They may perhaps have been taken to secure a useful anchorages or silence batteries that protected potential prizes. However enemy privateers were more likely pursued to maintain a fighting reputation and to eliminate them as a threat to Nova Scotia's West Indies trade. The wording of privateer reports such as "in the name of our Lord the King, having taken possession of a Fort belonging to the said King of Spain" suggests that the forts offered an opportunity to make a gesture of military prowess, an enhancement of reputation. The fact that one attack was carried out while a Royal Navy frigate was nearby, suggests this, as does the praise these actions earned in Wentworth's dispatches to London:

a Privateer fitted out & armed at Liverpool in this Province proves the great enterprize and spirit of the people & that they are useful to His Majestys Service by destroying the Forts, Ordnance & munitions of his Enemies.²⁰

Turning from broad imperial issues in the Caribbean, to the provincial military issues of Nova Scotia, privateering played an useful auxiliary role in the defence of Maritime Canada. This may seem surprising in an era of supremacy for British sea power. However the Royal Navy often denuded British North American waters of warships in this period to concentrate their forces in European and West Indies waters. The Royal Navy station at Halifax was often reduced to a few light frigates.

In 1794 when a French fleet at New York raised an invasion scare, Nova Scotia's governor, John Wentworth, listed the forces at his disposal. He counted on the 186 men serving in the various armed trading ships at Halifax as a key resource, a force that was almost equal to the 200 men in the single naval frigate on station.²¹ Clearly seeing privateers as an important defensive asset, he preceded a call for privateering authority in 1793 with a description of the lack of naval ships on station and then pleaded: "... I wish to God, I had the armed Schooner mentioned in my previous letters ... Instructions have been sent to the Judge of Admiralty, for granting Letters of Marque, but no letter or commission to me to issue the commissions."²² On two occasions the Liverpool privateers acted directly as direct defensive units for the town. In August of 1803, three small French privateers arrived to lay in wait off of Liverpool Harbour. Unfortunately for them, Liverpool was a rather poor choice for a raid at this time, as it was swarming with armed privateersmen preparing for a cruise. At the first news of the French privateers, the Liverpool privateers manned several small boats and attacked the French with musket

fire, sending them fleeing into the Atlantic. On another occasion, a large armed ship was reported to be ominously waiting at White Point, just outside the approaches to Liverpool Harbour. The privateer brig, the *Rover*, preparing for a cruise, quickly assembled its men, fitted sails and within an hour sailed out to challenge the stranger. She turned out to be a Halifax-bound merchant ship that had just made landfall from the Caribbean.²³

One of the defensive advantages of privateering was it was usually most affordable and popular when enemy threats were the greatest. However privateers were designed to be at sea, seeking enemy ships to capture, so they could not be a consistent defence force, so on other occasions, Liverpool called on the Royal Navy and provincial warships to drive off privateers, especially when privateer crews were away or dispersed.²⁴

However, even in their offensive capacity privateers could be seen as a defense of trade, seeking to eliminate enemy privateers and sometimes acting as escorts for local West Indies merchant ships. Excluded from peacefully trading in the Caribbean, they were not going to relinquish the southern waters without a struggle and thus replaced their trading ventures with military ones. Many of their prizes belonged to the competitors who had seized the Caribbean trade, neutral American merchants ships.²⁵

The way privateering changed to the perception of security in Liverpool can clearly be seen in Simeon Perkin's reactions to strange sails on the horizon of Liverpool Bay. Before privateering, an unrecognised ship was a cause for alarm, mustering of the militia, priming of the cannons at Fort Point. After the advent of privateering, strange sails were a cause for optimism; often being a new prize sent in by Liverpool's privateers.²⁶ Privateering had largely made Liverpool a well-armed and military organized community, a poor choice of target for enemy raids and a far cry from its helpless status in the early stages of the American Revolution. Instead of being a helpless victim of a huge international struggle, Liverpool had become a player.

Relations and Operations with the Royal Navy

Privateers and the Royal Navy competed for both manpower and enemy prizes and traditionally scholars have seen great hostility between the two. Privateers in this period did suffer from naval impressment in the Caribbean, but they enjoyed very good relations with the Royal Navy on the Halifax station, and in several cases built good relationships with Royal Navy ships in the West Indies. Simeon Perkins found Admiral George Vandeput co-operative when the privateers began to organise in 1798, "I wait on the Admiral. Introduced by Mr. Uniacke. He is very agreeable, & willing to Supply us with the Guns, Shot, etc., for the Privateer." Vandeput not only armed Perkins's privateer, but even lent his theatre box to Perkins for a performance that night. He also wrote letters to Royal Navy commanders in the West Indies supporting Nova Scotia's privateers and requesting fair treatment for their concerns.²⁷

In the West Indies, privateer vessels usually kept well out of the way of Royal Navy ships, both to avoid impressment of their seamen and to avoid having their prizes seized by unscrupulous navy commanders who sometimes would claim a privateer prize as their own.²⁸ The privateer ship *Charles Mary Wentworth* had nine men pressed by the navy frigate HMS *La Unite* in 1799 but many other navy ships on the same cruise left the *Wentworth* unmolested, such as HMS *Boston* which "very politely" stopped the *Wentworth* to check her papers and gather intelligence.²⁹ One reason while privateer-navy relations were often harmonious was the assistance privateers provided to the Royal Navy in gathering intelligence such as this surviving report from the *Wentworth*:

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August the 9 Left the Spanish Main and stood for Curacao for the Purpose of Examining the Island. August the 10, made the Island Examined the Harbour Saw two Dutch Frigates there one having her Sails bent and ready for sea the other her Topmast Launched and very few men on board Saw a number of small privateers in the harbour, by the Best information that I Could, there were 600 Cannon mounted on the Island.³⁰

On occasion, privateer ships cruised in company with Royal Navy ships. The *Duke of Kent* spent several days with HMS *Boston* in January of 1800, sharing a capture of a schooner.³¹ The *Duke of Kent's* commander, at this time was Joseph Freeman who excelled at cultivating good relations with the Royal Navy. Later in the War of 1812, Freeman often teamed up with many navy ships on cruises to share in more captures, and playing a crucial role in the destruction of the famous American privateer, the *Young Teazer*, and re-enforcing the crew of HMS *Shannon* just before its duel with the USS *Chesapeake*.³² After his noted defeat of three Spanish warships in 1800, Alexander Godfrey, of the *Rover*, is believed to have been offered a Royal navy commission in recognition of his skills and achievement.³³ The Bermuda privateer ship the *Experiment*, under Hezekiah Frith also made joint cruises with Royal Navy vessels and was attached to a navy squadron for a month.³⁴ This sort of co-operation was not as uncommon as many historians have assumed, and largely explored evidence suggests that the Royal Navy often used privateers as tenders and scouts and it was far from unheard of for navy officers to take a spell at privateering between naval commands

Relations with Militia Units

Privateers make a strong case to be considered as a seagoing militia, a community controlled military force that answered to local needs and one that was at least as effective as the Sea Fencible reserve units being created at the same time in Britain.³⁵ This function is strongly supported by the many links between the Queens County militia regiment and its privateer companies. There was a noticeable parallel between leadership of the Queens County militia and the Liverpool privateers.

	Militia Rank	Privateer Station
Sim Perkins	Colonel	Principal owner & agent for privateer vessels
Nathaniel Freeman	Lt. Col	Lieut C.M. Wentworth
Nathan Tupper	Capt	Lieut (1799) & Capt (1800) C.M. Wentworth
Joseph Barfs	Capt	Principal owner & agent for several vessels
Hallet Collins	1st Lieut	Principal owner of several privateer vessels
Snow Parker	1st Lieut	Principal owner & agent of several privateer vessels
Issac Dexter	2nd Lieut	Builds & refits privateers, son on C.M. Wentworth
Elkanah Freeman	2nd Lieut	2nd Lieut Lord Spencer ³⁶

Privateer owners picked captains and the captain picked his senior officers. This process integrated the privateers within a familiar structure of command closely tied to the community in which they lived. This overlap was not restricted to privateer owners and officers but also encompassed a large proportion of the seamen and marines who volunteered to sail under officers they knew from the militia service on the land. The reputation of certain officers created important bonds, similar to the “command by respect” of leaders in New England’s volunteer provincial units.³⁷

Other parallels existed in both material and official guise. The uniforms of the privateer marines were borrowed from the Queens County militia and the muskets and sidearms on privateers were almost certainly militia weapons. The Governor recognized the nature of militia service at sea with special warrants for militia members to serve on privateers. The main purpose of these warrants was to protect privateers from navy pressgangs but, as these protection warrants were subject to careful scrutiny by naval commanders, they were based on a genuine reality of militia service at sea.³⁸ The land and sea militias of Liverpool also carried out overlapping functions. Privateers and militia call-ups both provided wages, food and work for the unemployed. Interestingly, the land militia of Liverpool also captured ships and shared in Vice Admiralty awards. In 1797 the militia secured a French ship, the *Bernsdorf*, that was stranded near Liverpool and after a struggle with Halifax authorities, received a share of its capture. Most of the militia men who led this seizure became privateers soon after.³⁹

Conclusion

Privateering’s military legacy in Liverpool was a generation of officers and seamen skilled at operating small warships to the benefit of their home communities and to the broad goals of the empire. However it was not the birth of the Royal Canadian Navy as some writers such as Thomas Raddall have suggested. Privateers were too dependant on the fluctuating supply of enemy shipping to be a long-term military institution. Changing legalities in naval warfare and the huge expense of armoured steam warships would make private warships obsolete. For a few generations a cultural legacy of local military self-sufficiency remained from privateering. As late as the American Civil War, the noted Nova Scotian leader Joe Howe enthusiastically promoted privateering as an ideal response to possible American invasion.⁴⁰ However, as generations passed, it was the Royal Navy and its traditions that came to dominate popular perception of the naval past. Privateering became relegated to a mythical association of piracy which still persists. However when considering the many strands of service which preceeded the creation of a Canadian Navy, privateers deserve, as much as any colonial militia unit, to be considered as one of the ways Canadians sought to defend themselves and their communities.

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Appendix A

Nova Scotia Privateers 1793-1805

Ship	Year	Crew	Tons	Guns	Rig	Prizes	Port
C.M. Wentworth	1798	80	130	16	ship	11	Liverpool
Nymph	1799	90	169	18	brigt n	3	Halifax
Nelson	1799	80	140	16	brigt n	12	Shelburne
Duke of Kent	1799	100	196	20	ship	8	Liverpool
Fly	1799	40	71	10	schnr	3	Liverpool
Lord Spencer	1799	58	12		schnr	1	Liverpool
General Bowyer	1800	80	135	14	ship	4	Halifax
Nymph	1800	100	130	18	ship	2	Liverpool
Rover	1800	60	100	16	brig	8	Liverpool
Eagle	1800	65	148	14	schnr	1	Halifax
Earl of Dublin	1800	80	100	10	schnr	5	Halifax
Frances Mary	1800	50		10	sloop	0	Liverpool

In addition to these privateers, another thirty vessels received Letters of Marque for defensive purposes.

Sources: Vice Admiralty Casefiles, Lt. Gvnr records and Perkins Diary.

NOTES

- ¹ *Naval Chronicle* Vol. 5, Feb. 1801, p. 176.
- ² Carl Swanson, *Predators and Prizes: American Privateering and Imperial Warfare, 1739-1748*, (Columbia S.C., 1991), 1-2; John S. Bromely, *Corsairs and Navies 1660-1760*, (London, 1987).
- N.A.M Rogers, *The Wooden World*, (London, 1986), 128.
- ³ The diaries of Simeon Perkins, a privateer owner and town official carefully recorded the movement of people, ships and money. His account can be compared to Court of Vice Admiralty case files of captures as well as newspaper coverage and other privateer correspondence.
- ⁴ C.H.J. Snider, *Under the Red Jack: Privateers of the Maritime Provinces in the War of 1812*, (London, 1928); Thomas H. Raddall, *The Rover: The Story of a Canadian Privateer* (Toronto, 1958). David Sutherland "War and Peace," 238 and J.M. Bumsted "Resettlement and Rebellion," 171, in *The Atlantic Region to Confederation*, (Toronto, 1993), 206; Faye Kert. *Prize and Prejudice: Privateering and Naval Prize in Atlantic Canada in the War of 1812*, Research in Maritime History No. 11, (St. Johns, Nfld, 1997).
- ⁵ Nova Scotia Royal Gazette Feb 27, 1798.
- ⁶ The location and cargo information is taken mostly from libel and interrogation documents Vice Admiralty casefiles, NA RG 8 IV.
- ⁷ Christopher Hall, *British Strategy in the Napoleonic War*, (Manchester: Manchester U. Press, 1992), p. 90. John Lynch, *Bourbon Spain*, Oxford: Basil, Blackwell, 1989, p. 395. Spanish colonial exports fell by 49 per cent from 1799 to 1801, the peak years of Nova Scotian privateering.
- ⁸ Bermuda privateers also succeeded in finding prizes that eluded the navy. Henry Wilkinson, *Bermuda From Sail to Steam* Vol. 1, (London: Oxford University Press, 1973) p. 146.
- ⁹ John Bromely considered the limitations of navy versus privateer coastal operations in in "Channel Island Privateers," *Corsairs and Navies*, p. 340. Alfred Thayer Mahan considered navy pursuit problems in *The Influence of Seapower Upon the French Revolution and Empire*, p. 210. A vivid description of the problems of a Royal Navy schooner in Halifax is in Harold Hahn's *The Colonial Schooner*, (Annapolis Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1981), p. 29.
- ¹⁰ Howard Chapelle, *The Search for Speed Under Sail*, (New York: Norton, 1967), p.130.
- ¹¹ Perkins to Uniacke May 16, 1799, *Perkins Diary*, Vol. V, p.463. The shortage of six pounders was described by the Halifax agents of the Nelson. letter Oct. 11, 1799, PANS MG 1 Vol. 951 #637. About a fifth of the prizes taken were armed.
- ¹² The captured schooner was the Santa Rita, 120 tons, 12 guns. In this engagement, the Rover also severely damaged two Spanish gunboats that accompanied the Santa Rita. The Spanish losses were well detailed by four Spanish prisoners interrogated by the Vice Admiralty Court. NA RG 8 IV Vol. 39 "Santa Rita."
- ¹³ The Nymph took a French privateer of 4 guns in 1798, *Royal Gazette*, Dec. 28, 1798. The Halifax privateer ship, the Earl of Dublin, took the Brutus, a 130-ton ship en route to privateer buyers in Havana in 1800. NA RG 8 IV Vol. 33 "Brutus."
- ¹⁴ Thomas Parker to the agents of the Duke of Kent, Aug. 12, 1799. NA MG 23 J17.
- ¹⁵ Log of Wentworth, Mar 17, 1800.
- ¹⁶ Report by Joseph Freeman, PRO CO217 Vol. 70, p.193, Mfm 13866.
- ¹⁷ NA RG 8 4 Vol. 115; *Perkins Diary*, Sept. 4, 1799, p. 187.
- ¹⁸ PANS MG 20 Vol. 215 #10.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ Wentworth to Portland, Sept. 29, 1799, PRO CO 217 Vol. 70 p.188, Mfm 13866.

- ²¹ State of Force at Halifax, May 8, 1794 PRO CO 217 Vol. 36.
- ²² Wentworth to King, June 21, 1793, PRO CO217 Vol. 36, p. 179.
- ²³ *Perkins Diary*, Aug. 5 & 6, 1803, IV, p. 479; Jan 18 1801, IV, pp. 276.
- ²⁴ *Perkins Diary*, Aug. 9, 11 & 19, 1801, IV, pp. 322, 323, 325.
- ²⁵ Interestingly American armed merchant ships also carried the burden of trade defence in this period. John Pelzer, "Armed Merchantmen and Privateers: Another Perspective On America's Quasi-War With France," *American Neptune*, Vol. 50 No. 4, p. 270.
- ²⁶ Compare the alarmed reaction to a strange ship on Jan. 10, 1797, IV, p. 3 to Perkins hopeful reaction to another strange sail on Sept. 18, 1798, "A Brig appears in the Harbour. We wish it a Prize."
- ²⁷ *Perkins Diary*, June 29, 1798 The show, a musical called *The City Romp* along with some sort of comedy called *Chronobotonthologos*, was the first play Perkins had ever seen, aside from visiting theatre troops in Liverpool. He was not very impressed.
- ²⁸ The Nelson lost a prize this way to the HMS Brunswick. There were several examples of questionable navy claims, often achieved with violent intimidation of privateer crews, to privateer prizes both in the War of 1812 and the American Revolution. Snider, *Under the Red Jack*, p. 103-111. George Mullane, "The Privateers of Nova Scotia, 1756-1783," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, XX, (1921) p. 36-39.
- ²⁹ Log of Wentworth, Jan. 19, 1800.
- ³⁰ Report by Joseph Freeman, PRO CO217 Vol. 70, p.193, Mfm 13866.
- ³¹ Log of Wentworth, Jan. 26 & 27, 1800. This prize was probably sent to a West Indies Vice Admiralty Court as there are no records about it in Nova Scotia.
- ³² Snider, *Under the Red Jack*, p.122, 133, 134, 146.
- ³³ Halifax Monthly Magazine, (Vol. 2, 1853) pp. 338-349. Naval records have not been explored on this point, but such an offer would have been quite plausible. One of the most prominent Royal Navy officers in early Halifax, John Rous, was a former privateersman. After distinguishing himself at Louisbourg in 1745, he was commissioned into the Royal Navy. W.A.B. Douglas, "John Rous," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. III (1974), pp.572-574; Swanson, *Predators and Prizes*, p. 67. Navy officers became privateersmen and vice-versa more often than generally acknowledged. Colin Elliot, "Some Transactions of a Dartmouth Privateer During the French Wars at the End of the Eighteenth Century" in *Studies in British Privateering, Trading Enterprize and Seamen's Welfare, 1775-1900*, (No. 17 Exeter Papers in Economic History), p. 37.
- ³⁴ Jean de Chantal Kennedy *Frith of Bermuda: Gentlemen Privateer*, (Hamilton: Bermuda Books, 1964), p. 80.
- ³⁵ The Sea Fencibles manned Martello Towers and small armed vessels to protect shipping and harass French invasion preparations from 1793 to 1810. Their effectiveness varied but they eventually numbered 25,000 men. Hall, *British Strategy in the Napoleonic War*, p. 9.
- ³⁶ PANS RG 1 v 171 p132 Return of the Queens County Militia May 5 1795.
- ³⁷ Steven Eames, *Rustic Warriors: Warfare and the Provincial Soldier on the Northern Frontier, 1689-1748*, (Ph.D. dissertation, University of New Hampshire, 1989), pp. 324-235.
- ³⁸ Thomas Raddall discusses militia uniforms in the *The Rover*, p. 21. The Queens County militia were issued 200 muskets at the beginning of the war to distribute at their discretion. *Perkins Diary*, III, Aug. 17, 1793, p. 246. One of several militia warrants issued for the privateers was: Warrant by John Wentworth for 100 men of the Queens Co. Militia to serve on the Duke of Kent, Nov. 4, 1799, MG 20, Vol. 702, Item No. 34.
- ³⁹ The militia men who took the Bernsdorf initially demanded to immediately divide its salvage among themselves, fearing that the navy would take all the proceeds. They were persuaded by militia officers to submit its capture to the Vice Admiralty Court which eventually awarded the militia a portion. *Perkins Diary*, III, xxiv-xxv; July 8, 1797, IV, 37.
- ⁴⁰ Greg Marquis, *In Armageddon's Shadow* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 24-25. Britain and most seagoing nations (excluding the United States) outlawed privateering with the Declaration of Paris in 1856.

PRIVATE WAR, PUBLIC SERVICE: MARITIME CANADA'S PRIVATE WAR OF 1812

Faye Kert

“The port of Halifax is crowded with prizes; yet they are generously treated, for the captors give up all the adventure and baggage; and none but valuable vessels are sent in; coasting vessels not molested as yet.”¹

Barely two months into the war, the Boston papers were already commenting on the volume and value of American prizes carried into Halifax. Between June 24, 1812 when the first prize was taken, and the last recorded capture seized on March 26, 1815, over 40 privateers from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and 118 British naval vessels carried more than 600 prize vessels and their cargoes into port. Of these, Nova Scotia Vice-Admiralty Court records indicate 204, or roughly one third, were taken by provincial privateers².

Smaller and more lightly armed and crewed than their more than 500 American counterparts, the private armed vessels of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick preferred to patrol the waters closest to home. Although only one privateer, the *Liverpool Packet*, captured more than 20 prizes, the majority of letter of marque vessels captured fewer than ten and some took no prizes at all, privateering remained a popular activity throughout the war. Conducted by respectable merchants and ship owners who successfully combined patriotism and personal profit, Canada's private War of 1812 can be characterized as “well capitalized, law-abiding, business-like, generally well-behaved and moderately successful.”³ This paper will examine the economic and strategic effect of Canada's Atlantic privateers on the conduct of the war in North America.

A centuries-old military practice, the use of private armed vessels during wartime reached its peak during the War of 1812. As an economic weapon against an enemy's trade, privateering or *guerre de course*, was the natural resource of a weaker against a stronger maritime power.⁴ As opposed to the expenses associated with naval forces, privateers required no financial commitment from the government for either vessels or crew. Their strategic advantage was serving as naval auxiliaries and enhancing the harassment of enemy trade. By the nineteenth century, private armed warfare was hinged on the strategic principle that shipping was the lynchpin of a mercantile system. “If enemy commerce could be crippled, colonies cut off, outposts harried or occupied and war supplies curtailed, then a favourable peace was likely to be the outcome.”⁵ If, in achieving this goal, privateers could make money from the sales of the ships and cargoes they captured, all the better.

The maritime provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were no strangers to the business of privateering. During Britain's mid-eighteenth century wars with France and later during the American Revolutionary War, several communities sent out private armed vessels carrying letters of marque. One such entrepreneur was Simeon Perkins, a former American who relocated to Liverpool, Nova Scotia in 1762 when the town was only two years old. The diaries which he kept for nearly fifty years recount the active role

he played in the commercial, religious, political and legal life of his community. His full or partial ownership of some nine privateers during the various conflicts prior to the War of 1812⁶ is typical of the transitory role of privateering in the economic life of Atlantic Canada. Under wartime conditions, it was a perfectly respectable and acceptable means of making a living, but once peace was declared, Perkins and his partners were happy to either sell their vessels or convert them to more a prosaic but profitable trade as merchantmen.

While the records of the Halifax Vice-Admiralty Court indicate that letters of marque were issued to more than 40 provincial vessels during the War of 1812, it is clear that only some of them were actively engaged in commerce raiding. The others merely carried a letter of marque as a low-cost insurance policy that enabled them to take advantage of a prize making opportunity should it sail their way. Deprived of their regular commerce by wartime conditions, the merchants and entrepreneurs of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick had several options. They could obtain licences to carry American foodstuffs to British troops in Europe, they could continue a longstanding tradition of smuggling goods to and from waiting American ships, or they could risk their crews and their capital as privateers. For those unwilling to embark on either transatlantic or illegal trade, privateering provided a viable commercial outlet for ships, sailors and supplies that would have otherwise lain idle.

The value of privateering as a naval auxiliary varied directly with the strength of the navy. Although the Royal Navy boasted the largest fleet in the world at the time and the United States Navy had barely a handful of frigates under sail, the Halifax squadron under Sir John Coape Sherbrooke was beset by problems of both supply and command. Already thinly stretched by Britain's ongoing war against Napoleon in Europe, the North Atlantic squadron was further handicapped by too few serviceable ships, mediocre commanders, inexperienced officers, a shortage of manpower and a dearth of naval supplies. This fact, aggravated by inadequate and dilapidated land defences made privateering not just an adjunct to Britain's war at sea, but at times, the only weapon.

Prelude to War

From 1800 on, merchants, shipowners, fishermen and sailors in Halifax, Saint John and a score of small coastal communities along the Atlantic seaboard struggled to make a living through fishing, lumbering and maritime trade. They regularly petitioned the Lieutenant Governor requesting bounties for fish, demanding increased duties on American trade and lobbying for the exclusive privilege of supplying fish to the West Indies.⁷ Their anxiety about the economic future of their province is understandable as they watched Nova Scotia fishermen lured south to the United States because of the bounties offered for fish. In fact, according to one source, most of the fish caught in Atlantic Canada ended up sold to Americans or exchanged for smuggled goods and shipped to the West Indies from Boston instead of Halifax.⁸ In 1807 a self-imposed American embargo designed to seal off their ports from British vessels generally failed because of the ever-present opportunities for smuggling and the willingness of maritime Customs officials to look the other way.

Despite a much smaller population than the New England states and with less capital at their disposal, the merchants of Atlantic Canada established solid commercial relationships in England, Europe and the West Indies that served them in good stead both before and during the war. Unable to obtain the elusive monopoly on the West Indian

trade, Nova Scotia merchants continued pleading for concessions to compensate for commercial opportunities lost in the confusion of pre-war trade embargoes and restrictions. In 1809 Halifax was finally granted status as a free port and again from 1811 to the outbreak of war. Neutral ships were allowed to call in and sell their cargoes to supplement British goods. This made Halifax a depot in both import and export goods,⁹ and also created a thriving mercantile community that had a vested interest in ensuring that, war or no war, it maintained its livelihood.

President Madison's declaration of war on Great Britain in June 1812 merely formalized a situation that had been deteriorating steadily since the Peace of Amiens in 1802. In 1807, the captain of HMS *Leopard* nearly precipitated a war by firing on the American frigate *Chesapeake* and removing four so-called "deserters," one British-born sailor and three Americans. This high-handed action outraged the American public and prompted the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, Sir Charles Wentworth, to caution Lord Castlereagh, the British Secretary of State, about the "violent sentiments prevailing in the United States being expressed in terms not far distant from hostile."¹⁰ An uneasy peace characterized the next few years of on-again off-again trade as Napoleon's Berlin and Milan Decrees were echoed by various British and American embargoes and Non-Intercourse Acts. By early 1812, however, Nova Scotia's new Lieutenant Governor Sherbrooke anticipated the impending conflict and urgently petitioned Lord Liverpool for enough vessels at Halifax "to protect the coast from Insult and the trade from molestation."¹¹ Distracted by the war in Europe, the British government ignored the increasingly strident pro-war rhetoric surrounding the US presidential elections of 1812. The American declaration of war caught the British government by surprise and indicated just how badly it had misread the character of its feisty former colony.

The Problem with Privateering

The legal regulations governing privateering and international prize law had been developed over six centuries into a smoothly operating system. By 1812, the principles and practices of prizemaking were familiar to both the legal and seafaring communities of Europe and North America. No sooner was war declared than American ship owners and merchants raced to obtain letters of marque from the government and prepare their ships for sea. Within days, the *Nova Scotia Royal Gazette* was reporting three privateers launched from Salem and three or four from Marblehead with the promise of many more to follow.¹² Would-be provincial privateers rushing to obtain letters of marque found themselves in a "Catch-22" situation. The commissions they needed had to come from the Lieutenant Governor as head of the Vice-Admiralty Court. Activation of the Vice-Admiralty Court as a prize court required an official declaration of war, usually followed by a Prize Act. But the British government refused to declare war immediately in the hope that hostilities could be somehow be avoided.

Lieutenant Governor Sherbrooke was suddenly torn between anxious merchants clamouring for letters of marque and a cautious Colonial Office urging tolerance. His decision to issue general commissions against France and unspecified enemies of the Crown was an attempt to please both sides, but it left the first few privateers in a legal limbo. The settlement of £27,000 in prize money for 17 prizes earned by the *Liverpool Packet* in 1812 was not resolved until several years after the war.¹³

Throughout the war, the legal administration of privateering remained its major drawback. According to international maritime law, no property captured by a letter of

marque vessel could be transferred to the captor until it had been adjudicated and condemned by a prize court, in the case of Atlantic Canada, the Vice-Admiralty Court in Halifax. Although the process was well understood, and Judge Croke's court was considered to be one of the best in the colonies, the cost of court and custody fees and delays could be ruinous. While unusually lengthy and complicated, the case of *Penelope* and thirteen tierces of coffee seized in August 1812 by the New Brunswick privateer *General Smyth* indicates just how expensive the process could be. Two years after capture the prize was finally condemned and the coffee that hadn't been spoiled sold for £338.10.111/2. Even when the court cut the custody costs in half, the captor's profit after deductions was less than £70. As a rule, court costs represented roughly 12 per cent of the total cost of condemnation.¹⁴

Economic Impact

As it was conducted in Atlantic Canada in 1812, privateering was a cooperative commercial activity that usually involved investors, shipowners and crews from the same community, if not the same family. Conservative by nature and inclination, they carefully weighed the opportunities for prize money and adventure against the standard dangers of seafaring such as storms, and shipwreck, and the wartime likelihood of combat, capture, and imprisonment. Although the most successful Canadian privateers, the *Liverpool Packet*, *Sir John Sherbrooke* and *Retaliation*, brought in over 80 prizes between them, most of the others considered themselves lucky to make back their investment. Nevertheless, stories about men like Thomas Freeman, who was said to have made up for twenty years of seafaring in just two weeks of cruising aboard *Retaliation*¹⁵ fuelled popular interest in privateering. Few could resist the twin pulls of patriotic service and private profit.

Financially, the difference between outfitting a ship for a regular merchant voyage with a letter of marque, and setting up a vessel to cruise as a privateer could be as much as \$25,000.¹⁶ Since few cargo vessels in Canada's maritime fleet had the sleek, swift lines and manoeuvrability desirable in a privateer, it was faster and more efficient to purchase prize vessels at auction and use them against their former owners. As a result, at least fifteen captured American privateers reappeared under the red jack¹⁷. One was the *Retaliation* brought for £ 530 by Thomas Freeman from prize money he earned as a prize master for the *Liverpool Packet*¹⁸. Others were like the *Liverpool Packet*, bought by Enos Collins for £ 400 and converted from a slave tender, and the *Brunswicker*, a former American revenue cutter.

In addition to the cost of the vessel, the owners had to ship additional guns and ordnance, store extra masts, sails, rigging and any other supplies that might be necessary for repairs at sea and provide accommodations and provisions for a crew of up to 100 men for from two to six months. Once the ship was ready for sea, the owners or investors were further required to post a bond of £1,500 for good behaviour for an average size ship. In return for equipping and victualling a privateer, owners usually received a percentage, usually half, of the net profits of a venture. Nevertheless, such a large outlay of capital demanded a fair degree of commitment from the owners and investors. The fact that the last letter of marque of the war was issued to the thirty-ton schooner *Dove* at the end of January 1815 indicates that, despite its mixed returns, privateering remained a viable investment outlet throughout the war.

In order to spread the costs and the risks as broadly as possible, ownership was shared between two or more partners, a business, such as Messrs. Belcher and Wright in Halifax, or the province of New Brunswick which owned the *General Smyth*, *Hunter* and *Brunswicker*. Officers and crews agreed to serve aboard a privateer for a pre-determined number of shares rather than wages, trusting to their captain's skills and their own luck. Given the average crewman's wage of \$15-30 per month at the time, it would not take many prizes to match or exceed that figure. While few were as lucky as the *Dart's* crew, who are said to have earned \$500 apiece on their first cruise,¹⁹ the reappearance of the same names as captains and prize masters on various ships, means that the earnings must have been worth the effort.

Aside from signing on board a privateer, there were a number of ways to participate in a prizemaking venture. Halifax merchants Enos Collins and Samuel Cunard between them invested as owners or bondsmen in seven privateers: the *Liverpool Packet*, *Sir John Sherbrooke*, *Dart*, *Rolla*, *Dolphin*, *Ann* and *Snadragon*. Even more active were the Barss and Freeman families of Liverpool, Nova Scotia. Not only did they invest their capital in the *Liverpool Packet*, *Retaliation*, *Sir John Sherbrooke*, *Wolverine*, *Rolla*, *Minerva* and *Saucy Jack*, their sons sailed aboard each others' vessels as masters and prize crew, eventually investing their profits as owners. Entrepreneurs in Saint John, New Brunswick and Annapolis Royal and Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, followed a similar pattern of investment, spreading the risk over several vessels or cruises and participating only as long as there were profits to be made.

Privateering generated direct economic benefits for other members of the maritime community.²⁰ Twenty-three Halifax merchants and one from Saint John are identified as prize agents for the crews or officers of privateers and naval vessels. Prize agents ensured that their clients' share of prize money or other entitlements were paid by the courts or safeguarded them until the owners returned to port or could receive their funds. Prize agents such as John Dougan, George Redmond Hulbert and the Halifax firm of Hartshorne and Boggs received commissions of five per cent on the net value of sales enabling them to amass a tidy fortune during the war.²¹ A further 47 appraisers received three shillings every time they were appointed by the Vice-Admiralty Court to inspect prize vessels and cargos to determine their value or condition. This was a particularly important service when the cargo was in danger of spoiling if it were not sold immediately, or if its appraisal could affect the condemnation and sale. For example, when a specialized cargo such as copper sheeting or ships stores were seized, a shipwright or blacksmith might be hired by the court to contribute his specialized knowledge. For the appraisers, many of who were also merchants and investors, the inside knowledge of what cargoes might be coming up for auction was an added bonus.

The value of privateering to Atlantic Canada's coastal economy was significant. Not only did it provide employment for seamen and an outlet for mercantile activity otherwise choked off by wartime trade restrictions and enemy cruisers, it provided a market for shipbuilding, chandlery, ropemaking and other maritime industries. The vessels and cargoes carried in provided consumers with basic commodities such as flour, sugar, corn and rice that were in short supply, as well as luxury items such as brandy, fine wines, silks and "segars."

One of the most useful prize cargoes in a province where there were no banks and a dearth of hard currency was specie. Captured prior to Britain's official declaration of war in October, and therefore condemned to the Crown and not the naval captors, the cargoes of *Mary Elizabeth* (St. Ubes, \$2,313), *Maria* (Cadiz, \$32,000), *Cordelia* (Figuera, \$21,144), *Hiram* (Lisbon, \$12,800), *Four Sisters* (Lisbon, \$1,000), *Bolina* (Gibraltar, \$13,550) and *Eastern Star* (Corunna, \$21,000) enriched Governor Sherbrooke's coffers by over \$100,000. Any money generated through the pursuit of prizes or the sales of prize cargoes at auction was eventually returned to the provincial economy and did much to compensate for the loss of regular trade in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Most of the communities in Canada's maritime provinces enjoyed unprecedented prosperity as a result of the wartime boom from 1812 to 1815. Salaries, rents, housing and commodity prices rose as prizes captured by both navy vessels and privateers flooded the markets in Halifax, Saint John and Liverpool. Even when so many cargoes of flour and corn were brought in to Halifax that local prices went down, there remained huge profits to be made when these goods were re-shipped to Great Britain.²² Meanwhile, the presence of a large naval garrison in Halifax ensured that all foodstuffs and any lumber or naval supplies, including some of the prizes themselves, would find a ready market. In fact, between 1805 and 1815, thanks to the rising cost of wages and supplies such as beef, naval spending pumped some £2.9 million into the Nova Scotia economy.²³

Strategic Implications

The economic and strategic value of privateering to the War of 1812 are difficult to calculate. During the first few months of the war, when Admiral Warren's naval strength consisted of HMS *Africa* (64), *Shannon* (38), *Belvidera* and *Guerriere* (36), *Aeolus* (32), the brig *Nautilus* and a few other vessels stretched from Halifax to Bermuda,²⁴ there is no doubt that the presence of the *Liverpool Packet* and a few other successful privateers discouraged attacks by American privateers and contributed to the security of Canada's coasts. Their importance diminished, however, once the Royal Navy began the slow, deliberate process of blockading the entire coast of America. Privateer captures, which peaked in the summer of 1813, gradually dwindled down to a handful by the fall of 1814, as more and more American shipping was bottled up in its own ports. Even their usefulness as intelligence gatherers for the Navy declined with the ship traffic.

The one strategic contribution of privateers throughout the war was nuisance value. Every capture represented some form of loss to the owners, shippers and crew of the prize. Cargoes seized represented merchandise or food no longer available to American markets and, at the very least, shortages and inconvenience for the intended buyers. By April 1813, in a letter to Alexander Baring of Baring Brothers and Company in London, New Orleans merchant Vincent Nolte complained that the war caused "very heavy sacrifices on our part and bears so hard on all classes of citizens."²⁵ Shipping losses raised insurance costs for any American shipowners still daring to trade while stories of captures in local newspapers made masters and crews more reluctant to sail.

Conclusion

Eventually, the combination of naval pressure and private armed aggravation drove the American government to the peace table on December 24, 1814. At least six more

privateer prizes were sent in to Halifax before the news of the Treaty of Ghent officially reached Nova Scotia in March, but by then, most of the resources devoted to privateering had reverted back to more peaceful pre-war activities of fishing and shipping. As part of the maritime War of 1812, the privateers of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick risked their ships, their fortunes and even their lives. In return, their prize ships and cargoes bolstered the economies of their provinces and helped persuade their American neighbours towards peace. In the end, this was no small contribution.

NOTES

- ¹ Reprinted from a Boston paper, 23 July, 1812. London *Times*. London, 11 September, 1812, p. 3.
- ² National Archives of Canada , RG 8, IV, Vice-Admiralty Court, Halifax, 1784-1818, Prize Court Records (Vols. 73-150).
- ³ Kert, Faye. "Prize and Prejudice – Privateering and Naval Prize in Atlantic Canada in the War of 1812." *Research in Maritime History*, No. 11, St. John's: International Maritime Economic History Association, 1997, 155.
- ⁴ Jacobs, Major James Ripley and Glenn Tucker. *The War of 1812 – A Compact History*. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1969, 169.
- ⁵ Hill, Richard. *The Prizes of War -The Naval Prize System in the Napoleonic Wars, 1793-1815*. Stroud: Sutton Publishing in Association with the Royal Naval Museum, 1998, 7.
- ⁶ Leefe John. *The Atlantic Privateers, their story – 1749-1815*. Halifax: Pentheric Press, pp. 39-44
- ⁷ In February 1811, Caleb Nickerson and 90 other inhabitants of fishing districts in the province asked the Assembly to extend the bounty on fishing vessels to their smaller craft and requested a bounty on mackerel. Petition of Caleb Nickerson, 10 February, 1811 (Assembly Papers, Vol. 17), Legislative Papers, 217.
- ⁸ Butler, G.F. "The Early Organization and Influence of Halifax Merchants," *Nova Scotia Historical Society*, Vol. 25, 1942, pp. 1-16, 5.
- ⁹ Butler, 10.
- ¹⁰ Lt.-Governor Wentworth to Secretary of State Castlereagh, 14 July, 1807, Vol. 54 in Ells, Margaret, ed. *A Calendar of Official Correspondence and Legislative Papers, Nova Scotia, 1802-1815*. Halifax: Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Publication No. 3, 1936, 121
- ¹¹ Sherbrooke to Liverpool, 22 April, 1812. (Vol. 59, Doc. 37) "Nova Scotia State Papers." *Public Archives of Canada, Report for the Year 1946*. Ottawa: 1947, 120
- ¹² *Nova Scotia Royal Gazette*, 8 July, 1812, 2.
- ¹³ RG 8, IV, Vol. 128, No. 1-5, King's Warrant for *Liverpool Packet* prizes, 3 June 1814. On 31 July, 1812, the Prince Regent issued Orders regarding the detention rather than condemnation of American vessels except those with licences, those released from embargo and those still on their original voyage. Letters of marque against the United States were not issued until 31 October.
- ¹⁴ Kert, Prize and Prejudice, 64-65.
- ¹⁵ Leefe, Introduction.
- ¹⁶ Garittee, Jerome. *The Republic's Private Navy: The American Privateering Business as Practised by Baltimore during the War of 1812*. Middleton, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1977, 111. This amount would have been roughly equivalent to £5,000, Nova Scotia currency.

- ¹⁷ By articles issued in 1740 during the war with Spain, British privateers were forbidden to wear any jack or ensign used by the Royal Navy, carrying instead "a red jack with the Union Jack described in the caton at the upper corner thereof near the staff." Marsden, R.G., ed. *Documents relating to the Laws and Customs of the Sea*. London: Naval Records Society, 1915, II, 428.
- ¹⁸ Mullins, Janet E. *Some Liverpool Chronicles*. Liverpool: Lancelot Press, 1980. (Originally published 1941), 19.
- ¹⁹ Forester, C.S. *The Naval War of 1812*. London: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1957, 77.
- ²⁰ Kert, *Prize and Prejudice*. Appendix 7 contains names of merchants from various communities and their prize-related activities, 237
- ²¹ Gutridge, Tony. "Aspects of Naval Prize Agency." *Mariner's Mirror*, LXXX (1994), 46.
- ²² Gwyn, Julian. "'A Little Province Like This:' The Economy of Nova Scotia Under Stress, 1812-1853." *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, Vol. VI, Donald Akenson, ed., Gananoque, ON: Langdale Press, xxx, 196.
- ²³ Gwyn, Julian. "Rum Sugar and Molasses" in James H. Morrison and James Moreira, eds. *Tempered by Rum*. Halifax: 1988, 114. This figure is based on a more than 300% rise in the cost of beef over the period and wage increases of 150%.
- ²⁴ William S. Dudley, ed., *The Naval War of 1812, A Documentary History*. Washington, D.C.: Naval Historical Centre, 1985, I, 83. At the outbreak of war the U.S. Navy had 16 ships in commission (excluding gunboats) while Great Britain had HMS *Africa* and two dozen smaller vessels.
- ²⁵ PAC, RG 8, IV, Vol. 118, *Pilgrim*, Vincent Nolte to Alexander Baring, 6 April, 1813.

Frontiers Frontières

FORT HALDIMAND 1778-1783: EXTENDING THE EMPIRE DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR¹

Sarah Katherine Gibson

In March of 1780 trader Robert Hamilton greeted the spring-time arrival of the *Haldimand*, one of Lake Ontario's transport vessels, to his island home by writing to a friend. But his salutation was desultory: "Shut up from all Communication with the rest of the World, you cannot expect that this Barren island will afford great Matter of Epistolary Entertainment." The island in question was Carleton Island, located at the eastern end of Lake Ontario, a two hundred miles distant from Montreal. But it was far from being "barren" or isolated. Hamilton's letter was an expression of frustration, not a rational evaluation of Carleton Island's connection to the world beyond its confines.²

During the last five years of the American Revolution, Carleton Island was host to British Fort Haldimand that held the key to the fate of Quebec's sprawling territory. The island-fort protected the vulnerable transshipment point at the junction of the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario and kept open the supply and communication line between Detroit, Montreal, and the British Atlantic Empire beyond. Only the island's geographic formation and location made Fort Haldimand an isolated place; the fort's very *raison d'être* was to preserve communication and transportation links.

The following portrait of Fort Haldimand and its garrison sweeps aside the veil of Hamilton's discontent to emphasize the strength of the community's physical, psychological and cultural connections with the rest of Quebec and the British Empire. The question of the post's imperial integration provides insight into how Quebec's Governor General, Lieutenant-General Frederick Haldimand, relied upon a supply system to stabilize British authority in the western district. The supply system delivered trade items, the materiel of war, and people to Carleton Island that recreated an imperial culture upon the island. Thus, men and women isolated by distance continued to act and think in imperial terms. Robert Hamilton's focus upon the "rest of the world" attested to his continuing identification with the broader scope of the war. His act of letter-writing further demonstrated the island's outside connection; a connection that gave him the opportunity and luxury to complain about his loneliness. General Haldimand relied upon the islander's continuing sense of physical, cultural and psychological connection and integration in order to extend his imperial authority on the frontier.

Physical Connections

Contrary to Hamilton's bleak portrait, Carleton Island was a hive of activity. The island-post's very value to General Haldimand's defence of Quebec was as the "Great Depot of Provisions for the Upper Posts."³ All the goods and supplies necessary to support the posts in Quebec's west funneled through the island's harbors. During the American Revolution a string of interdependent posts – Fort Niagara, Fort Erie, Detroit, and Fort Michilimackinac – extended British influence deep into the Lake Erie region to protect the fur trade and to maintain an alliance with the western Indians.⁴ But British presence beyond Montreal was tenuous. The six thousand men and women who garrisoned the western posts subsisted upon the rations and supplies General Haldimand sent up the St. Lawrence River.⁵ But the supply system was inefficient and slow, and until Haldimand arrived to take up the governorship of Quebec in June 1778, it was particularly vulnerable at the eastern end of Lake Ontario.

The junction of the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario had traditionally been a weak point in the west's supply line where merchants and military men transshipped goods from the small river-bateaux to larger lake-going vessels. One of Haldimand's first acts as governor was to establish a year-round depot, shipbuilding centre and fort to protect the entrance to the St. Lawrence River. In July of 1778 he sent an expeditionary force to survey and resurrect Fort Frontenac at Cataraquei (Kingston), but the team members found the fort wanting in comparison with the features of nearby Carleton Island.⁶

Carleton Island possessed the appropriate physical and geographical amenities to transform it into an imperial shipping-centre.⁷ Commanding Royal Engineer, renamed it Carleton Island in August 1778. Richard Preston, editor, *Kingston before the War of 1812*. Toronto: The Champlain Society 1959, 4, 6. The island is located twelve miles from the entrance of the St. Lawrence River, on the southern side of Grande Isle (now Wolfe Island) and is surrounded by channels deep enough to accommodate vessels of significant draft. It was an ideal transshipment point. River-bateaux from the St. Lawrence River approached the island from the east, sheltered from the prevailing wind. Lake-going vessels also navigated easily in the waters surrounding the island. Two bays, protected by forty-foot cliffs on the western end of the island, formed a natural dockyard, while readily available timber facilitated shipbuilding. The island is also small in area, only 1,274 acres and naturally defensible. Lieutenant William Twiss, R.E., established Fort Haldimand atop the cliffs, high above the bays with its bastions facing eastward over the island. For the next five years the fort crouched silently over the traffic in the harbors and witnessed the bizarre tableau of a geographically-isolated island bustling with activity like a port town.⁸

The fort enjoyed year-round contact with military centres in the east and west. Between April and November voluminous military and merchant traffic arrived from the east carrying troops, goods, news and instructions. An average of thirty-four bateaux – conducted by 170 Canadians – brought military provisions and troops to the island every week. Two hundred and sixty merchant bateaux added to the military traffic every season. Intense activity on the part of the island's naval department supported the continuing westward flow of goods and people. By 1780, shipwrights had completed and launched the *Ontario*, a 200-ton snow. After she foundered that same year they replaced her with a sistership, the *Limnade*. Skilled seamen sailed the ships through storms and doldrums, attempting to complete eleven journeys to Niagara each season. The activity

slowed down in the winter months, but a team of men traveling by snowshoe permitted monthly communication between Niagara, Carleton Island and Montreal. The possibility also existed for the delivery of emergency supplies from the east over the frozen river.⁹

General Haldimand explicitly identified the Carleton Island installations as the fulcrum of the western defensive system based upon Fort Haldimand's role as a transshipment depot. He warned that "if Carleton Island should fall into the Enemy's hands [the American rebels], Niagara and Detroit be lost" and with that loss, control over the province's economic life line: the western fur trade.¹⁰ But aside from being the life-line to the other posts to the west, Fort Haldimand's garrison itself was a product of those same transportation and communication connections.

Cultural Connections

The island-fort's secure supply of goods and integral position within Quebec's communication line brought the materiel of war, trade items and news that established it as an imperial base. The constant flow of traffic also washed a social replica of Haldimand's Quebec onto Carleton Island. Individuals of "of all Nations; of all Colours, and of All professions" gathered at the fort and offered distinct contributions to Britain's war effort in the west. From his seat in the lower province, General Haldimand orchestrated the islander's daily lives in order to reproduce the administrative and social relations upon which his governorship relied. The material goods and the social organization General Haldimand provided for the garrison created visual cues and reminders for the Carleton Islanders of Haldimand's, and by extension Britain's, continuing legitimacy on the periphery.¹¹

The bateaux and vessels brought a cosmopolitan community to Carleton Island that frequently reached the one thousand mark in number. The garrison's ethnic composition mirrored the imperial scope of the war: Haldimand posted people from two continents—Europe and North America – at the tiny island. The members of the garrison submitted to military authority on the island in order to help preserve British rule in North America. But they had significantly different views of the war. The presence of most Europeans on the island was simply an extension of their lives in Europe. Scotch, Irish and English officers and men participated in the American war out of a military duty owed to King George III. An international agreement defined the relationship between the German mercenary troops and the British. The soldiers' greatest stake in the war was to maintain the credibility and respect of the British military, and thus their economic and social positions in Europe.¹²

In contrast, North Americans supported the British cause in order to preserve a way of life. Loyal men from Britain's North American colonies joined the provincial corps in order to protect their property, farms and livelihood from the American rebels. Furthermore, the Loyalists expected the British military to protect, feed and shelter their families – wives, children and domestic black slaves – while they made war. Indian groups of the Great Lakes region spliced their on-going battle for cultural survival onto the Europeans' domestic squabble. The Indian nations sought military assistance and protection to stave off European incursions into their homelands. Traders and merchants in Quebec supported the British, albeit with reservations, in order to preserve the fur trade with Britain. Even some of Britain's erstwhile Canadian enemies joined the ranks of Haldimand's Provincial Naval Department hoping to reclaim a position as the natural leaders of Canadian society, just as the officers of the *troupes de la marine* had enjoyed

under the French régime. Only the exigencies of war brought this polyglot community together on Carleton Island. Both the Europeans and North Americans' mental and cultural orientation was focused upon their unique social, economic or military relationship with the imperial power, not upon the island, or upon each other.¹³

Haldimand counterbalanced the community's lack of internal cohesion by laying out the fort to schematically reproduce on the land the social and political framework of the British wartime administration. Haldimand apportioned parcels of land on the island to different military departments in order to preserve their operational distinctions. The members of the regular corps, the engineering and artillery corps, the provincial naval department and the provincial troops all occupied separate barracks, controlled their own storehouses and tended separate vegetable gardens. Department heads living within feet of each other presented written vouchers if they wished to borrow tools or men from another department. Haldimand's distinctions were not arbitrary, but rebuilt the empire's organizational structure on the colonial periphery.¹⁴

Haldimand also reproduced the empire's social relations on the island. The military structure did not easily embrace the activities of civilians implicated in the war so he rigidly defined their relationship to his administration. Cultural misunderstanding between the British military and the Indian nations obscured their different aims in the war. Thus, conflicts between the allies were never resolved, but only laid the foundation for racial tension and distrust. Haldimand reacted by restricting the Indians' activities on the island. He reinforced cultural barriers between Europeans and Indians by prohibiting their association. Likewise, Haldimand distrusted the traders and merchants to act in the King's interest. He confined their business to enclaves on the island's north western shore in order to prevent their "self-serving" business from subverting military goals. The loyalist families of women and children and slaves did not have a defined place on the island. Even though several families did live on the island, Haldimand considered them a drain upon the western supply system and limited their presence in the west. The women thus appeared as burdens, not legitimate participants in the war. General Haldimand organized the island's very landscape so that the garrison members knew and kept their place within the fort, and by extension within Haldimand's Quebec.¹⁵

Even the islanders' daily life contained continual reminders of the imperial order they were fighting to preserve in North America. The very food they ate was a reminder of the geo-political scope of the war. The members of the garrison who received British rations ate bread, salted pork, butter, peas, oatmeal, and biscuits and drank spruce beer and rum that came from Britain's East Anglia, Ireland, and Britain's exotic West-Indian holdings. The rest of the islanders' supplies, from medicines to barracks furniture to small arms, hailed from Britain. Islanders cultivated an even greater sense of connection with the empire by purchasing European goods from the traders to help maintain a sense of European decorum. The Indians, meanwhile, protected their cultural independence with purchases of guns and ammunition from the traders. The men and women of Carleton Island were conscious of belonging to a world far exceeding the island's limits because their daily survival and comfort depended upon it.¹⁶

Psychological Connections

The presence of imperial goods and an ordered social and administrative setting provided the foundation for the islanders' continuing psychological attachment to the British cause. Haldimand may well have exhorted his officers to "Sacrifice not only the

Luxuries but even the conveniences [sp] of Life to promote the Public Service,” but he knew that an unstable material base on the island ignited conflicts among the islanders. The conflicts originated from the islanders’ desires to secure their political, economic or social place within the empire, and in the case of the Indian allies, to regain their ancestral lands, then overrun by the rebels. Haldimand relied upon a judicious distribution of imperial goods and favors to quell their anxieties and maintain authority over the querulous islanders. Both in origin and in resolution, the islanders’ conflicts underscored the important role the supply system played on the colonial periphery. The tangible and intangible goods carried out west by the transportation system comprised the glue of empire. The goods – from peas to promotions – insinuated the recipients on the periphery into a reciprocal-dependent relationship with the crown.¹⁷

Material goods – rations, tools, supplies, Indian presents – served as symbolic evidence of authority on the frontier. Within the military establishment, goods, particularly rum, were the medium through which imperial influence devolved through the island’s officers to retain influence over the men. Carleton Island’s officers used rum as “a reward to the Attentive and as a punishment of the Indolent” and as a means to bolster their own influence on the island. The men worked most diligently for the officers who rewarded them. Officers with well-behaved men earned the notice of military superiors closer to the centres of power. Other goods – rations and new clothing – played a similar role in maintaining the troops’ confidence in the empire: soldiers were liable to desert without this proof of imperial credibility, and did.¹⁸ The goods did not only keep the soldiers alive, but helped retain their services. Without the soldiers compliance, neither the officers, nor by extension the whole military hierarchy, had any effectiveness on the periphery.

Material items also stabilized the relationship between the British and the King’s Indian Allies. The British forged a diplomatic relationship with the Indians by adopting the old French-Indian practice of exchanging gifts in return for military service. The gifts cemented a symbolic, paternal relationship between the allies. Haldimand and the officers of the British Indian Department instructed the island’s Indian Interpreter, Jacob Adams, to treat with the Indians within that context. The gifts and provisions Adams distributed represented a practical recompense for the warriors’ military activities on behalf of the British; the warriors could not hunt for their families while on scouting missions for the British. But the goods also signaled the good will, authority, influence and bounty of the English King. Adams sealed British declarations with strings of wampum “according to the weight of [his] message” and reiterated Haldimand’s paternal promise that the Indians would be “...able to live in peace and quietness enjoying their hunting, fishing and Trade unmolested” if they continued to support the British. Britain’s failure to live up to their commitments to the Indians had negative consequences.¹⁹

When General Haldimand violated the trust between the allies in 1779 he ignited a major diplomatic crisis that only a Mohawk matron living at Carleton Island was able to solve. Haldimand did not respond immediately with military aid to the Six Nations when the rebel general Sullivan raided the Mohawk Valley in 1779. An Indian council gathered at Carleton Island in the September following the raid. The Indian chiefs challenged Haldimand’s credibility before prominent members of the British Indian Department and Chief Tichaguendé reproached the British for having abandoned them in a time of need. Only Haldimand’s judicial distribution of goods and influence to Molly Brant, a Mohawk Matron, living on the island, reasserted stability in the alliance.²⁰

Molly Brant distributed goods as a means of negotiating power between the representatives of the British Empire, General Haldimand and the agents of the Indian Department, and between the Six Nation's federation. She held influential positions in both camps. Within the British community, Brant wielded influence because she was the widow of the Indian Department's former head, Sir William Johnson and because Indian Department officials continued to give her British goods. Brant's ready access to the material resources complimented her position in Mohawk society and was the source of her diplomatic influence. She was a matron of the Mohawk nation and employed her traditional control over food resources to influence the tribe's warriors. Haldimand thought she was "unreasonable in her demands [for goods] for her own family and favorites." But he agreed with an officer's assessment that it was expedient to give her the supplies because "she checked the demands of others for presents and provisions." Haldimand reaped an important yield from his investment in Brant's interests and family. By February, the Indians were affirming the alliance. Members of Carleton Island's Indian Department ascribed the change of heart to Brant's influence. The incident correlated with Haldimand's belief that the security of Quebec's west rested upon "the exertions of the Indians which ever have and ever will be governed by the presents they receive."²¹

The supply system also brought more intangible goods in the form of instructions, reports, commissions and promotions that solidified the relationship between the officers and the Haldimand's central command. Several conflicts erupted on the island as a result of officers' insecurities about their position within the military hierarchy. Captain James Andrews, for example, was almost "entirely unhinged" by the stress of heading the Water Service of the Naval Department on Lake Ontario without a clear commission delineating his powers. He grew paranoid and fought with his fellow officers. The conflicts "frequently extended to the lower Orders, and a general want of Subordination, and Arrangement pervaded every class of the [Naval] Department." Without clear instructions from central authorities, personal insecurities threatened to destabilize authority at the post.²² Haldimand soothed his officers' ruffled feathers by awarding them praise, promotions and commissions to bind them closer to British interests.²³ Because the troops, officers and Indians tied their future comfort to the empire's success, General Haldimand was able to use goods and imperial recognition to retain influence over them while they were on the periphery.

But traders activities in the west systematically undermined Haldimand's base of authority – the distribution of goods – by offering the soldiers and Indians an alternative source for their needs. The traders brought goods to the frontier that interfered with Haldimand's control over the Indians and the troops. By Haldimand's analysis the merchants "ruined [the Indians] for war" by reducing their dependence upon the military's subsidies. Haldimand also thought that "the service" suffered by the trader's "avidity." Carleton Island's traders' "fraudulent conveying of Goods," particularly rum, cast a pall of "riotous debauchery," in the words of one officer, over the garrison. Over the winter of 1779-1780, sixteen hundred pounds sterling worth of rum changed hands every week, and that was only the reported rum trade. General Haldimand appealed to the trader's self-interest and desire for economic security in order to exert a small degree of imperial control over their activities in the west.²⁴

Haldimand limited the traders' and merchants' access to the transportation system itself as a means to gain influence over their activities. He followed the custom

established by the previous governor-general of Quebec, Guy Carleton, and issued passes only to those traders who were “worthy” or who demonstrated “personal attachment [...] to the government.” Haldimand’s strategy only worked with those traders who had an interest in preserving Quebec’s fur trade. Canadians who traded with Indians in the environs of Carleton Island ignored the system, content to trade exclusively with the Indians. But Carleton Island’s traders chose to submit to military law on the island so that they could benefit from government-subsidised transportation and sell their goods to a captive garrison market. Thus, again Haldimand extended his influence into the west with the supply system. But with the traders, he used access to the system, not goods as leverage.²⁵

General Haldimand relied upon the islander’s confidence in Fort Haldimand’s physical links and their sense of cultural connection to cement their loyalty to the British cause in America. Thus, only in a geographic sense were members of Fort Haldimand’s garrison isolated. Even the islanders’ ill humour may be interpreted in an imperial framework. Robert Hamilton, whose morose description of Carleton Island opened this paper was a trader with concerns in Britain. The fate of British ships on the Atlantic Ocean was of more concern to him than activities on the island. Other islanders were similarly aware that events elsewhere affected upon their daily lives. The supply system reinforced this sense of integration by bringing food stuffs from Britain, news, Indian presents, instructions and commissions. The constant flow of imperial goods underpinned the islander’s psychological connection with Britain’s imperial agenda and formed the basis of Haldimand’s authority on the frontier.

NOTES

- ¹ The paper repeats the ideas, theories and some phrases that first appeared in my Master’s Thesis. Sarah Katherine Gibson, *Carleton Island 1778-1783: Imperial Outpost During the American Revolutionary War*, M.A. Thesis, Queen’s University, 1999.
- ² Robert Hamilton to Francis Goring, 25 March 1780, printed in J.H. Durham, *Carleton Island in the Revolution: The Old Fort and its Builders*. Syracuse, New York: C.W. Bardeen Publishers, 1889, 99.
- ³ Queen’s University Archives (QUA), Haldimand Papers (HP) 21851, 120, Captain Mathews to Nathaniel Day, 17 February 1780.
- ⁴ Besides the forts of the Great Lakes, Britain held forts further west: Forts Miami, St. Joseph, and Vincennes on the Wabash River, Kaskaskia on the Mississippi and Fort Cahokia. But the rebels captured Vincennes and Kaskaskia in February 1779 and in 1780 British Lieutenant Governor Sinclair abandoned the forts Miami and St. Joseph. Whitfield, *The Geography of the British Northern Interior of Defence during the Haldimand War Administration of Quebec 1778-1784*, PH D thesis, McMaster University, 1993, 160. QUA, HP 21852, Returns of Provisions forwarded to the Upper Posts, 1779-1783, *passim*.
- ⁵ In 1778 General Haldimand supported only 3,021 men and women at the upper posts. But in 1779 two military disasters doubled the supply burden in the west to 6,000. Haldimand supported 250 soldiers, refugees and Indians at Oswegatchie, 1,000 at Carleton Island, 2,500 at Niagara, 100 at Fort Erie, 1,850 at Detroit and 300 at Michilimackinac. QUA, HP, 21852, 113. “The Distribution of Provisions July 1779-July 1780,” 6 June 1779. Norman Baker, *Government and Contractors: The British Treasury and War Supplies 1775-1783*. London:

The Athlone Press, 1971, 22. Sarah Katherine Gibson, "Carleton Island 1778-1783," appendix II, 120.

- ⁶ "Sketch of the Military State of the Province of Quebec" 28 July 1778. General Haldimand to Lord George Germain, 14 October 1778. Both references printed in *A History of the Organisation, Development and Services of the Military and Naval Forces of Canada from the Peace of Paris in 1763 to the Present Time*. Vol. 3: The Province of Quebec under the Administration of Governor Frederic Haldimand, 1778-1784., Canada, Department of National Defence, General Staff, Historical Section., eds. Ottawa, S.N.: 1919, 49-50, 69. Alfred Leroy Burt. *The Old Province of Quebec*, 1933, Reprint Toronto: McClelland and Stewart 1968, vol. 2, 10. Carol McLoed. "The Tap of the Garrison Drum: The Marine Service in British North America, 1775-1813." Canada: Canada Parks Historical Research Division, 1970, 113.
- ⁷ Carleton Island was previously called Deer Island. Lieutenant William Twiss, R.E., Haldimand's Commanding Royal Engineer, renamed it Carleton Island in August 1778. Richard Preston, editor, *Kingston before the War of 1818*. Toronto: The Champlain Society 1959, 4, 6.
- ⁸ C.C.J. Bond, "The British Base at Carleton Island." *Ontario History*, 52 (1960): 1-16, 2. Haldimand to Lord George Germain, 14 October 1778, printed in *A History of Organisation, Development and Service of the Military...*, 69. Benson Lossing, *Field Book of the War of 1813.....* N.D. Reprint Glendale N.Y.: Benchmark Publishing Corporation 1970, 656, note.
- ⁹ Gibson, "Carleton Island 1778-1783," appendices III, IV, 121, 122-3. Burt, *The Old Province of Quebec*, 2: 12. QUA HP 21787, 133, Captain Fraser to General Haldimand, 18 May 1780. HP 21787, 188, Captain Fraser to General Haldimand, 8 November 1780. HP 21787, 259, Major Ross to General Haldimand, 27 September 1781. HP 21832, 166. "Return of the Vessels upon the upper Lakes, their Burthen in barrels Bulk, Estimation.....of the number of Voyages in the Summer Season." No Date. Gibson, "Carleton Island 1778-1783," 62-63.
- ¹⁰ General Haldimand to Lord George Germain, 28 November 1780, printed in *A History of Organisation, Development and Service of the Military...*, 190.
- ¹¹ QUA, HP 21787, 119, Captain Fraser to General Haldimand, 21 March 1780.
- ¹² A garrison of between 200 and 800 soldiers formed the core of Carleton Island's population and included four detachments of the regular army, the 8th, 34th, 47th, and 84th Regiments of Foot and one corps of German mercenaries, the Hesse-Hanau Chasseurs. Great Britain, Colonial Office Records, CO 42, vol. 39, 145. National Archives of Canada (NAC), MG 11, microfilm, "State of his Majesty's Garrison at Carleton Island," 1 November 1778. Great Britain, War Office Records, WO 28, vol. 6, 105, 107, 115, 143, 151, 161, 166, 168, NAC, MG 13, microfilm, Garrison Returns for Carleton Island, 1 January 1782, 1 February 1782, 1 May 1782, 16 January 1783, 23 February 1783, 24 June 1783, 24 July 1783. QUA, HP 211759, 123, 121, Field Returns of the Troops at Carleton Island, 16 September 1782, 16 January 1782, 24 August 1783. Armstrong Starkey, "War and Culture, A Case Study: The Enlightenment and the Conduct of the British Army in America, 1755-1781," *War and Society*, 8 (1) 1990: 12. H.C.B. Rogers, *The British Army of the Eighteenth Century*. London: George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1977, 43. Curtis, *The organization of the British Army in the American Revolution*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926, 53-55. Jean Pierre Wilhelmy. *German Mercenaries in Canada. 1984 translated by Honey Thomas. Beloeil, Quebec; Maison des Mots, 1985, 178, 292.*
- ¹³ Two loyalist regiments-the King's Regiment of New York and Butler's Rangers also made up the military garrison. For information about their number see references in above note. Algonquin and Iroquois Indians were present at the island. The Algonquin Mississauga were a constant but seasonal presence on the island, their numbers rose and fell between two hundred and six hundred warriors, women and children. Iroquois did not resort to the island until after rebel Major General John Sullivan devastated their ancestral lands in the Mohawk Valley in

the summer of 1779. During the winter following the raid, Fort Haldimand sheltered a collection of 206 people of the Onondaga, Tuscarora, Mohawk, Oneida, Mohican, Cayuga, Delaware, Shawnee, and Naticoke of Susquehanna nations. E. Cruikshank. *Butler's Rangers: The Revolutionary Period. 1893*. Reprinted Owen Sound, Ontario: Richardson, Bond and Wright 1975, 104. Cruikshank, "The King's Royal Regiment of New York," Reprint from the *Ontario Historical Society's Papers and Records*, vol. 27, 1931, 35. QUA, HP 21787, 64 Captain MacDougall to General Haldimand, 12 June 1779. HP 21885, 197. "Return of Indians in the District of Quebec," 7 July 1783. HP 21769, 46. "Return of Officers and Indians of the Department of Indian Affairs under the Command of Guy Johnson....," 24 March 1780. McLoed, "Tap of the Garrison Drum," 131. Fernand Ouellet, *Economy and Class and Nation in Quebec: Interpretive Essays*, edited and translated by the Institute of Canadian Studies, Carleton University, Ottawa: Gage Publishing Ltd, 1980, 98-9, 106. D.G. Creighton, *The Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence 1760-1850*, Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1937, 57-58.

- ¹⁴ For example, the engineering and artillery department and the regular troops were two different administrative entities. The Board of Ordnance supplied the Engineers and the Artillery, whereas the Treasury and the War Office supplied the needs of the army. NAC, CO42/72 Q volume 49, microfilm, C-11901, 236, Lord Dorchester to Lord Grenville, 10, November 1790. QUA HP 21722, 102, General Haldimand to Captain Aubrey, 31 October 1778. Curtis, *The Organization of the British Army in the American Revolution*, 35, 40-41.
- ¹⁵ Barabara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution*. Syracuse N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1972. Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca*, New York: Vintage Books, 1972, 21, 128. Peter S. Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991, 4, 97. QUA HP 21788, 71, General Haldimand to Captain Fraser, 10 November 1779. HP 21722, 34, General Haldimand to Captain Aubrey, 22 August 1778. HP 21788, 12-3, General Haldimand to Captain McDougall, 29 April 1779. NAC, MG 23, B23, File 4, transcripts on microfilm, 63, "Captain Samuel Anderson's Orderly Gook of the First Battalion of the King's Royal Regiment of New York, May 1779-August 1780." Janice Potter-McKinnon, *While the Women Only Wept: Loyalist Refugee Women in Eastern Ontario*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993, 44, 105
- ¹⁶ Baker, *Government and Contractors*, 22, 64, QUA, HP 21787, 120, 121, 122, 123, 125, Returns of merchant's goods at Carleton Island, April 1780. HP 21877, 84, "The Petition of Robert Macaulay," no date. Durham, *Carleton Island in the Revolution*, 105.
- ¹⁷ QUA HP 21804, 58, General Haldimand to Captain Schank, 6 May 1779.
- ¹⁸ Great Britain, War Office, Judge Advocates General Office, WO 71, vol. 56, p. 26, 38, NAC, MG 13, transcript, "The Court Martial of James Glennie," 24 July 1780. Cruikshank, "The King's Royal Regiment of New York," 45. QUA HP 21802, 182, Captain Schank to General Haldimand, 6 May 1782.
- ¹⁹ Catherine Desbarats, "The Cost of Early Canada's Native Alliances: Reality and Scarcity's Rhetoric," *William and Mary Quarterly* 52(4), 1995. NAC, "Claus Papers," MG 19, F1, vol. 6, 42-3, transcripts on microfilm, Daniel Claus to Jacob Adams, 13 November 1778.
- ²⁰ QUA HP 21787, 90-1, Captain Fraser to General Haldimand, 29 September 1779.
- ²¹ Gretchen Green, "Molly Brant, Catharine Brant, and the Daughters: A Study in Colonial Acculturation," *Ontario History*, 81 (1989), 240. Judith K. Brown, "Iroquois Women: an Ethnohistoric Note," in *Towards an Anthropology of Women*. Ed. R. Reiter, New York: Monthly Press Review, 1974, 249. QUA HP 21788, 74, General Haldimand to Captain Fraser, 16 April 1780. HP 21787, 118, Captain Fraser to General Haldimand, 21 March 1780. General Haldimand quoted in Baker, *Government and Contractors*, 199.
- ²² QUA HP 21802, 182, Captain Andrews to General Haldimand, 3 October 1778. HP 21787, 97 Captain Fraser to General Haldimand, 29 October 1779. Captain James Andrews to Collin Andrews, 16 July 1779, printed in A. Smith *Legend of the Lake: The 22-gun Brig-Sloop*

Ontario 1780. Kingston: Quarry Press, 1997, 43. Captain Fraser to General Haldimand, 10 November 1780 printed in Richard Preston, *Kingston Before the War of 1812*, Toronto: The Champlain Society 1959, 16.

²³ For further details see Gibson, "Carleton Island 1778-1783," chapter three, *passim*. Wilhelmy, *German Mercenaries in Canada*, 178.

²⁴ QUA, HP 21787, 119, Captain Fraser to General Haldimand, 21 March 1780. HP 21787, 256, Major Ross to General Haldimand 26 September 1781. HP 21791, 75, General Haldimand to Brigadier McLean, 3 May 1780. HP 21788, 88, General Haldimand to Captain Fraser, 18 June 1780. HP 21787, 52, Lieutenant James Glennie to General Haldimand, 20 May 1779. HP 21787, 127, Captain Alexander Fraser to General Haldimand, 2 May 1780.

²⁵ QUA, HP 21759, 3 "Memo.Re: Trade to the Upper Country," 20 January 1778. HP 21791, 76, General Haldimand to Captain Fraser, 3 May 1780. HP 21787, 15 Captain Aubrey to General Haldimand, 17 November 1778. HP 21787, 126, Captain Fraser to General Haldimand, 2 May 1780. Bruce G. Wilson. *The Enterprises of Robert Hamilton: A Study in Wealth and Influence in Early Upper Canada 1776-1812*. Ottawa: Carleton U.P. 1983, 10.

**“... A FORCE TOO SMALL TO IMPLY CONSTRAINT,
BUT SUFFICIENT TO PROCLAIM A PRINCIPLE”:
THE ENROLLED PENSIONER SCHEME IN CANADA WEST
1851-1858**

Timothy D. Dubé

The middle years of the nineteenth century were a period of decisive change in Canadian defence policies and forces. Speaking generally, the defence of Canada, as the policy had been formulated in the eighteenth century and as the practice developed throughout the first half of the nineteenth, had been predominantly one in which Canada had been free from all obligation of contributing, either by personal service or money, toward its own defence. But after having granted self-government in all that related to Canada's internal affairs, it appeared to the Imperial Government that this advantage ought now to carry with it corresponding responsibilities. Using such arguments as 'self-government begets self-defence,' an end to the 'expensive paternalism' that had seen the province being defended almost entirely by the British Army and at the expense of the British taxpayer was sought.¹

With nothing more formal than a letter of instruction from the Colonial Secretary, Earl Grey, to the Governor-General of Canada, Lord Elgin, a new defence policy was inaugurated in 1851. While the Imperial Government would continue to acknowledge its obligation to defend the province against foreign aggression, it now regarded the use of British troops in Canada as a police to maintain internal security as improper. To replace the British troops, whose numbers would be greatly reduced, Canada would have to supply its own police or some other force for the purpose of local defence. Although no general statement defining the respective military responsibilities of province or mother country was laid down, the Imperial Government, hereafter endeavoured to establish and to implement, consistent with colonial safety, the principle of colonial self-reliance in matters of local defence. As to the actual measures to be taken, Grey,

in the first place ... intended that, in future, with the exception of a certain number of enrolled pensioners, for whose location in the Province arrangements are in progress, the troops maintained in Canada should be confined to the garrisons of two or three fortified posts of importance²

However, Grey's "notion was not ... to cease *at present* paying for the defence of Canada but to substitute a cheaper & More effective defence."³ Along with a properly maintained militia, it was felt that these measures would not only be sufficient to provide the necessary security for the province but, also, the requisite savings to the British Treasury. Although British garrison forces would remain in the Canadas until the 1870s, the initiative in providing for the defence of Canada had shifted from the Imperial to the Canadian Government.

Within this evolution, a small but interesting chapter is provided by the Enrolled Pensioners; discharged soldiers of the British Army who were recruited for further light

duty as part of a defence/emigration scheme. Not wishing to claim for it an importance which it does not merit, the Enrolled Pensioner Scheme deserves more consideration, if only to better understand the sweeping changes that occurred in Canada's defence organization during the period.

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The use of military pensioners, in lieu of regular British Army personnel, had a long tradition, both in the United Kingdom and in the Empire. The history of Britain's military pensioners commences with the founding of the Chelsea Hospital in 1682 by Charles II as a home for aged veterans and men broken by war. The granting of pensions originated shortly thereafter as an alternative to hospitalization and as a reward for long and valued service. Until 1847, enlistment in the British Army was for life or until a discharge on medical grounds was granted. Pensions promised, or seemed to promise, financial reward and security for the men in their later years. With rates varying from 8 pence to 3 shillings per day, depending on the nature and extent of the disability and rank or from 1847 for length of service over 21 years, these pensions, in their aggregate form, were a considerable drain upon the British Treasury.⁴

In an attempt to reduce the cost of pensions or to funnel them into constructive channels, numerous proposals were adopted over the years. Chief of these were the employment of pensioners as garrison troops in lieu of regular Army personnel and as a police force for the maintenance of public order. Beginning in the closing years of the seventeenth century, pensioners were selected for service in special units, known then as Independent Companies of Invalids. During the American Revolution, pensioners, in the guise of the Royal Garrison Battalion, performed garrison duties at Halifax. The 4th Battalion King's Royal Veterans was at Halifax in 1812. In addition to providing garrison troops at Halifax and Isle-aux-Noix during the War of 1812, the 10th Royal Veterans Battalion participated in actions at Michilimackinac, Frenchtown, and Miami. From 1824, the practice of garrisoning Newfoundland with Veteran Companies was adopted.⁵ In all these cases, the employment of the pensioners had amounted, in fact, to re-enlistment. But during the 1820s and 1830s, when the threat of invasion gave way to internal unrest, the services of the pensioners were extended within Britain to include temporary employment as special constables; assisting regular police in their duties by guarding threatened objects from attack or dispersing unruly mobs.⁶

In 1843, an Act⁷ was passed to make more effective use of this latter temporary employment of the pensioners. Selecting the most active and energetic of the men and placing them under the command of half-pay officers, a 'Corps of Enrolled Pensioners' was organized as a permanent reserve force. Assembled for inspection and exercise each year, the pensioners at other times lived in their homes carrying out their normal occupations, yet remained ready to turn out in case of emergency. Through this re-organization, and with extensions of the Act to include pensioners of the Royal Navy⁸ and the East India Company,⁹ as well as those in the colonies,¹⁰ the Corps of Enrolled Pensioners would see extensive service throughout Britain and its Empire.¹¹

A two-part program utilizing the Enrolled Pensioners was developed as a means to reduce the charge on the British Treasury for the defence of the colonies. First, and most important, was the withdrawal of the greater part of the British Army and a concentration of its remaining forces within the respective colony. Secondly, at the stations vacated by

the Army, it was planned to settle Enrolled Pensioners and their families, who would form a ready reserve through which British military obligations might be met. The Enrolled Pensioners, having served their terms of enlistment and having received their discharges when no more than forty years of ages or having been granted earlier discharges because of injuries that would not incapacitate them from garrison duties, would be quite capable of performing the limited military duties that would be required of them. Moreover, the pensioners would man the scattered posts more cheaply than British regulars, as they would only be paid for the days they were on actual duty. The plan thus offered both strategic and financial benefits.

One of the staff officers employed in the payment and superintendence of the Enrolled Pensioners in Britain, Captain James Dundas Gregorie Tulloch, was sent to Canada in April 1849 on a mission for the War Office to enquire and report upon the feasibility of implementing the scheme in Canada. (Before commencing his investigation, Tulloch was pressed into service to adopt 'preparatory measures' to assemble and equip a small battalion of the most efficient of the pensioners at Montreal as an aid to the civil power; Tulloch's arrival coinciding with the riots stemming from the passage of the Rebellion Losses Bill.¹²) From his survey it was concluded that, although it would be necessary to initially send out a small number of pensioners and their families from the United Kingdom, the Enrolled Pensioner scheme could be adopted in Canada, provided that a means existed for locating the pensioners near sites where their services would be required.¹³

One of the conditions for obtaining the services of the Enrolled Pensioner in other colonies, and to prevent their dispersion throughout these countries, had been the offer of a residence and small grant of land in the area where their services were required. But free Crown land, essential to the scheme, was no longer available for military settlers in Canada.¹⁴ To meet this difficulty, Tulloch proposed taking advantage of the Ordnance Reserves in Canada West. Located

at Kingston, Bytown, Toronto, Hamilton, Niagara, Chippewa, Fort Erie, London, Chatham, Sarnia, Amherstburg, Windsor, and several other important stations ... [were] reserves ... extending in some cases to upwards of 1000 acres, for the most part clear of wood, with good soil, in the immediate vicinity of towns, and possessing every requisite for the settlement of pensioners on small allotments.¹⁵

In Tulloch's view, the Ordnance Reserves appeared "to offer a most eligible opportunity for settling Pensioners in that Country, in such a manner as to contribute materially to the defence of the Province."¹⁶

The Ordnance Reserves were vested by the Province in the Ordnance Department for the purpose of military defence as the sites of possible defence works and buildings. If left unused, it would be difficult to resist the claims of the Canadian authorities to obtain possession of them; claims which were becoming more difficult to ignore as Britain was no longer inclined to incur the expense of building stone walls on them.¹⁷ The appropriation of these reserves for the settlement of Enrolled Pensioners seemed, however, to be "legitimately defensible as a direct application of those lands to purposes of military defence."¹⁸ Perhaps more importantly, by substituting the Enrolled Pensioners for the regular British garrison forces, the necessary reduction in the British forces in Canada would be made without requiring the Province to undertake any additional expenditures in consequence. Governor-General Lord Elgin, although not personally

enthusiastic, was quite certain that whatever came of the proposed changes, there never was likely to be so favourable an opportunity for attempting them.¹⁹

With the submission of Tulloch's favourable report,²⁰ a plan was drawn up to put the Enrolled Pensioners on the Canadian Ordnance Reserves. Modelled on the scheme existing elsewhere in the Empire, a warrant was issued early in 1851 that authorized the enrolment of one thousand pensioners in Canada.²¹ Within Canada, the scheme, as initially planned, was to include most of the reserves of Canada West. Required first were the reserves at Amherstburg (including Bois Blanc) and Penetanguishene, from which the troops were ordered to be removed, and the reserve at Toronto. It was intended to settle 120 pensioners with their families at Amherstburg, and 70 pensioners with their families at Penetanguishene. The pensioners to be located at Toronto were to be selected from men who were on the spot. The next reserves required were to be those at London, Niagara, and Fort Erie, at which it was planned to settle pensioners and their families over the course of the summer of 1851. The remainder of the reserves would be required by the spring of 1852.²² Because of the 'experience obtained' by Tulloch on his tour of 1849, he was selected to superintend the scheme in Canada, making his headquarters at Toronto.²³

In making the first selection of men and their families from the United Kingdom, every care was taken. Physical and financial conditions were imposed to ensure candidates were men of good character, whose maximum age was not over 45, and who possessed sober and industrious habits.²⁴ In subsequent years, to fill vacancies created by death or infirmity, pensioners would be added from the soldiers annually discharged in Canada. To maintain their military skills, periods of drill of up to twelve days and an inspection of the Enrolled Pensioners would be held annually. There was a reason for ensuring and maintaining high standards; the men were ultimately to form the largest part of the province's ready reserve.

Beginning with the arrival of the first draft of pensioners in July 1851, a systematic withdrawal of the regular garrison in Canada was commenced. By January 1852, it was reported:

the number of Pensioners already organized and drilled in Canada amount to about 350 men, and by the next summer the force will be nearly 600, so that the withdrawal of a Regiment will leave nearly as large an effective Force in the colony as before, besides causing a very considerable savings.²⁵

This forecast seems to have been achieved. Within a year of the introduction of the Enrolled Pensioner Scheme, the regular garrisons at Amherstburg and Penetanguishene had been withdrawn, and by doing this it was possible to reduce the Royal Canadian Rifle Regiment from ten to six companies.²⁶ At the same time, the total effective strength of all ranks in Canada was reduced from 6,106 to 4,960 men, eight minor stations were abandoned, and reductions in the staff establishment and their consequent costs, were also made.²⁷

By June 1853, the Enrolled Pensioner force organized and armed in Canada West consisted of 119 men at Amherstburg, 62 at Penetanguishene, 71 at Niagara, 159 at London, and 230 at Toronto, for a total of 641 men, as well as the requisite staff officers.²⁸ In 1854, companies were formed at Bytown and Fort Erie.²⁹ War Office officials believed that "had the system now pursued been adopted ten or twelve years ago, the whole of Canada West might now have been independent of regular troops."³⁰

The Canadian Government had accepted these reductions in the British regular force because they had involved no additional charges on it.

During the years that British regulars had been stationed throughout the province, the local governments had made extensive use of them as a police. With these soldiers now being withdrawn, the Canadian Legislature turned to the Enrolled Pensioners. In August 1851, a Bill to authorize the employment of the Enrolled Pensioners as a local police was presented. Opposition to the plan claimed that the Pensioner Bill was "... a most dangerous infringement of the position which Canada, as a colony, should occupy towards the Imperial Government. It was the beginning of a system which would end in making the Province to bear the whole of the military expenses."³¹ William Lyon Mackenzie, returned from his years in exile, "detested the idea of a force of the kind. He had had some experience in mobbing, but would run the risk of it rather than set up a ... force of this kind."³² Despite the negative views of the plan and the men, the Bill was passed by a 35 to 14 vote. The Act³³ authorized the use of up to 500 of the Enrolled Pensioners as a local police for a period of five years. But this local service was not to conflict with any duty when "required in any other capacity by the Imperial or Military Authorities."³⁴ The Enrolled Pensioners remained first and foremost an Imperial force.

It was not until 13 August 1853 that the Governor-General issued his warrant in pursuance to the enrolment act to the mayors of Toronto, London, and Niagara, and to the wardens of the United Counties of Essex and Lambton, and the County of Simcoe "authorizing them respectively in certain cases where the public peace may be endangered, to call out the whole or such parts of the Enrolled Military Pensioners as they may consider necessary, in aid of the Civil Powers."³⁵ By this time, a number of requests had been received for the services of the Enrolled Pensioners.³⁶

Pensioners were called to police the 'lawless men' engaged in the construction of the Grand Trunk Railway line in the vicinity of London. Toronto had asked for the pensioners to prevent public disturbances in July 1853. In October 1853, an urgent request was received from Montreal, and 200 pensioners (120 from Toronto, 20 from Niagara, and 60 from Amherstburg) were quickly forwarded.³⁷ The cost to the local government for the expenses connected with the pensioners' employment on this latter occasion was reported to be upwards of £1,500.³⁸ As a means of explanation for the numerous requests, Tulloch would later report:

It is supposed at home that the Pensioners take charge of the Barracks in their Districts and thus allow the Regular Troops of the Line to march to where their services may be required to put down Riots, though in this Country it has generally been the reverse, the Regular Troops have remained in barracks & left the Pensioners to do the duty of putting down Riots.³⁹

With officials in Britain quick to note the savings to the British tax-payer, these examples were also "... sufficient to shew (*sic*) how useful that Force is and how its utility is becoming appreciated."⁴⁰

At this point, however, interdepartmental disputes over the use of the Ordnance Reserves ended any further expansion of the scheme in Canada. Only the pensioners at Amherstburg, Penetanguishene and Fort Erie would receive land on the reserves. At Toronto, London, Bytown and Niagara, the pensioners and their families were provided with free housing in the barracks during the tenure of the plan, and in lieu of land received life payments of £4 annually.⁴¹

Despite the settlement problems, the reduction of regular troops in Canada was continued, so that by the end of fiscal year 1854-55 there remained only 1,887 Imperial troops in the Canadas; the Royal Canadian Rifle Regiment at Kingston (with two of its companies detached to Montreal), and one regiment of the line and two companies of artillery at Quebec.⁴² As officials pointed out, "... it cannot be said that there is any recognized system of military defence now applicable to Canada. All that can be said is that there are several military posts which are more or less susceptible of being defended according to circumstances."⁴³ This was thus seen as "a fitting occasion for moving the Provincial Government to consider the expediency of reorganizing the Militia upon a basis of efficiency."⁴⁴ Encouraged by offers from the Imperial Government to give over the Ordnance Reserves no longer occupied on the general condition of the Province providing for these defences, the Canadian Government decided to undertake the small expenditure in the task of upkeep.

In the first instance, the Province directed that the Enrolled Pensioners should serve as occupation forces at those posts which for various reasons it was deemed inconvenient to abandon. Authority for this action was found in the Enrolment Act of 1843 and its extension of 1847, which declared that whenever any of the regular forces were removed, it was lawful to direct that the pensioners be kept on duty and pay. In Australia, two companies (140 men) had been placed on permanent duty at the expense of the local government in Victoria.⁴⁵ Accordingly, a warrant was issued authorizing the placement of the Enrolled Pensioners on 'permanent duty' at the expense of the Province.⁴⁶ Against these charges, it was anticipated that the sale of the surplus Ordnance lands would be set off.⁴⁷

Beginning in September 1854, 150 of the Enrolled Pensioners were employed on 'permanent duty' by the Province; 54 at Toronto, 24 at Niagara, 35 at London, 25 at Bytown, and 12 at Prescott, these latter detached from Bytown. Adjustments to this force were made when necessary. When hostilities appeared possible with the United States in 1856, a sergeant and eleven rank and file (later increased by one private, for thirteen men in total) were placed on Permanent Duty at Amherstburg by reducing a like number at Bytown.⁴⁸ Along with maintaining a guard at various of the vacated stations, the Permanent Duty pensioners were "called on to perform a sort of Military duty in attendance on the Governor General, by affording Guards of Honour on the ordinary public occasions and by supplying the usual sentries, etc."⁴⁹ As its only ready force, the Enrolled Pensioners were Canada's first line of defence west of Kingston.

One of the early consequences of the Canadian acceptance of the Ordnance Reserves had been the appointment of a Commission to investigate and report upon the best means of reorganizing the Militia of Canada. When it reported, the Commission urged the formation of a force of approximately 4,000 Volunteers; a small, partially-trained force, immediately available, capable of dealing with sudden minor emergencies.⁵⁰ The role of the Enrolled Pensioners as a catalyst in the formation of the Canadian Volunteer Force cannot be overlooked. Unable to avoid making appropriations for defence, the Province preferred to expend these, not on the 'temporary rent' of pensioners, who were subject to the orders of the Imperial Government and its officers in Canada, but rather on organizing local forces over which its control would be complete. In this way, a comparatively large force might be kept up for a cost approximating that of the 150 pensioners.⁵¹ An Act⁵² embodying the Commission's recommendations was passed in 1855.

From 1 April 1857, no vacancies in the Enrolled Pensioners as an Imperial body were to be filled, and the force was to be allowed to decrease in numbers. As a Provincial body, the Permanent Duty Pensioners would be continued until the Militia was considered sufficient for the defence of the province. So it was that Attorney-General John A. Macdonald reported the services of the Permanent Duty pensioners, as a Provincial force, ceased 30 June 1858.⁵³ On 7 October 1858, Tulloch “disbanded the Enrolled Pensioner Companies as an Imperial Force ...”⁵⁴

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The Enrolled Pensioner Scheme had marked a turning point in Canada’s military evolution from colony to nation. One official of the time had said, the Enrolled Pensioners were “... a force too small to imply constraint, but sufficient to proclaim a principle.”⁵⁵ A symbolic turning point perhaps, but symbols have always been important to this country.

NOTES

- ¹ For a general view of this period and subject see, C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the British Army, 1846-1871* (hereafter cited, *Stacey*) (University of Toronto Press: 1963).
- ² “Dispatch from the Colonial Secretary, Earl Grey, to the Governor-General of Canada, the Earl of Elgin, Putting into Effect a Reduction of Military Expenditures for Canada by the Home Government, 14 March 1851,” in, Joel H. Weiner, ed., *Great Britain: Foreign Policy and the Span of Empire 1689-1971, A Documentary History* (McGraw Hill: 1972), pp. 2175-2178.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 2177.
- ⁴ In 1850-51, the total number of pensioners was 66,777, whose pensions totalled £1,192,052. Great Britain, *British Parliamentary Papers*, “Report from the Select Committee on Army and Ordnance Expenditure; with the Proceedings of the Committee, 1851” (hereafter cited, *Army and Ordnance Expenditure*), pp. 42.
- ⁵ Charles H. Stewart, *The Service of British Regiments in Canada and North America* (National Defence Library: 1962), pp. 404 and 416.
- ⁶ F.C. Mather, “Army Pensioners and the Maintenance of Civil Order in Early Nineteenth Century England,” *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Vol. 36, No. 147, pp. 110-124.
- ⁷ Great Britain, *The Statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland* (hereafter cited, *British Statutes*), 6 & 7 Victoria, Cap. XCV, “An Act for rendering more effective the Services of such Out-Pensioners of Chelsea Hospital as shall be called out to assist in preserving the Public Peace.”
- ⁸ *British Statutes*, 9 & 10 Victoria, Cap. IX, “An Act for amending the Act rendering effective the Services of the Chelsea Out-Pensioners and for extending it to the Out-Pensioners of Greenwich Hospital.”
- ⁹ *British Statutes*, 11 & 12 Victoria, Cap. LXXXIV, “An Act to amend the Acts for rendering effective the Service of the Chelsea and Greenwich Out-Pensioners, and to extend them to Pensioners of the East India Company.”

- ¹⁰ *British Statutes*, 10 & 11 Victoria, Cap. LIV, “An Act to amend the Acts for rendering effective the Service of the Chelsea and Greenwich Out-Pensioners.”
- ¹¹ In addition to service in the United Kingdom, Enrolled Pensioners served in the several Australian and New Zealand colonies, the West Indies, the Hudson’s Bay Territory, the Falkland Islands, various African colonies, and Canada. See: Paul Knaplund, “E.G. Wakefield on the Colonial Garrisons, 1851,” *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 228-236; George K. Raudzens, “A Successful Military Settlement: Earl Grey’s Enrolled Pensioners of 1846 in Canada,” *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 52, No. 4, pp. 389-403; and, Timothy D. Dubé, *The Enrolled Pensioner Scheme in Canada West, 1851-1858, With Specific Reference to the Plan at Amherstburg*, (hereafter cited, *Dubé*) unpublished MA thesis, (University of Windsor: 1982).
- ¹² J.D.G. Tulloch, *Report of the Inspection of Pensioners in the North American Provinces* (hereafter cited, *Tulloch Report*) (London: 1850), p. 1; and, National Archives of Canada (hereafter cited, NA), *British Military and Naval Records*, RG 8, I, Vol. 499, pp. 51-52, J.D.G. Tulloch to Military Secretary, 16 May 1849.
- ¹³ NA, *War Office: Ordnance Office In-Letters*, WO 44, Vol. 716, n.p., Fox Maule to Earl Grey, 20 December 1949.
- ¹⁴ WO 44, Vol. 716, n.p., “Information for the use of Military and Naval Officers proposing to settle in the British Colonies, 15 August 1834.”
- ¹⁵ *Tulloch Report*, p. 34.
- ¹⁶ WO 44, Vol. 716, n.p., J.D.G. Tulloch to Secretary at War, November 1849.
- ¹⁷ NA, *War Office: In-Letters*, WO 1, Vol. 565, pp. 401-402, unsigned, undated minute.
- ¹⁸ WO 1, Vol. 566, p. 219, unsigned, undated minute.
- ¹⁹ *Stacey*, p. 83, citing Elgin to Grey, 23 April 1851.
- ²⁰ Although details and recommendations had been forwarded late in 1849, it was not until October 1850 that the report was published and submitted for inspection.
- ²¹ RG 8, I, Vol. 500, p. 234, Fox Maule to Earl Grey, 5 April 1851.
- ²² WO 1, Vol. 565, pp. 416-417, Colonial Office Memorandum by E. Panmure, “The proceedings with regard to the settlement of Pensioners on the Ordnance Reserves in Canada,” 28 August 1852.
- ²³ Tulloch was to be given the local rank of Major in Canada. For his duties, see, WO 1, Vol. 565, pp. 448-451, A.M. Tulloch to J.D.G. Tulloch, 2 December 1850.
- ²⁴ WO 1, Vol. 564, pp. 320-322, “Conditions on which Pensioners are to be Enrolled for Service in North America,” 31 January 1851.
- ²⁵ RG 8, I, Vol. 501, pp. 198-199, B. Hawes to H. Merivale, 14 January 1852.
- ²⁶ WO 1, Vol. 566, p. 182, B. Hawes to H. Merivale, 20 January 1853.
- ²⁷ *Stacey*, p. 85; *Army and Ordnance Expenditure*, p. 26.
- ²⁸ RG 8, I, Vol. 502, p. 208, “Enrolled Pensioners: State of the above Force in Canada West at the Spring Drill, ended 4 June 1853.”
- ²⁹ RG 8, I, Vol. 503, p. 50, J.D.G. Tulloch to Secretary at War, 7 April 1854.
- ³⁰ WO 1, Vol. 566, p. 398, B. Hawes to H. Merivale, 20 January 1853.
- ³¹ Elizabeth Gibbs, ed., *Debates of the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada*, Vol. 10, Pt. 2 (Centre de Recherche en Histoire Économique du Canada Français: 1979), p. 1484, H. Merrit, 20 August 1851.
- ³² *Ibid.*, p. 1149, W.L. Mackenzie, 1 August 1851.
- ³³ Canada, *Provincial Statutes of Canada* (hereafter cited, *Canadian Statutes*), 14 & 15 Victoria, Cap. LXXVII, “An Act to authorize the employment of Military Pensioners and others as a Local Police Force.”

- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ Canada, *The Canada Gazette*, Vol. XII, No. 32, p. 1173, 13 August 1853.
- ³⁶ WO 1, Vol. 566, pp. 323-324, and 330-332, J.D.G. Tulloch to Secretary at War, 23 June and 16 July 1853.
- ³⁷ WO 1, Vol. 566, p. 467, J.D.G. Tulloch to Secretary at War, 18 October 1853.
- ³⁸ WO 1, Vol. 566, p. 470, J.D.G. Tulloch to Secretary at War, 9 November 1853.
- ³⁹ RG 8, I, Vol. 503, p. 355, J.D.G. Tulloch to Major Griffin, 12 March 1856.
- ⁴⁰ WO 1, Vol. 566, pp. 363-364, B. Hawes to H. Merivale, 18 August 1853.
- ⁴¹ *Dubé*, pp. 36-44.
- ⁴² *Stacey*, p. 90.
- ⁴³ WO 1, Vol. 565, pp. 399-400, unsigned, undated minute.
- ⁴⁴ WO 1, Vol. 567, p. 64, unsigned to Earl of Elgin, 31 March 1853.
- ⁴⁵ WO 1, Vol. 566, p. 180, B. Hawes to H. Merivale, 20 January 1853.
- ⁴⁶ WO 1, Vol. 568, p. 638, B. Hawes to Under-Secretary of State Colonial Department, 30 November 1854.
- ⁴⁷ *Canadian Statutes*, 18 Victoria, Cap. XCI, "An Act relating to the Ordnance Lands and Naval and Military Reserves in this Province, and for other purposes."
- ⁴⁸ NA, Department of Militia and Defence, RG 9, IC5, Vols. 28-29, Accounts of Militia (*sic*) pensioners on permanent duty, Canada West, 1854-1858.
- ⁴⁹ NA, Sir William R. Eyre fonds, MG 24, F 38, Vol. 15, folio 14, Edmund Head to Sir W. Molesworth, 7 August 1855.
- ⁵⁰ Canada, *Sessional Papers to the Thirteenth Volume*, 1855 Appendix XX, "Report of the Commissioners appointed to investigate and report upon the best means of reorganizing the Militia of Canada, and providing an efficient and economical system of Public Defence and to report upon an improved system of Police, for the better preservation of the public peace."
- ⁵¹ Expenses totalling £8,000 were budgeted for the services of the 150 Enrolled Pensioners on Permanent Duty in Canada West for 1856. By comparison, Militia appropriations in 1856 amounted to £25,145 of which £10,000 was for the purchase of arms and ammunition. Canada, *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada*, Vol. 15, 1857, p. cxiii; *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, 1856, p. cxiii.
- ⁵² *Canadian Statutes*, 18 Victoria, Cap. LXXVII, "An Act to regulate the Militia of this Province, and to repeal the Acts now in force for that purpose."
- ⁵³ Canadian Library Association Microfilming Project, *Parliamentary Debates*, Reel 1, 1858, p. 114, J.A. Macdonald, 1 July 1858.
- ⁵⁴ RG 8, I, Vol. 503, p. 495, J.D.G. Tulloch to Military Secretary, 13 October 1858.
- ⁵⁵ MG 24, F 38, Vol. 15, folio 16, Edmund Head to Sir W. Molesworth, 7 August 1855.

Part III
20TH CENTURY CONFLICTS

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Partie III
LES CONFLITS DU XX^E SIÈCLE

The First World War

La Première Guerre mondiale

HOW EVEN WAS THE LEARNING CURVE? REFLECTIONS ON THE BRITISH AND DOMINION ARMIES ON THE WESTERN FRONT 1916-1918

G.D. Sheffield

On 30 April 1918, Lieutenant-General Sir William Birdwood, the commander of the Australian Corps, wrote deploring the tendency of unfavourable comparison between British troops and those from the Dominions in order to boost the reputation of the latter.¹ Certainly, during the First World War some British troops resented what they viewed as the excessive publicity given to Dominion troops. The battalion history of the 23rd Royal Fusiliers complained that the role of British 2nd Division in the capture of Delville Wood had been entirely eclipsed by the coverage given to the South African Brigade.² General Horne, commander of First Army, commented to Canadian Corps commander Arthur Currie that “the Canadian Corps is perhaps rather apt to take all the credit it can for everything and to consider that the BEF consists of the Canadian Corps and some other troops.”³ This pattern of British and Dominion forces sniping at each other’s achievements was probably an inevitable, although regrettable, by-product of the emergence of Canada and Australia in particular as nations in their own right: by 1918, they could no longer be treated as mere overseas appendages of Britain. It has had the unfortunate effect, however, of clouding the debate on the military effectiveness of the forces of the British Empire in the First World War.

Much influential writing since 1918 has also had a nationalistic tinge. The best, or worst, example was Charles Bean, war correspondent and Australian official historian, aptly described by a modern Australian historian as a “myth maker ... the Homer of the AIF.”⁴ The indefatigable John Laffin has continued the Bean approach to the present day, and his Canadian equivalents would include Pierre Berton. The twin British habits of regarding the First World War as an unmitigated disaster, and concentrating on the Somme and Passchendaele to the exclusion of the victories of 1918 has contributed to this lack of balance in assessing the relative contributions of British and Dominion forces on the Western Front. As Syd Wise has demonstrated, Canadian and Australian accounts of the battle of Amiens in August 1918 not only downplay the role of the British (let alone the French) on their flanks, but also that of each other.⁵ Thankfully, historiography has changed considerably over the last twenty years. Building on the work of a number of

recent historians, this paper offers some thoughts on the question of what the tactical and operational 'learning curve' was on the Western Front. Was it the case, as many have argued, that Dominion forces learned more quickly and became more effective than those from the British Isles? That a learning curve took place in the BEF is, indisputable. This learning process took place against a background of what would now be termed an RMA, a Revolution in Military Affairs. The warfare of August 1914 was quasi-Napoleonic. The warfare of November 1918 looked forward to Tukhachevskii, Guderian and even Schwarzkopf. The intervening months formed a bloody and painful transition from one era of warfare to another. Part of the learning process consisted of working out how best to use new technology on the battlefield, but there were also improvements in matters such as command, staff work, logistics, and the conduct of war at the operational level.

In recent years something of a new orthodoxy has been established about the importance of artillery. The evolution of the BEF's artillery, from the unscientific "rule of thumb" approach of 1914 to the distinctly scientific and highly accurate gunnery of 1918 was the factor, more than any other, that brought about victory. This was a BEF-wide phenomenon, in which it is difficult to separate out distinctive "Dominion" strands, although the contribution of individuals, such as the Canadian sound ranging specialist, H.H. Hemmings, can be identified.

The artillery of the Canadian Corps is rightly judged to be highly effective, but again this needs to be placed into the context of the wider BEF. For the attack on Vimy Ridge in April 1917, for instance, Andy McNaughton, the Canadian Corps Counter Battery Staff Officer (CBSO) was able to build on the work of sound ranging and flash spotting units which had been in the sector long before the Canadians arrived. As a recent authoritative history of such arcane matters puts it, "McNaughton was therefore able to take advantage of a system ... which was mostly already in place and functioning well. His contribution, like that of many other CBSOs, was to understand its possibilities, encourage it, and use its results intelligently."⁶ To muddy the waters further, the Chief of Staff (CoS) to Canadian Corps Artillery commander was British; he was a certain Major Alan Brooke, who had an enormously important input into the artillery plan.⁷ Like McNaughton, much would be heard of Brooke in a later war. The advantages that the Canadian Corps artillery enjoyed over its British counterparts had little to do with being Canadian, or even that it employed some outstanding individuals. Rather, like its Australian counterpart in 1918, the Canadian Corps was a permanent and "semi-autonomous" formation. Unlike British corps, it did not have divisions rotated through it, thus the Canadian Corps was able to build on continuity to create Standard Operating Procedures and trust between formations and individuals. Also, the Canadian Corps's status allowed it to do things such as reinforce its artillery, so that in 1918 each Canadian division had roughly the firepower of a British corps; and place its senior gunner in the position of an artillery commander, rather than as an advisor.⁸

Symbiosis is defined by Chambers Dictionary as "a mutually beneficial partnership between organisms of different kinds." This admirably summarizes the relationship that developed between the Dominion formations and the rest of the BEF in 1917-1918. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand concentrated on producing first class "teeth-arm" units of infantry, artillery and supporting arms. Stray units such as the Anzac mounted formations that served mainly in the Middle East aside, the Canadian and Australian Corps and the New Zealand Division were the "main effort" of the respective countries. Britain did not have the luxury of such a main effort. Britain had to find, as well as

infantry divisions, everything else that a modern army required, on a vast scale. While Dominion forces could concentrate and specialise, the British had to spread their resources thinly, in support not only of formations from the home islands but Dominion forces as well. The luxury of specialization, and the advantage of the semi-independent position enjoyed by the Canadian Corps, was never more apparent than in the spring of 1918, when British divisions bore the brunt of the German *Kaiserschlacht*. Australian divisions did not get involved until the beginning of April, while the Canadians stayed out of the battle, thanks largely to Currie's refusal to allow Canadian divisions to be fed into the battle piecemeal.⁹

In support of this notion of symbiosis, it is instructive to examine the order of battle for certain operations. For the Canadian Corps's attack on Vimy Ridge in April 1917, the heavy artillery support consisted of I and II Canadian Heavy Artillery Groups, and seven British HAGs. Field artillery consisted of that of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Canadian Divisions, V and XI Brigades RFA (which was serving as 4th Canadian Division's artillery), plus eight British brigades. It was a similar story for other major operations involving the Australian and Canadian Corps. For the attack on the Drocourt-Queant Line, 2 September 1918, the Canadian Corps (British 4th Division under command) was supported by 20 brigades of field artillery – about half of which were British – and 11 brigades of British heavy artillery. Amiens provides a snapshot of the symbiotic relationships within the BEF in 1918. Armour came under the command of the British Tank Corps. In support of the Canadian Corps at Amiens on 8 August 1918 was IV Tank Brigade of four battalions, while its sister V Tank Brigade, supported the Australian Corps with another four tank battalions. The Australians had successfully cooperated with tanks at Hamel in the action of 4 July, so Canadian officers were sent to learn from their experience. The vast majority of the guns fired in support of the Canadian and Australian Corps were operated by British gunners. The Royal Air Force, which played such a vital role on 8 August 1918 was, like its predecessors, the RFC and RNAS, the imperial force par excellence, containing substantial numbers of Dominion personnel, especially Canadians. And let us not forget the vital role of flank guard played by the British III Corps, unfairly reviled as it has been. The Dominion corps were sustained by a vast logistic effort, in which British units played the primary role: Roger Lee has commented that while the bulk of an Australian division's "clothing and rifle requirements" came from Australia, "the British supplied everything else."¹⁰

If, on 8 August 1918 the Australian and Canadian Corps were the tip of the spear, behind it was a broad and powerful blade and a long shaft. In recent years historians have begun to look at the deeply unfashionable topic of the BEF's logistics. It is clear that a learning curve was also experienced in this area. It was not just the dramatic growth in the scale of the logistic effort from 1914 to 1918, impressive though that was. Ian Brown has demonstrated that Sir Eric Geddes's reorganization of the BEF's transportation in late 1916 and early 1917 gave the BEF the "strategic flexibility" to match its improvements in the tactical and operational sphere. Ironically, had Haig's army actually broken through on the Somme, for logistic reasons they would not have been able to sustain a major advance.¹¹ The logistic learning curve is best treated as a BEF-wide phenomenon, with local variations, some important: the Canadian Corps Tramway organization, and its 1st Anzac Corps equivalent, are examples of these. At the time of the Vimy operation, the Canadian outfit operated tramways forward of the Light Railways, independent of the Light Railway Directorate. It was "composed of men skilled as railway workers in civil life, who had become, through long practice in the Canadian Corps, expert in light

railway construction, maintenance and operation.” The official “First Army Administrative report on the Vimy Ridge Operations” described it as “very highly efficient.” When Vimy Ridge was captured, the Tramways were “push[ed] forward,” personnel sustaining heavy losses in the efforts to keep in touch with the front line. Although obviously effective, the Canadian Tramways were far from unique; alongside the Canadians in First Army, a newly formed XIII Corps company, despite suffering from teething troubles, employed trams to very great effect.¹²

Yet the semi-independence of the Canadian Corps in this case, as in so many others, was an advantage. A major Canadian asset in 1918 was the addition of an engineer brigade to each division in the Corps. This emerged as a result of the Passchendaele fighting of 1917. Rob Thompson of the University of Salford has recently argued that in some respects the BEF’s competence in logistics, in its broadest sense, lagged behind those in battle fighting as late as October-November 1917. The operational technique of “bite and hold,” at which Plumer’s Second Army and indeed the Canadian Corps were so adept, worked well on three occasions during Third Ypres, on 20, 27 September and 4 October 1917. Unfortunately, the use of massed artillery to “shoot infantry in” to close objectives ensured that the ground over which guns had to be hauled in preparation for the next attack was invariably shattered. Success, in short, made the trick more difficult to pull off next time around, and on 9 October Second Army’s assault failed. Major-General W.B. Lindsay, Commander Royal Engineers of the Canadian Corps, was one man who took on board the lessons. Lindsay produced a report in which he argued that the pace of the advance was dictated by logistic and engineering factors, and a broadly civilian approach to engineering organization (with dedicated labour rather than working parties furnished by the reluctant infantry). The Canadian Corps, with the flexibility to reorganize itself and the manpower to make it effective, created an engineer brigade per division. These proved to be priceless assets in 1918.¹³

Nonetheless, one should not underestimate the magnitude of the improvements in logistics across the BEF. To take just one example, tanks could only travel about twenty miles on paved roads, and in the absence of transports that could move by road, had to be moved by rail. As a result Ramp Wagons were built, which “enabled armour to offload at any site;” while the demand for fuel created were overcome by Herculean efforts in creating forward POL dumps. In any case, the demand for POL had increased by a staggering amount between August 1914, when the BEF had 950 lorries, and October 1918 when it possessed 33,500, using 10.5 million gallons of petrol per month. The evidence fully supports a recent assessment that the “BEF in 1918 was, logistically, a robust and innovative organization.”¹⁴

This brings me onto the question of staff work. This is a controversial matter of which we still know too little. One indisputable fact was that in 1914 the British army possessed only a relative handful of trained staff officers. Most of them accompanied the original BEF to France, leaving an inadequate number for the newly raised divisions at home and in the Dominions. Those men subsequently appointed to staff positions had training that was mostly of the “on the job” variety. Failures of staff-work led to a number of bloody disasters with which we are all too familiar and to the unsavoury reputation that still clings to the red tabs of 1914-1918. In the Australian case, the large numbers of British and Indian army officers who held staff positions in AIF divisions in 1915-1917 had almost entirely been removed by 1918. As Lee comments, “there is as yet no evidence to prove whether this was or was not to the detriment of the AIF.”¹⁵ The

Canadian Corps went through a similar process of Canadianization of its command and staff, although as Desmond Morton notes “a few key positions at Corps and division level were held by some outstanding British officers almost to the end of the war.”¹⁶

Did the replacement of British with Dominion staff officers and commanders improve the performance of the Australian and Canadian Corps in 1918? At one level, there does seem to be a correlation with Dominionization of the staff and improved performance in 1918 – although failures of Australian staff work tended to be on the “Q,” rather than the British-dominated “G,” side. Yet this must be set against a background of a marked improvement in command and staff-work across the BEF as a whole in 1917-1918. Major problems on the Somme in 1916 included the failure to coordinate attacks across Corps and Army boundaries; piecemeal, “penny-packed” attacks; attacks on a narrow frontage (both Australian and Canadian formations, as well as numerous British divisions, suffered from this tendency); and the failure of staffs to give frontline troops sufficient warning of an attack, resulting all too often in an operation that went off at half cock. The battles of 1917, while by no means free of such problems, showed a distinct improvement. The BEF was on the way to mastering the controlled, set-piece battle. By the Hundred Days, the BEF had gone a stage further: commanders and their staffs were capable of conducting more fluid battles without much advance notice. The analogy of Currie or Monash as a conductor of the CEF or AIF symphony orchestra was often been used. In the Hundred Days, especially in October and November, the analogy of jazz is more appropriate, as the experience of 30th Division illustrates.

In the Hundred Days 30th Division was in effect a new formation. The original division of Lancashire Kitchener battalions had been destroyed in the 1918 German spring offensives, but in July it was reconstituted with battalions drawn from other parts of the BEF and from Palestine. Crucially, it retained its divisional commander and its staff. In its last major attack on 15-18 October, 30th Division crossed the River Lys in a masterpiece of improvisation. It brought pontoons forward under the cover of darkness and built a bridge under enemy fire, getting a battalion across “on duckboard rafts, Boche ‘floats’, old doors, and anything else that would float.” On the far bank, to keep in touch with the retreating enemy, 30th Division formed *ad hoc* battle groups (the leading brigade being reinforced by an artillery brigade, a field ambulance, sappers and machine gunners) to pursue the Germans. By the Armistice 30th Division had advanced 50 miles, taken 1000 prisoners, “over 50 guns and machine guns and mortars innumerable.” From our point of view, the divisional staff (and indeed junior leadership) coped extremely well with the changing circumstances, including the taxing demands of an opposed river crossing. The new 30th Division was a very average division, not an elite formation – yet its performance was typical of British divisions in the Hundred Days.¹⁷

The ultimate test of the learning curve is of course, effectiveness of formations in battle. The performance of divisions from all parts of the Empire was patchy on the Somme, but by the end of the campaign the BEF as a whole was a much superior force to the one that had begun the battle in July. In early spring 1917 there were some important doctrinal changes, enshrined in two key doctrinal pamphlets, SS143 and SS144. These brought about the reorganization of the platoon (which had previously consisted solely of riflemen) into “semi-specialized sections of riflemen, Lewis Gunners, bombers, and rifle bombers.”¹⁸ These changes reflected the need for tactical flexibility that had been worked out on the ground during the Somme fighting, codifying existing practice rather than imposing it from above.¹⁹ The BEF entered the battle of Arras with an effective tactical

doctrine, employed not only by divisions from the British Isles, but also the New Zealand Division, and formations from Australia and Canada.²⁰ The successes in the initial stage of the battle of Arras – at Vimy and elsewhere, notably the 3½ mile advance of XVII Corps towards Fampoux – showed just how much the BEF had learned since 1 July 1916.

In 1917 the Dominion divisions definitely established themselves as among the leading divisions in the BEF, but the evidence does not suggest that there was clear water between them and the best British divisions. The establishment of a common doctrine was one reason for the overall high quality of the BEF. The creation of doctrine was a dynamic process. In addition to formal doctrinal pamphlets, semi-informal notes were constantly issued by higher headquarters while battle were still in progress. When judging the relative learning curve of Dominion and British formations, it is important to note that for the purposes of dissemination of doctrine, Dominion formations were on the same footing as any others in the BEF. They pushed ideas, after action reports and the like upwards: many of the documents in the very interesting tactical files generated by Fifth Army at the end of the Somme have a Dominion provenance.²¹ Likewise, the Dominion Corps were in the loop for the dissemination of doctrine. A typical document issued by First Army on “from the experience of Divisions in recent operations” contains a number of tactical top tips and was sent to seven corps, including the Canadian Corps, with orders for it to be distributed down to brigade level.²² Thus British and Dominion formations should not be thought of as being hermetically sealed; there was a constant interchange, both formal and informal, of information and ideas that built into effective doctrine for the BEF as a whole.

That is not to say that different formations did not develop different approaches. Research on the Canadian forces have revealed a distinctive “way in warfare,” as has work on the Australians. Research on British units has highlighted a similar process. Helen McCartney’s work on 55th Division, a West Lancashire Territorial formation that came to regard itself (with some reason) as a “storm” formation has demonstrated that Jeudwine, the divisional commander, solicited after action reports from junior officers, NCOs and even privates. Thus tactical ideas went straight up the chain of command. Jeudwine also issued a pamphlet on new methods in defence, in which 55th Division was trained. The division then stood firm on the Lys on 9 April 1918 and was instrumental in bringing about the eventual defeat of the German attack.²³ Likewise, Peter Simkins has highlighted tactical innovation in a Kitchener formation, 18th (Eastern Division), along with its pioneering of “battle drill” and its hallmark of careful preparation.²⁴ Similar points could be made about a number of other divisions including the Guards, 9th Scottish, and 63rd (Royal Naval), to name but a few. The clincher is the performance in September 1918 of a very ordinary formation, 46th North Midland Division, in breaking the Hindenburg Line. The point is not this division of Midland Territorials was exceptional – it was not – but that by the Hundred Days even the most average of formations in the BEF was of a high overall quality. The elite formations – the Dominion Divisions and the ten or so British divisions identified as the result of number crunching by Peter Simkins as having a high success rate in attacks during the Hundred Day – were very much *primus inter pares*.²⁵ This situation compares starkly with gulf between German storm divisions and their trench-holding brethren.

The BEF’s victory in 1918 can, be my view, be ascribed to two related factors. The first was the morale of the individual soldier and collective morale within units. The

traditional view that the Dominion soldier was a natural warrior, thanks to the frontier ethos, capable of shooting the eye out of a squirrel or a kangaroo at half a mile (depending on where he was from) has been largely debunked. Likewise, my work and those of others has (I hope) laid to rest the notions that British soldiers were simply a bunch of harshly drilled automatons, and that the quality of British junior leaders was poor.²⁶ Such views have been propounded to explain the alleged massive superiority of Dominion troops over those from Britain. While they may contain a small grain of truth, such explanations fail to take into account the fact that Dominion and British discipline and officer-man relations had much more in common than the likes of Bean or Berton allow. It also fails to allow for the quite extraordinary resilience of British soldiers in the face of the most appalling strain and hardships. Morale within the BEF was, to say no more, good enough to withstand everything the Germans could throw at them in the spring and then go onto the offensive more-or-less continuously until November 1918.

The second factor in victory was the creation of a highly effective weapons system, into which all arms were integrated: infantry, armour, artillery (which above all was the battle winning weapon), airpower, and machine guns, and wireless communications. The first glimmerings of this weapons system were visible as early as 1915, and was developed the hard way – through practical experience fighting a tough enemy – over the next two years. By August 1918 the BEF had a relatively high level of training, an abundance of weapons and munitions, the logistic backup to ensure that they were delivered to the front, and widespread understanding, via doctrine, of how to use the technology available. Add to these improvements in command and staff-work from Haig downwards, and the result was a method of warfighting to which the Germans had no answer.²⁷

So, how even was the learning curve? The principal Dominion formations – the Australian and Canadian Corps, and the New Zealand Division – were undoubtedly elite formations. The first two were aided enormously in their achievement of excellence by the fact that they were permanent formations. The failure by the British to adopt permanent corps structures was a major mistake, a gratuitously inflicted own goal. Being in effect national armies, the Dominion Corps also benefited from a semi-independent status denied to British corps. Yet for all that the two Dominion corps and the New Zealand Division were not truly independent formations. They operated under British command, and had a symbiotic relationship with the British Army – especially in terms of logistics, armour, and artillery support. Moreover, Dominion formations both contributed to and benefited from a steady increase in competence across the BEF. From 1916 to 1918 a number of British divisions performed as well their Dominion counterparts, and by 1918 even those British divisions (like the 30th and 46th) that probably did not make the cut into the elite stream had an overall level of competence that was extremely impressive. But in a sense, to compare Dominion with British formations is to miss the point. The BEF was, and was not, a coalition force. The Dominion forces had in some ways to be treated as minor but significant alliance partners; but in other ways they were just components, albeit unusual ones, of a cohesive Army of the British Empire.

NOTES

- ¹ Circular from Birdwood, 30 April 1918, 3 DRL 3376 item 18, Australian War Memorial.
- ² F.W. Ward, *The 23rd (Service) Battalion Royal Fusiliers (First Sportsman's)* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1920), p. 89.
- ³ Horne to Currie, 27 March 1919, Horne papers, 73/60/2, Imperial War Museum, quoted in S.B. Schreiber, *Shock Army of the British Empire* (Westport, CT: Praegar), p. 4.
- ⁴ E.M. Andrews, "Bean and Bullecourt: Weaknesses and Strengths of the Official History of Australia in the First World War" in *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire*, No. 72 (Canberra 1990), p. 47.
- ⁵ S.F. Wise, "The Black Day of the German Army: Australians and Canadians at Amiens, August 1918," in P. Dennis and J. Grey, *1918: Defining Victory* (Canberra: Dept. of Defence, 1999), pp. 15-22.
- ⁶ P. Chasseaud, *Artillery's Astrologers* (Lewes: Mapbooks, 1999), p. 270.
- ⁷ D. Fraser, *Alanbrooke* (London: Hamlyn, 1983), p. 76.
- ⁸ Schreiber, pp. 19-24.
- ⁹ J. Swettenham, *To Seize the Victory* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1965), p. 202-4.
- ¹⁰ R. Lee, "The Australian Staff: the Forgotten Men of the First AIF," in Dennis and Grey, p. 125
- ¹¹ I.M. Brown, *British Logistics on the Western Front 1914-1919*, pp. 150-1.
- ¹² First Army Administrative report on the Vimy Ridge Operations, pp. 21, 53-4, S[taff] C[ollege] L[ibrary], Camberley.
- ¹³ Rob Thompson, unpublished paper given at RMA Sandhurst, 6 March 2000.
- ¹⁴ Lieutenant-Colonel C.H. Maginniss, "Heads of Steel: Logistic Support to the BEF's Mobile All Arms Battle, July-November 1918," in *British Army Review*, No. 122 (Autumn 1999), pp. 75-6, 78.
- ¹⁵ Lee, "Australian Staff," pp. 128-9.
- ¹⁶ D. Morton, "The Canadian Military Experience" in R.J.Q. Adams, ed., *The Great War, 1914-19* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1990), pp. 87, 89.
- ¹⁷ Anon, *A Brief History of the 30th Division from its Reconstitution in July, 1918 to the Armistice...* (London: War Narratives Publishing Co., 1919), pp. 48-57.
- ¹⁸ H. Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* (Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1921), p. 159.
- ¹⁹ See J. Lee, "Some Lessons of the Somme: the British Infantry in 1917" in Brian Bond *et al*, *"Look to your Front": Studies in the First World War* (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 1999).
- ²⁰ Stewart, p. 159; C.E.W. Bean, *The A.I.F. in France: 1917* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1982), p. 234; W.G. Rawling, *Surviving Trench Warfare* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 89-92. Although in most respects an admirable book, the latter underestimates the degree of tactical change in the British army immediately after the Somme.
- ²¹ WO 158/344, Public Record Office, Kew, London.
- ²² First Army No. 1888 (G) 25 April 1918, SCL.
- ²³ I am grateful to Ms McCartney for allowing me access to her as yet unpublished research.
- ²⁴ P. Simkins, "The War Experience of a Typical Kitchener Division: the 18th Division," in H. Cecil and P. Liddle, eds., *Facing Armageddon* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), p. 301.
- ²⁵ P. Simkins, "Co-Stars or Supporting Cast? British Divisions in the 'Hundred Days', 1918," in P. Griffith (ed.), *British Fighting Methods in the Great War* (London: Frank Cass, 1996),

pp. 56-8. The top ten British divisions were (in no particular order): Guards, 18th, 24th, 34th, 38th, 66th, 9th, 19th, 16th, 25th.

²⁶ See G.D. Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches: Officer-Man Relations, Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the Era of the Great War* (London: Macmillan, 2000).

²⁷ R. Prior and T. Wilson, *Command on the Western Front* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) has heavily influenced my views on this subject.

HOW THE LESSONS WERE LEARNED: SENIOR COMMANDERS AND THE MOULDING OF THE CANADIAN CORPS AFTER THE SOMME

Patrick Brennan
and Thomas Leppard

The transformation of the Canadian Expeditionary Force from a militia rabble into one of the British Expeditionary Force's premier assault formations is, to echo C.P. Stacey, one of this nation's truly outstanding achievements. Yet determining how and why we became so good, having started from such unpromising beginnings, has been largely either overlooked or misrepresented. Popular histories have continued to beat the patriotic drum, arguing that cultural "uniqueness" coupled with some ill-defined but intrinsic military aptitude explain the "self-evident" battlefield superiority of the Canadians over their British allies, not to mention their German opponents. For their part, Canadian historians have tended to focus on the nation at war, the conflict's socio-cultural dimensions, tactical innovation and straightforward battle history, the latter invariably emphasizing the central leadership role of Sir Arthur Currie.¹ All of the military studies understate or even ignore the contributions of a very talented cadre of senior officers who commanded the CEF's divisions, brigades and battalions. While undoubtedly drawing heavily on the experience and inspiration of others, particularly the BEF of which it formed an organic part, the Corps played a key role in transforming itself into an elite fighting force, and these men were indispensable in that remarkable process.

To understand how the Canadian Corps became good it is essential to understand what these officers learned about war, how they learned it, and the manner in which they moulded these lessons into a simple, precise, coherent and flexible battle doctrine emphasizing fire and movement and the coordination of all arms. To a significant (and underappreciated) degree the CEF's success was founded on an institutionalized system of learning within the officer corps that took root after the St. Eloi and Somme officer purges of 1916 and was followed rigorously thereafter with exceptional results.

In its main elements, this system consisted of critically assessing each battle and clearly delineating all lessons learned in detailed after-battle reports, then altering doctrine and tactics accordingly, and finally training officers and men in the "new way" in Corps, divisional and brigade schools as well as through appropriate tactical exercises conducted at all levels.

In the CEF, all officers, from platoon subalterns to Lieutenant-Generals, were part of the learning process. At all levels, officers were encouraged to offer constructive criticism and show initiative by experimenting with creative solutions on the battlefield. Beginning in 1916, those who did this well rose to the top; those who did not were sent back to England or home. On the shoulders of the senior infantry officers rested the heavy burden of sending men to fight and die. Determined to find ways to save lives and win victories, they experimented with better ways to fight, in the process

professionalizing the Corps and fashioning an institutionalized system of learning that produced battle and training doctrines second to none on the Western Front.²

Assessing the process of learning from battle in the CEF must begin with an examination of the role of battalion commanders who were quite literally in the front line of the officer-learners. To be useful, their answers to standard queries from above on everything from tactics to equipment to training had to be comprehensive and frank. It is clear from perusing their reports that they felt confident their superiors would consider their appreciations seriously, no matter how unpalatable. During 1917-18, continuity, albeit undermined by both casualties and promotion, was a characteristic of the battalion commanders of the Canadian Corps; thirty-three served for fifteen months or more, six of these being promoted to brigadier-general in 1918. Ultimately, much of the training – especially of junior officers – was in their hands, and their approach to this crucial responsibility went a long way toward determining how effective the Corps' effort to universalize learning and thus improve combat efficiency would be.

The next level of commanders, the infantry brigadiers, exercised a crucial role at both ends of the process – in learning and in the implementation of its lessons, namely tactical doctrine and training. They were also a talented group, not the least because able Canadian officers did not earn promotion to British units but rather were kept in the Corps to “Canadianize” it. Opportunities for one of the top jobs in a four-division Corps were rare and consequently many talented brigadiers remained at that rank.³ Brig-Gen. William Griesbach, a lawyer and mayor of Edmonton in pre-war life who had commanded his hometown 49th Battalion for twenty months, emerged as one the Corps' ablest brigadiers after taking over the 1st Brigade in February 1917. General Macdonell, his divisional commanding officer for most of that period, praised him as “the quickest officer that I have ever had anything to do with to grasp the tactical advantages or disadvantages of a given situation”⁴ Griesbach proved to be one of the most insightful Canadian commanders in grasping the challenges posed by the transition from trench to semi-open and open warfare for which the Corps was diligently preparing in the first half of 1918. Describing the rationale of one of his realistic tactical training schemes:

“It is hoped to test leaders in the quick ... appreciation of situations and the value of ground, the rapid issue of sound ... orders and the vigorous carrying out of same, the vigorous and independent action of subordinate commanders when favourable opportunities present themselves, and ... [the inevitable] ... intervention of unexpected forces creating a new situation calling for [a] fresh appreciation and [a] change of plans. The whole exercise is designed to draw attention of all ranks to the vital differences between trench warfare and an operation in open warfare and to stimulate the interest and imagination of all ranks”⁵

Such training, which originated at both the brigade and divisional level that spring under broad direction from Currie's headquarters, was soon vindicated in battle. Brig-Gen H.M. Dyer, OC 7th Brigade, enthusiastically reported that “... the Battalion which did the scheme [drawn up by the Division's GSO 1 to practise attacking machine gun nests] in June are agreed that it was ... the best form of training for an operation similar to the one carried out on the 8th of August.” Griesbach, never one to cast less than a critical eye and Corps tactical doctrine, agreed after Amiens that “as a first experience in open warfare, principles laid down in the training manuals are absolutely sound.”⁶

Of course, facilitating learning meant listening as well as teaching. “With a view to stimulating interest of the other ranks, ... improving methods of training, ... clearing up obscure points in the minds of other ranks ... [and] ... **securing of valuable suggestions** [author’s emphasis] ...,” Griesbach had ordered his four battalion commanders to instruct their platoon officers to draw out the fighting experiences of their men. “Don’t hurry. Patiently extract ideas. Encourage talk,” he reminded them to instruct their subordinates. As Griesbach liked to remind his battalion officers:

“No man should be allowed to get back to Canada and say that he had a good idea ... upon any subject connected with the war and that he could not get it considered by higher authority. Suggestions emanating from platoons should be laid before the company commander and by them forwarded to the battalion commander and by him taken up with the brigade commander. No subject of interest to the platoon, company, battalion or brigade should be considered as negligible and unworthy of discussion.”⁷

As a result of Griesbach’s determined initiatives, there was clearly plenty of such discussion in the 1st Brigade.

Mastering “open warfare” dominated Griesbach’s energies during the fierce fighting of the Last 100 Days. His after-battle reports were masterpieces of insight into and analysis of open warfare’s challenges, clearly delineating both the difficulties – some of them, such as communications breakdowns and the shortage of trained junior officers, insurmountable – as well as the possibilities – he was one of the Corps’ enthusiasts for the tank – while relentlessly reminding his superiors where experience dictated improvements in tactics.⁸ His observations on Canadian tactical weaknesses exposed during the bloody forcing of the Drocourt-Quéant Line were explicit:

“The offensive use of our machine guns still leaves much to be desired. They followed along and took up successive defensive positions. I would like to treat machine guns as other arms of the service ought to be treated by the infantry but I am now of the opinion that, having regard for the difficulties of transport and the apparent lack of a definite offensive doctrine, machine guns must be attached to the infantry and specific orders given by the infantry commander ... Our artillery also requires to be ginned up in the matter of offensive fighting. Trench warfare ideas still apparently prevail and our artillery have not yet to any extent got into action over open sights at targets of opportunity. Up to the present, I have only intimated my intention to the artillery commanders. In future I will assume the responsibility of ordering the guns forward ... The keenness and willingness of the artillery attached to me was beyond praise. What I refer to is the matter of doctrine and training which to some extent might be secured by combined training ...”⁹

The Corps’ heavy casualties from August 8 onward were evidence enough that the problems had not been entirely addressed, and Brig-Gen. Eric McCuaig’s response was typical. Immediately upon his brigade’s being withdrawn from action in late October, he informed his battalion commanders that they would devote the rest period to further training in open warfare tactics, with particular emphasis on advancing by infiltration and exploiting a success, overcoming isolated machine gun nests, using smoke rifle grenades, infantry-tank cooperation to reduce strong points which the infantry were unable to overcome alone, and cooperation with mobile field artillery, trench mortar, and heavy machine gun units attached to infantry in attack. To ensure that the training would focus

on tactical exercises and demonstrations, his headquarters supplied standardized model schemes and questions to highlight instruction.¹⁰

Asked to account for the successes the Canadians had enjoyed in 1917, Griesbach had concluded that the reasons were “quite well known and understood,” but after all, “I fancy that in all divisions in France, the information necessary is in hand ... [and] ... distributed down to the lowest formations.” The problem, he was convinced, was lower formations failing to implement the knowledge primarily through a lack of training and of properly trained officers capable of grasping the meaning and purpose of what others had already learned. The Canadian Corps achieved success in 1917, Griesbach confidently believed, because it was **well trained, well led, and driven by a commitment to learn.**¹¹

Nine men commanded the Corps’ four divisions in battle during WWI and only Richard Turner was sacked.¹² M.S. Mercer was killed by shellfire at Mount Sorrel, while his replacement, a British regular who had taken Winnipeg’s 8th Battalion overseas in 1914, Louis Lipsett, returned to the British army in October 1918. Both Edwin Alderson, the original British commander of the 1st Division, and Arthur Currie, his replacement, moved on to command the Corps. Henry Burstall, an artillery regular, took over the 2nd Division from Turner in 1916. Frederick Loomis, who had served as a battalion and then brigade commander, assumed command of the 3rd Division from Lipsett, while Archibald Macdonell, whose route had been similar to Loomis’s, replaced Currie in June 1917. The last division formed, the 4th, had only one commanding officer, David Watson. Watson might have owed his appointment to his Tory connections and Sam Hughes, but he had ably led a battalion and brigade and kept his position on merit. Unquestionably, stability in divisional command was a key factor in the CEF’s systematization of learning. During the post-Somme “reforms,” the period from December 1916 through Vimy the following April which in retrospect was the most important in the Corps’ development, there were no alterations in the divisional commands. Working closely with Byng, they concluded that changes were required in the way the Corps fought, particularly in the organization, training and firepower of infantry platoons.

Immediately following the Somme, Gen. Percy Radcliffe, the Corps’ very able chief of staff, sent a memo to all divisions and supporting arms canvassing their views on “the lessons to be derived from [recent] operations ... in order that the valuable experience gained there by the Corps may be turned to the best account in future operations. Any points of interest in connection with tactics, organization and administration would be dealt with,” he continued, “and proposals submitted for improvements on the methods adopted.”¹³ The memorandum listed fifteen broad categories and many subcategories to be specifically addressed, and requested replies before the end of November. Currie, Burstall, Lipsett and Watson threw themselves and their subordinates into the process, one simultaneously underway throughout the BEF and other Dominion forces. Some lessons, like the importance of shepherding men across the battlefield behind a rolling barrage, had already been grasped.¹⁴ In contrast, the tactical relationship between the infantry and “specialists” like rifle grenadiers, bombers and Lewis gunners proved more difficult to figure out. While the Canadians would make many improvements in their tactical use of the Lewis gun by early 1917, a few weeks earlier they had not agreed on what changes were needed or, indeed, whether they should change at all.

In late December, Watson informed Byng's headquarters that he did not consider it advisable to alter the existing system of battalion organization, balking at the suggestion of self-contained platoons with individual sections of "specialists," and arguing that such units "would be broken up at once to deal with each fresh situation as it arises."¹⁵ Lipsett agreed, pointing out that "... it would be easy for the battalion commander to draft specialists temporarily into companies, as required by the tactical situation."¹⁶ Byng listened but by this time Currie had just returned from his visit to the French army at Verdun and had proposed a major overhaul of the platoon along their lines. Byng now deferred to Currie and on December 27 issued a communiqué that laid the groundwork for a new tactical doctrine based on a reorganized platoon which greatly enhanced its firepower and tactical capability. Byng ordered that "every platoon is to have its proper complement of specialists, which are not to be detached from it ... [and that] the training of the company is to be based on the combined action of those self-contained Platoons."¹⁷ That said, "provided the principle [a platoon reorganization comprising a Lewis gun, rifle grenadier, bomber and rifle section] is adhered to, the Corps Commander does not consider it desirable to lay down a hard and fast establishment ... until further experience has been gained"¹⁸ In effect, Byng was allowing his divisional commanders to decide how best to implement these changes. Each division modified the pattern slightly to suit its purposes, and Byng approved all four.¹⁹ It is worth noting that the Canadians' reconceptualization of the "fighting platoon" preceded the BEF's adoption of broadly similar plans, as mandated in memoranda *SS 143* and *144*, by some two months.

After Vimy, it is evident that the divisional commanders had become more adept at gleaned the lessons of battle. In the flush of the April victory, the 1st Army asked Byng to determine the degree to which the Corps' successful assault was attributable to the new platoon organization. For Currie, it was clear cut: "I am perfectly convinced that our success was greater and made more easy of accomplishment by [its] adoption"²⁰ Burstall felt it had "fully justified its introduction," but he warned that "the organization does not, however, enable infantry to overcome the obstacle of wire which has not been properly cut."²¹ In other words, Burstall recognized the new platoon had both tactical capabilities and limitations. For his part, Lipsett remained unconvinced about the new structure's merit and, since he considered the Vimy operations had not really tested it, was reticent to make judgements. However, he conceded that platoons of his 7th Brigade had eliminated one troublesome machine gun using rifle grenades and Lewis guns.²² As for Watson, "there seems little doubt that the intelligent handling of these self-contained platoons," he enthused, "contributed largely to the success of the whole operation."²³

A year later no one was questioning if the new platoon structure worked but only how to make it work even better.²⁴ Burstall believed that the platoon's tactical use would be enhanced by eliminating the specialist sections. "The ideal to be aimed at is that ... any men of a platoon could ... act as a Lewis gun crew, a bombing squad, or a rifle grenade squad," he concluded.²⁵ Burstall's principle was sound, but was it practical, at least without an extensive regimen of training which proved difficult to provide.

Learning of all sorts had become ingrained by the last winter of the war. "With a view to compiling something which will be of value in training next year, as a result of the experience gained during the fighting this year," Macdonell solicited his brigadiers' ideas. "Your replies and opinions should be, when possible, backed by concrete examples which have occurred during operations," he informed them, and "please also include any suggestions you may have to add over and above the actual questions asked"²⁶

Macdonell's approach was shaped by hard battlefield logic. As he confided to Currie, "we must study each problem on its merits and concentrate on the best method for that particular action.." Clearly, "some of our failures and excessive losses may be due to our not studying the particular problem in hand attentively enough"²⁷

When the Hundred Days began at Amiens on August 8, 1918, the Corps entered its most intense period of fighting of the entire war. Though they had trained for semi-open and open warfare, its reality presented unconsidered challenges. In his assessment of the Amiens operations, Macdonell praised the methods of infiltration taught during an earlier rest period as well as fire and movement tactics which, in "combination ... with the employment of scouts and snipers pushed well forward, and Lewis guns employed to give covering fire and to develop superiority of fire over hostile machine guns, proved effective."²⁸ In contrast, he reported that the performance of the trench mortars and field artillery had been a disappointment. Macdonell provided an equally useful critique following the smashing of the Drocourt-Quéant Line less than a month later. He emphasized the necessity for local commanders to seize opportunities by using the weapons at their disposal to sweep aside enemy resistance. Training, he concluded, had carried the day by teaching troops the value of enveloping tactics. Although Macdonell always encouraged his men to be "bold – always bold,"²⁹ he also cautioned that "machine gun nests cannot be rushed." Instead, "troops must be patient and know when to stop as well as when to advance."³⁰

Divisional commanders sometimes learned the lessons eagerly, and other times, not, but that they always saw themselves as learners. Coordinating – and inspiring – the learning process occurring at the battalion, brigade and divisional levels was the Corps' responsibility. Ultimately, lessons learned in combat were analyzed there and, if deemed worthwhile, adopted throughout the CEF. Thus, by setting the tone for institutionalized learning, the benefits resulting from openness and innovation at lower levels were not wasted.³¹ Creating a conducive environment for passing tactical lessons up the chain of command had begun during Byng's tenure, and to a degree even under Alderson. One of former's endearing qualities was that he took his Canadian commanders, unpolished though they might be, seriously. He had always encouraged them to discuss tactical and training matters with subordinates on the clear expectation that "any new form of 'Boche killing' that has been suggested will be communicated to Corps Headquarters in order that it may be circulated to the rest of the Canadian Corps."³² Currie's credit lies in further elaborating and formalizing consultation and learning within the officer corps. What resulted was nothing less than a system that provided continuity of purpose, intentional learning and institutional memory. In the systematic accumulation and analysis of after-battle reports, Currie's headquarters probed every aspect of preparation and operations, and the questions asked spoke of the organized, integrated way the Corps approached battle. The Corps utilized the analysis of this unvarnished feedback from the fighting commanders to alter tactical doctrine and improve training. Although the Canadian Corps was not without its vested interests and pre-conceived notions, systematic learning confirmed that it was results, not reputation or tradition, that mattered at the top. Or as Radcliffe, succinctly put it, "improvements rooted in battle experience are to be encouraged."³³ Apart from after-battle reports, a steady stream of other returns from all services and units flowed into the Corps headquarters, ensuring that no aspect of the army's activities which might be integral to battlefield success would be ignored.

Corps headquarters generated key elements of the learning curve. Formalization of liaison among the various combat elements of the CEF, in particular the artillery, machine gun and infantry units, which by the end of the war had gone a long way toward resolving one of the most serious deficiencies in the CEF's open warfare capabilities, was a very significant contribution.³⁴ Both the gradual implementation of a more responsive command and control organization for the artillery than used elsewhere in the BEF – in effect, a GOCRA with effective command responsibilities – and the reorganization in early 1918 of machine gun units in response to changes in the way these forces had been used from 1917 onward were other instances of learning and subsequent organizational and attitudinal transformation executed at the Corps level.³⁵

Corps headquarters also passed on valuable information including tactical doctrine from Haig's headquarters as well as from the various Armies under which the Canadian Corps served,³⁶ and the CEF continued to make extensive use of British training institutions, especially for officers.³⁷ British ideas were very often sound – it was implementing them throughout the BEF, and not just within an elite segment of that force, that often bedevilled the British. In contrast, the CEF, with its institutionalized learning, not to mention cultural homogeneity and organizational stability, could more quickly embrace worthwhile innovations once they had been accepted. Arguments by some British historians, like Griffith, that Canadian innovation is over-rated, and that the Canadian Corps was merely embracing the learning and changes occurring in the BEF after 1916, are themselves misleading.³⁸ The similarities with the BEF, of which, after all, the CEF was an organic part, were marked, but cannot be allowed to overshadow the measurable differences which were emerging between the British and Canadian ways of war after 1916. Canadian military historians have at least debated, even if too often understating, the credit which should accrue to the British in increasing the Corps' battleworthiness. In contrast, they have largely ignored how the CEF profited from tactical and training ideas gleaned from the French, a process which continued, though to a decreasing degree, right through 1918.³⁹

This Canadian Corps was an army which fought; which, at least after 1916, always won; and which invariably learned. It was not better than the British army's best divisions and corps. But it was every bit as good as them, and it is worth remembering that **all four** Canadian divisions, though arguably starting with greater disadvantages in leadership and training than even the greenest "New Army" divisions, became elite assault formations. Many factors contributed to the learning which made possible a striking increase in fighting proficiency. Canadian militia officers found it easier than pre-war regulars to cast aside military orthodoxy. Latent talent made them an insightful, innovative group while growing professionalism made them confident. An emerging national feeling encouraged them not just to fight but to want to win and their continuity of command after 1916 ensured widespread diffusion of what they learned. One thing is clear, in the Canadian Corps – systematic learning, and its indispensable corollary, the diffusion of learning, namely training – were processes driven by combat officers. Knowledge was accumulated, and that knowledge, combined with significant input from the British army in particular, was synthesized into an increasingly cogent battle doctrine, spawned equally effective training strategies, and produced an army confident in its ability to apply that doctrine on the battlefield. The process continuously renewed itself, so that from the Somme onward, we must characterize the CEF as not just a fighting machine, but a **learning – fighting machine**.

By “doing and dying,” junior officers and other ranks may have learned to master trench warfare, but it was their senior commanders who ensured that not just some men **but the whole army** would learn. Asked by General Plumer in the aftermath of Passchendaele to account for the success of the Canadian Corps, Currie, a soldier’s soldier, predictably highlighted “the fighting spirit of the men.” But Canadian infantry had never lacked “fighting spirit” More revealingly, he identified that “fighting spirit” had been “tempered by discipline, developed by training and enhanced by the confidence in themselves and their officers created by a year of unbroken success.”⁴⁰ Institutionalizing learning, and then learning well, had contributed to the tempering of the Corps’ fighting spirit by discipline and training, and to that increase in soldierly confidence. For the better part of two years, Currie’s commanders diligently pursued this common purpose and in the process produced uncommon results.

NOTES

- ¹ J.L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton, *Marching to Armageddon* (Toronto: Key Porter, 1989), Desmond Morton, *When Your Number’s Up* (Toronto: Random House, 1993), William Rawling, *Surviving Trench Warfare* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) and Tim Cook, *No Place To Run: The Canadian Corps and Gas Warfare in World War I* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999).
- ² Similar learning was going on in the CEF’s other combat arms, but the process paralleled the infantry’s and furthermore the infantry experience clearly served as the genesis of the “learning system.”
- ³ Thirty men, all but three of them Canadian officers, commanded the twelve brigades from the Somme onward. Four were promoted to divisional commands, two were badly wounded and one taken prisoner. Eight served as brigadiers for more than twenty-two months.
- ⁴ MG 30 E15 [Griesbach Papers, NA], v. 1, file 7, *Confidential Report on Officers*, 19 Jan 1919.
- ⁵ RG 9 III C3 [NA], v. 4022, folder 51, file 6, Griesbach memo on 1st CIB tactical exercise, 8 June 1918.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, v. 4015, folder 30, file 5, report to 1st Division, 12 Aug 1918. *Ibid.*, v. 4154, folder 6, file 7, *Summary of Lessons and Experiences Gained from Recent Operations* [Amiens].
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, v. 4031, folder 27, memo to battalion commanders, 20 May 1918.
- ⁸ On the death of junior officers, Griesbach Papers, v.2, file 14, after battle report, 24 Aug 1918. *Ibid.*, file 35, report on Amiens fighting, 12 Aug 1918; file 34A, report on fighting 28 Aug – 4 Sept 1918; and file 32, report on Amiens fighting, 12 Aug 1918.
- ⁹ RG 9 III C 3, v. 4016, folder 31, file 5, report to 1st Division, 6 Sept 1918. RG 9 III D 2 [NA], v. 4797, file 82, Odlum report, 8 Oct 1918 *Narrative of Operations Carried Out between Sept. 2nd and Sept. 5th, 1918, against DURY HILL and the CANAL DU NORD North of the ARRAS-CAMBRAI Road*. See also *ibid.*, MacBrien, 14 Sept 1918, *Report on Scarpe Operation – Capture of the Drocourt-Queant Line 2nd September 1918*.
- ¹⁰ RG 9 III C 3, v. 4114, folder 46, file 3, Maj HW Wallis, Bge Maj 4th CIB, memo to all battalions, 25 Oct 1918.
- ¹¹ RG 9 III C1 [NA], v. 3859, folder 85, file 8, report on Passchendaele fighting, 20 Nov 1917.
- ¹² On Turner, see Thomas P. Leppard, “The Dashing Subaltern: Sir Richard Turner in Retrospect,” *Canadian Military History*, 6, 2 (Autumn 1997), 25-7.
- ¹³ RG 9 III C1., v. 3954, folder 93, file 3, 3 Nov 1916.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 3842, folder 43, file 8, Currie to brigades, 15 Aug 1916.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, v. 3964, folder 99, file 4, 20 Dec 1916.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Lipsett on reorganization of the Canadian Corps, 20 Dec. 1916.
- ¹⁷ RG 9 III C3, v. 4114, folder 46, file 1, Canadian Corps to divisions, 27 Dec 1916.

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- 18 RG 9 III C1, v. 3864, folder 99, file 9, Corps to Division, 10 Jan 1917.
- 19 *Ibid*, file 4, Byng memo to Divisions, 22 Jan 1917.
- 20 *Ibid*, file 6, Currie to Corps, re: platoon at Vimy, 10 May 1917.
- 21 *Ibid*, Burstall to Corps, re: platoon at Vimy, 10 May 1917.
- 22 *Ibid*, file 16, Lipsett to Corps, re: platoon at Vimy, 11 May 1917.
- 23 *Ibid*, Watson to Corps, re: platoon at Vimy, 9 May 1917.
- 24 RG 9 III C 3, v. 4188, folder 5, file 6, Lt. Col Parsons, GSO 1 of 3rd Div., to brigades, 30 May 1918.
- 25 *Ibid*, v. 4113, folder 44, file 2, Burstall memo, 2nd Div., undated (May 1918).
- 26 *Ibid*, v. 4188, folder 5, file 6, Parsons memo, 3 Nov 1917.
- 27 *Ibid*, v. 4015, folder 28, file 3, 23 Nov 1917.
- 28 *Ibid*, v. 4016, folder 33, file 13, memo to Canadian Corps, 17 Aug 1918.
- 29 MG 30 E15, v. 3, file 16 (b), Macdonnell to 1st Division, *Lessons Learnt from Recent Fighting*, 1 Sept. 1918.
- 30 *Ibid*, v. 3, file 16(b), Macdonnell, *Post-Drocourt-Quéant Report*, undated (Sept. 1918).
- 31 The commitment of key British staff officers, like Radcliffe and Webber, must also be noted.
- 32 RG 9 III C1, v. 3946, folder 64, file 1, Byng memo to the divisions of the Canadian Corps, 14 Mar 1917.
- 33 RG 9 III C3, v. 4022, folder 51, file 2, Radcliffe memo, 27 Nov 1917, *Canadian Corps Notes on Training November 1917*. RG 9 III C1, v. 3859, folder 85, file 2, Radcliffe memo to Divisions, 28 Oct 1917.
- 34 RG 9 II C3., v. 3867, folder 106, file 16, Radcliffe memo to divisions re: recent battalion OC and second-in-command courses at Corps Headquarters, 19 Dec. 1916; v. 3870, folder 113, file 1; Maj. NM Ross, OC 21st Bty CFA, 15 Aug 1917, report on conference at Artillery School, Aire, 2-4 Aug 1917 and Gen. AC Stewart, OC 8th Art. Bge to GOCRA Canadian Corps, *Report on 2nd Conference at First Army Artillery School at Aire, Aug. 15th – Aug. 18th, 1917*.
- 35 On machine gun reorganization, see *ibid*, v. 3864, folder 99, file 10, Radcliffe memo, 23 Aug. 1917 and on artillery reforms, see MG 30 E414 [Brutinel Papers, NA], v. 1, Report on the Canadian Corps 1918-19 file and MG30 E157 [Crerar Papers, NA], v. 22, file 3, memo, RA Canadian Corps, 6 Oct 1918. The role of three officers was central here – Brig-Gen. Raymond Brutinel, OC Machine Gun Corps; the Corps' counter-battery officer, Col. AGL McNaughton and the GOCRA, Maj.Gen. EWL Morrison.
- 36 RG 9 III C1, v. 3859, folder 85, file 6, Maj Gen WH Anderson, GSO1 1st Army' to Corps for distribution down to brigade, 31 Aug 1918, *Lessons from Recent Fighting Referred to by the Army Commander at Conference Held at Canadian Corps Headquarters 30th August 1918*. *Ibid*, v. 3854, folder 72, file 1, an extensive report on the use of tanks from Anderson to Cdn Corps and a similar memo entitled "Offensive Action" outlining the contemporary German system of defence, v. 3855, folder 75, file 3, 24 Aug 1918.
- 37 RG 9 III C3, v. 4113, folder 45, file 2, *General Programme for the Commanding Officers' Course*, GSO 1, 1st Army, 6 Oct 1918.
- 38 Paddy Griffiths, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front: The British Army's Art of Attack* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).
- 39 RG 9 III C1, v. 3871, folder 115, file 8, *Notes on French Attacks, North-East of Verdun, in October and December 1916*, 23 Jan 1917, talk by Currie (based on his report Jan. 1917) given individually to 1st, 2nd and 3rd CIB mid-Jan. On French input into Canadian platoon re-organization, *ibid*, v. 3864, folder 99, file 3, Byng to 1st Army, 13 May 1917. As the Canadians became more confident in their own approach, insights from the French – or anyone else – became fewer. *Ibid*, v. 3952, folder 87, file 4, Watson memo on visit of Canadian Corps officers to the training centre of the GAN, Chalons, 30 Jan 1918.
- 40 *Ibid*, v. 3854, folder 71, file 7, Currie memo to Second Army, 20 Nov 1917.

“A PRIVILEGE TO SERVE”: TORONTO’S EXPERIENCE WITH VOLUNTARY ENLISTMENT IN THE GREAT WAR

Ian Miller

Historical accounts of the process by which Canadians enlisted in the Armed Forces during the First World War have been dominated by post-war concerns about the impact of conscription on Canadian unity. Historians have consequently focused on three questions: Why did voluntary enlistment dry up? Whose fault was it? and Was conscription necessary? There is remarkable consensus on the answers to the first two questions – Sam Hughes, and Sam Hughes. Placing the blame on Canada’s Minister of Militia, however, has taken attention away from the *process* of recruiting and the context within which recruits came forward.

The debate over the third question is much more lively, featuring some of Canada’s foremost military historians.¹ The sources used, however, are very similar: historians have used nationally generated statistics and the papers of prominent politicians. This paper does not attempt to wade into the murky waters of national recruiting policy. Instead, using accounts published in the six Toronto daily newspapers, this paper presents the experience of one city, Toronto, with enlistment. Recruiting officer and prospective recruit alike did not have the benefit of hindsight to know that conscription would eventually be imposed. Quite to the contrary, they both believed in voluntarism and an ad hoc war effort. This paper moves away from the standard questions used to understand recruiting. It avoids post-war presentism and examines the way in which recruiting *unfolded* rather than how it *unraveled* between August 1914 and the announcement of conscription in May 1917. In doing so, it breathes some life and context into the numbers used to describe recruiting.

Any examination of enlistment, however, must begin with an assessment of the number of potential recruits available. The population of Toronto in the 1911 Census was 376,538², while the 1921 Census records 521,893³ residents. This data can be used to estimate the total number of men eligible for overseas service. In the 1921 Census, the number of men between the ages of 19 and 40 was 100,853, or 19.3 percent of the total population. Applying that same percentage to the 1911 total population yields 72,672 potential recruits. The number available during the war years lies somewhere between these two extremes, the middle point being 86,723. Very little information is available from military sources, but an August 1916 document reinforces this interpretation, listing the total population of Toronto at 470,444, and the total number of eligible men (including those who had gone overseas) at 87,300.⁴ Each year of the war, new recruits became available as men turned 19, but this rise was largely offset by other men becoming too old to serve.⁵ The military figure of 87,300 will be used to place the total number of Toronto volunteers in context.

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Securing soldiers in August 1914 was less a process of recruiting than it was of deciding who to enlist. Local militia regiments were awash with volunteers and the number of volunteers would have been much higher but for the measures taken by militia regiments to stem the tide. The Queen's Own Rifles announced that it would consider enrolling only men who had served previously with the unit. All others had to wait. This announcement sent the crowd of around 4,000 men from the Queen's Own armories at Queen Street and University Avenue to swell the throng already gathered in front of the headquarters of the 48th Highlanders.

Recruiting officers preferred recruits with previous military experience. This requirement was born out of expediency, out of the desire to form as competent a force as possible, and out of the need to impose a filter to help sort out the thousands who came forward. Given the fact that much ink has been spilled decrying the relatively low percentage of Canadian born recruits in the First Contingent,⁶ it must be emphasized that many men came forward to enlist, only to be passed over in favour of others with experience. Recent immigrants of British birth were more likely to have had military training, and it was primarily for this reason that relatively few Canadian-born men were chosen. The final tally of Canadian born soldiers in the original force was lower than British-born because of the requirement for men with military experience. Had the criterion for service included being born in Canada, the ranks would still have been filled.

The First, Second and Third Contingents of soldiers bound for overseas were filled easily. Battles like Second Ypres in April 1915, however, demonstrated that even more men would be needed. Recruiting efforts increased considerably after 9 June 1915, when Minister of Militia Sam Hughes announced that 35,000 more men would be recruited immediately for the Fourth Contingent. Three new battalions were to be raised in Toronto: the 74th, 75th, and 76th. To meet these new demands, recruiting became an ongoing process.⁷

For the first time since the war began, there was a noticeable drop in the enthusiasm and the number of men volunteering. The 109th Regiment reported that there was only "a little more life at the Armories" in the wake of Sam Hughes' call for 35,000 men.⁸ Recruiting officers knew that Britain had success with recruiting posters, and the Royal Grenadiers experimented with a text-only poster to appeal to local men.⁹ The poster was typical of the appeals to men in the early stage of recruiting. It was at base an announcement of the need for men, and allowed men to make their own decision about whether or not to enlist. Reference was made to the justice of the cause, but there was no overt pressure to join: it was a call to join an elite club.

On Dominion Day 1915, recruiting sergeants spread out into the streets, with each militia unit aiming to secure two hundred recruits. The results were disappointing. Throughout the city, fewer than 30 recruits were attested. The Royal Grenadiers, however, had secured twice as many volunteers as the other regiments, and that success was attributed to their use of recruiting posters and active campaigning. Local initiative produced returns, resulting in a dramatic increase in activity, and a new phase of recruiting beginning around 3 July 1915. The fundamental difference was the target group for recruits. Recruiting in Toronto had stalled because earlier drafts had taken the intensely patriotic and/or unemployed men, leaving those men who had jobs. Militia officers now targetted this previously untapped source of recruits. This new recruiting tactic, they hoped, would create a climate in which employed men would come forward.¹⁰

Recruiting boomed. The sudden increase in the number and scope of appeals prompted many men to come forward, leading officers to report that recruiting was “crowned with success.”¹¹ Men volunteered by the hundred. Between 3 and 10 July 1915, over 1,000 were attested.¹² This new appeal was broadly based and made use of organizations representing the working, middle and business classes.¹³

The largest of these rallies took place at Riverdale Park on 9 August 1915. The Park was the scene for the “...vastest and most spectacular patriotic military demonstration which has been held in Canada since the outbreak of war.”¹⁴ Between 100,000 and 200,000 people lined the natural amphitheatre formed by hills sloping from Broadview Avenue to the Don River.

The whole extravaganza had been organized to encourage recruiting. A giant electric sign was erected in the centre of the valley, showing a large coloured Union Jack, over which was printed in lights: “Your King and Country Need You. Enlist Now.” Organizers had arranged to have speakers address the crowd, but the sheer size of the gathering made that impossible. Recruiting sergeants found the density of the crowd daunting, and restricted their recruiting efforts to the immediate area surrounding recruiting tents until the crowd began to disperse. As men filed past on their way home, their patriotism was appealed to by recruiting officers. Recruiters dubbed the evening a success, securing over 400 volunteers, and successfully promoting the participation of local residents in recruiting drives.¹⁵

Recruiting was no longer about personal decisions made by individual men in the comfort of their own homes, according to their own conscience. Recruiting was now an incredibly public phenomenon, drawing half the city’s population to a rally to help promote recruiting. Men now had to justify to themselves as well as to others why they were not in khaki. Sitting with friends or family on the hillside overlooking the rally, watching the military tattoo and seeing other men cheered as they stepped forward to enlist must have exerted a profound pressure on the men still in civilian clothes. It was no longer about choosing the best because only a few could go. Recruiting was now an ongoing process and the goal was to fill the ranks as quickly as possible. In the early months of the war recruiting was about patriotism and the privilege of serving: now it was very publicly about patriotism and duty.

Recruiting continued to proceed at the pace of a battalion every week. Between 1 July and 21 August 1915, the city recruited over 7,000 for overseas service. By 27 August, the Toronto recruiting total for the entire war had risen to over 25,000. There were limits, however, to the number of men who could be reached through general patriotic appeals. Even as the 2nd Canadian Division was joining with the famous 1st to form a Canadian Corps of 2 Divisions on 13 September 1915, it became clear that recruiting was dropping again. During July and August daily recruiting totals had been measured in the hundreds; in September and October daily totals rarely broke the one hundred mark.¹⁶ While these totals are remarkable, they were significantly lower than previous daily totals measured in the 400-500 range.

It was at this point in late October 1915 that Sam Hughes announced a new scheme for raising recruits. Modeled after Lord Derby’s British plan, Sam Hughes authorized the creation of individual battalions to be raised by prominent local men. Although the minimum number required was only 25 men, Hughes authorized whole battalions throughout the Dominion. The rationale was that locally appointed Lieut.-Col.’s chosen from among prominent local residents could appeal to men in a more personal way,

thereby re-energizing recruiting. This increase was necessary to meet the demands of the war and the new ceiling on the maximum size of the CEF: 250,000 men.

For Toronto, the new battalion scheme meant six new battalions.¹⁷ Canadian historians have argued that the battalion scheme immediately degenerated into a campaign whereby battalions looking for recruits engaged in ruinous competition.¹⁸ Militia officers, however, were conscious of the difficulty of having several battalions compete for recruits. To avoid that problem, recruiting officers decided to raise one battalion at a time, with all militia units working together. After securing the necessary complement of men for Lieut.-Col. R.K. Barker's 95th Battalion, authorized on 2 November, Colonel W.B. Kingsmill of the 10th Royal Grenadiers would raise the next one, the 123rd.¹⁹ The newly authorized battalions increased the number of men who came forward.²⁰ Local men now had the opportunity to serve under a commanding officer they knew, and they could choose the battalion and the men with whom they wished to enlist. For thousands of men this incentive was enough to prompt them to offer themselves for service.

Recruiting officers were taking advantage of the two most important elements of Sam Hughes' recruiting scheme: familiarity and peer pressure. Not only would prospective recruits know who their commanding officer would be, but they had the chance to volunteer with friends and be initiated to the rigors of military life surrounded by comrades.

The new recruiting scheme prompted another rush at the Central Recruiting Depot. The Depot had its best day yet, successfully enrolling 172 men.²¹ For the three days after the parade, the daily average for recruits once again exceeded 100. The 95th battalion quickly recruited up to strength. By 10 November, just eight days after being authorized, its complement was up to 825.²² Each day the battalion marched through the streets, drumming up support and appealing to men it passed to join the ranks: it took less than two weeks to fill the entire battalion.²³ It was then the turn of Lieut.-Col. W.B. Kingsmill and the Royal Grenadiers to move to centre stage and recruit the 123rd. Their first day of recruiting broke all previous records, 204 attested out of the 345 who offered, one-third refused for medical reasons.²⁴ Recruiting officers were securing in one or two days the number of recruits that had taken a week in October.

Prime Minister Robert Borden ensured that all available men would be needed. In his 1916 New Year's address Prime Minister Borden announced that the authorized strength of the CEF was to be raised to 500,000 men, just two and a half months since 250,000 had been set as the goal. For Toronto, as for the rest of the country, it meant recruiting would have to be increased.

Lieutenant Colonel Chadwick's 124th battalion appeared up to the task, recruiting half its complement in one week. The honeymoon for the 124th battalion continued in the first days of 1916, as it regularly secured more than 100 men a day. At the Recruiting Depot totals were at record levels, consistently exceeding 200.²⁵ Recruiting record after recruiting record was shattered, making January 1916 the best month for recruiting in the war. Gradually increasing as the month went on, totals for the weeks climbed from 628 in the first week, to 790, 840, and 1,257 in subsequent weeks.²⁶ January's recruiting totals more than doubled those for November and December combined.²⁷

As had been the case with previous recruiting booms, this latest one also began to fade as the number of men moved by this style of recruiting was exhausted. Despite the

publicity accorded each of the battalions recruiting in the middle of March, recruits were no longer coming forward in daily totals over 200. Daily recruiting totals were now consistently under 100 men, producing weekly totals around 600, lower than the worst recruiting week in January.²⁸ Nevertheless, Sam Hughes' battalion scheme had re-energized recruiting. This recruiting phase was focused around public appeals, public rallies, public parades and celebrations, and public pressure.

The dwindling numbers at the end of March and into April prompted a switch once again in the sphere in which recruiting was conducted. Up until this point in the war, men could take refuge from recruiting appeals in the privacy of their own homes. However, that would soon change as recruiting officers continued to expand their appeals to target men not only at work and at play, but at home.

While Canadian soldiers struggled under German artillery at St. Eloi, recruiting efforts in Toronto were increasingly relying on individual appeals directed at men in their homes. In early April the 204th Battalion planned to send recruiting officers to visit every home in the East End to allow each man to have the "opportunity" to tell the recruiting sergeants just why he thought he should not be in khaki.²⁹ The canvassing process was painstaking, but it showed that recruiting officers were forced to target specific men in specific locations. General appeals alongside a climate of patriotic enthusiasm were no longer effective.

The Bantam Battalion, composed of undersized soldiers, also undertook direct appeals, believing that recruiting had reached the point where only "... the direct personal appeal brings results." The unit arranged for a house to house canvass in the section of the city bounded by Queen, Bloor, Yonge and Sherbourne Streets. Only three recruits were secured, but the personal canvass revealed why recruiting was dropping: "the canvass along All Street reveals the fact that, with the exception of two or three houses, every house on this Street has given at least one man for active service, and throughout the entire evening it was the rule rather than the exception to find that one or all of the eligible men in house after house had already enlisted."³⁰

Papers recorded that 25,000 men had left by August 1915. Between August 1915 and March 1916, another nine battalions of infantry were filled, adding another 10,800 to the total. The resulting total of 35,800 men does not include men who volunteered for artillery batteries, pioneer or construction battalions, or the Royal Flying Corps. Nor does it include men essential to war industry who could not leave their jobs, nor those unable to reach the minimum height or physical standards who never attempted to enlist. In addition, it must be remembered that the number of men who came forward was usually one-third higher than the number accepted, meaning that some 53,700 had to volunteer just to fill the infantry positions, let alone the ancillary places. Comparing 53,700 against the 87,300 eligible men provides a tremendous record of achievement: more than 60 percent of the eligible men had volunteered. Rather than demonstrating that the patriotic enthusiasm of Toronto's men had run out, recruiting officers were discovering that the patriotic appeals had been so successful that there were very few men left to recruit. Recruiting officers were fighting, not the recalcitrance of local men, but their own previous success in calling men to the colours.

Dismal recruiting results were reported throughout the summer of 1916. When Canadian units were engaged in offensive action at the Somme in September, recruiting numbers continued at very low levels. Both Liberal and Conservative papers printed editorials which shamed local men into service and appealed for some form of

compulsory service.³¹ Recruiting officers once again took to the streets to appeal for recruits, pushing recruiting totals back up to near 40 per day, but they quickly dropped off again.³²

In this increasingly tense atmosphere, Sir Sam Hughes was fired. Dealing with a rising man-power crisis at home, rising Canadian casualties from the Somme offensive, and Hughes' penchant for wild public statements, Prime Minister Borden no longer had the patience to deal with Hughes' antics. On 9 November 1916 Borden demanded his resignation, which he received along with a list of complaints.³³

Before withdrawing at the end of November to rest and train for spring offensives, the casualty totals of the Canadian Expeditionary Force clearly demonstrated the pressing need to solve the recruiting dilemma. Casualties greatly exceeded enlistment, and new recruits were needed to fill the ranks. It was in this context that Torontonians undertook what would become their last major recruiting drive of the war. The Clerical Patriotic Association was formed throughout the Toronto Military District to help recruiting officers secure the almost 7,000 recruits needed to fill up the units which had already been authorized in the district.³⁴ The basic recruiting tactic was "moral compulsion" to push men into service.³⁵ The needs of individual men no longer took precedence; at stake was the patriotic reputation of the city and its ability to live up to its commitments. Patriotic appeals were largely dispensed with, and citizens openly attempted to shame men into service.

The centre of this campaign was a new unit to be raised by the Queen's Own Rifles, the 255th, commanded by Lieut.-Col. George L. Royce. Advertisements were run in the papers announcing the "Give Us His Name" campaign. Recruiting officers hoped that citizens who knew the names and addresses of potential recruits would send them to recruiting sergeants. At the bottom of the form was a "coupon" which asked for the eligible man's name, address, business address, and occupation. Respondents were asked to mail the form to the Queen's Own Rifles: it was up to them to decide if they wished to sign the form. Despite the effort, recruiting did not pick up.

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* *

This last phase of voluntary recruiting was both its longest and its least productive. The cycle of voluntary recruiting was completed however, and when all attempts at voluntary recruiting were exhausted, conscription was the natural choice. Voluntary recruiting passed through many stages, edging ever closer to calls for conscription. The first two phases, August 1914 – December 1914 and January 1915 – April 1915 were about private choices made by individual Toronto men. In the privacy of their own homes, men consulted their own consciences to determine whether or not to enlist. Their decision to volunteer reflected the period, a private decision to take up the King's shilling.

Recruiting stalled however, as not enough men decided that the call of the war superseded other demands on them. The solution was to push recruiting into the public sphere. The initial period from May 1915 to early July 1915 was not successful as men did not take well to recruiting officers telling them their duty. Rejecting such appeals, men refused to enlist, openly defying the public appeals of militia authorities. Recruiting officers, however, learned from their failures, and began a subtler form of public appeal. From early July to late October 1915, recruiting officers solicited the help of the local

population to create an atmosphere where young men might be encouraged to enlist. Patriotic rallies involving 200,000 people persuaded many men through enthusiasm or peer pressure to place the demands of country before self. Sam Hughes' battalion recruiting scheme built upon this framework and extended it, successfully re-energizing the campaign from the end of October 1915 to mid-March 1916. The combination of the possibility of serving with friends, coupled with patriotic appeals which moved from patriotic gatherings to public appeals at places of work and worship, prompted thousands more to enlist. But this phase, as with all the others, had limits.

The solution was to move back into the private sphere. Not into the private realm of individual conscience, but physically into the homes of remaining men. Citizens provided the names of those men still available for service, and recruiting officers visited each house many times, appealing to the young men inside. Successful in maintaining recruiting numbers between the middle of March and early June 1916, this method encountered trouble shortly thereafter. This period stood in stark contrast to the early part of the war when enlistment resulted from an individual decision to place the country before individual interests. By the beginning of 1917, the rights of the individual had been gone for a long time. The collective entity of Toronto, through its leaders, militia officers, church leaders, organizations, and its citizens, engaged in a process of imposing their desires on individual men. Having exhausted public and private appeals to patriotism, duty and shame in an attempt to impose their desire, militia officers and many Torontonians turned to the only remaining option: conscription.

Voluntary recruiting had succeeded, however, in securing approximately 40,000 men before conscription was announced.³⁶ Since one-third of the men who volunteered were rejected on medical grounds, 60,000 must have offered to serve King and Country overseas. Placed alongside the total number of eligible men available, 87,300, more than two-thirds of Toronto's eligible men volunteered for duty. The "failure" of the voluntary has been noted by many historians of recruiting, but such conclusions assume a limitless number of recruits. What would have constituted success? Measuring the record of Toronto's voluntary enlistment figures against an assumed counter-factual model of perfect success undercuts the enormous commitment made by tens of thousands of men to the war effort.

Appendix A

Battalions Raised in Toronto

Name of Unit	Organizing Person/Militia Unit	Month Announced
First Contingent	Composite	August 1914
Second Contingent	Composite	October 1914
Third Contingent	Composite	January 1915
58 th Battalion	Composite	May 1915
74 th	Composite	June 1915
75 th	Composite	June 1915
76 th	Composite	June 1915
81 st	Composite	July 1915
83 rd	Composite	July 1915
84 th	Composite	July 1915
92 nd	48 th Highlanders	July 1915
95 th	Queen's Own Rifles	November 1915
123 rd	Royal Grenadiers	December 1915
124 th (Pals)	9 th Mississauga Horse/Governor General's Body Guard	December 1915
134 th	48 th Highlanders	January 1916
166 th	Queen's Own Rifles	January 1916
169 th	109 th Regiment	January 1916
170 th	9 th Mississauga Horse	January 1916
180 th (Sportsmen's)	Crown Attorney R.H. Greer	January 1916
201 st (Light Infantry)	E.W. Hagerty, High School Principal	February 1916

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Name of Unit	Organizing Person/Militia Unit	Month Announced
204 th (Beavers)	W.H. Price, MPP	March 1916
208 th (Irish)	Herb Lennox, MPP	March 1916
216 th (Bantam)	Lieut.-Col. F.L. Burton	March 1916
255 th	Queen's Own Rifles	November 1916

NOTES

- ¹ The debate over the third question, the necessity of conscription, features A.M. Willms, "A Brief for the Defence," in Ramsay Cook, Craig Brown and Carl Berger, eds., *Conscription 1917* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969: 1-14), versus Jack Granatstein and J.M. Hitsman's *Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977). Willms maintains that Borden imposed conscription because of military necessity in a context where plans were being drawn up for final offenses in 1920, and it was therefore necessary. In contrast, Granatstein and Hitsman argue that Borden imposed conscription as a political expedient to ensure election victory in 1917, and while it won him the election, it unnecessarily ripped apart the country along linguistic lines.
- ² *Fifth Census of Canada, 1911*, Vol. II, p. 372.
- ³ *Sixth Census of Canada, 1921*, Vol. I, p. 542.
- ⁴ No author listed, "Recruiting Returns, Military District Number 2 Up To and Including Month Ending August, 1916," September 1916, Public Archives of Canada, RG 24, Vol. 4303, File 34-1-59, Military District Number 2, General Recruiting, Vol. 8.
- ⁵ The 1921 Census lists the total number of men between 14 and 18 at 21,270 while those between 41 and 45 number 17,366, a difference of only 3,904. Divided equally over the war years, that means an increase of less than 1,000 new eligible recruits each year. (*Sixth Census of Canada, 1921*, Vol. II, pp. 104-105).
- ⁶ See for example, Desmond Morton, *When Your Number's Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War* (Toronto: Random House, 1993), p. 9.
- ⁷ "Call Sent Out to Canada For 35,000 Fresh Recruits," *World*, 9 June 1915, p. 1. For a survey of the battalions recruited in Toronto, see Appendix A.
- ⁸ "109th Regiment Gets a Call for 360 Men," *Star*, 30 June 1915, p. 3.
- ⁹ "Recruiting Sergeants and Appealing Posters," *Globe*, 30 June 1915, p. 8.
- ¹⁰ "Successful Response to Call for Recruits," *Globe*, 3 July 1915, p. 8.
- ¹¹ "Success Follows Recruiting Call," *World*, 7 July 1915, p. 1.
- ¹² "1,000 Toronto Men Enlisted This Week," *Globe*, 10 July 1915, p. 6.
- ¹³ Designed to raise the profile of recruiting and to launch the Toronto Recruiting League, the rally promoted the fact that the League had members from many prominent local organizations: the Board of Trade, the Manufacturers' Association, the Trades and Labour Council, the Speakers' Patriotic League, the Canadian Defence League, the City Council, and representative clergy. ("Big Recruiting Meeting," *Star*, 13 July 1915, p. 5).
- ¹⁴ "Hundred Thousand Witness Tattoo in Riverdale Park," *World*, 10 August 1915, p. 1.
- ¹⁵ For accounts of this rally, see the following: "Sergeants Busy Among the Crowd," *World*, 10 August 1915, p. 2; "Tens of Thousands of Hearty Voices Joined in Singing 'Rule Britannia'

and "Tipperary," *News*, 10 August 1915, p. 10; "Riverdale Park Filled to Limit," *Mail and Empire*, 10 August 1915, p. 4; "Greatest Throng City Ever Saw Reveled in Patriotic Concert," *Telegram*, 10 August 1915, p. 7; "Vast Singing Throng Sweeps Riverdale," *Globe*, 10 August 1915, pp. 1, 6.

¹⁶ See for example, "Toronto Recruiting Not Up to Standard," *Globe*, 24 September 1915, p. 6; "Recruiting Slackens; Information Wanted," *Globe*, 27 September 1915, p. 7; "Less Recruiting; Average is Low," *World*, 30 September 1915, p. 7; "Recruiting Lags Now, 47 Men in Latest List," *Star*, 30 September 1915, p. 4.

¹⁷ The Queen's Own Rifles, the 10th Royal Grenadiers, the 36th Peel, the 48th Highlanders, and the 109th Regiment were each responsible for raising one battalion. The Governor General's Body Guard and the 9th Mississauga Horse, the two cavalry units, would unite to organize a sixth battalion of infantry. ("Local Regiments to Recruit Battalions," *News*, 1 November 1915, p. 10).

¹⁸ See for example, Ronald G. Haycock, "Recruiting 1914-1916," in Marc Milner, ed., *Canadian Military History: Selected Readings* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1993), p. 65.

¹⁹ "Colonel Kingsmill for Commander," *World*, 2 November 1915, p. 2.

²⁰ "Artillery Arrives in Pelting Rainstorm," *Globe*, 5 November 1915, p. 6.

²¹ "Largest Number Enlist in a Day," *World*, 9 November 1915, p. 2.

²² "Toronto Averages 100 Recruits a Day," *Globe*, 11 November 1915, p. 6.

²³ "Over 500 Enlisted During Last Week," *Globe*, 15 November 1915, p. 6.

²⁴ "Biggest Day in Depot's History," *World*, 16 November 1915, p. 6.

²⁵ "246 Men Don Khaki: Record Again Broken," *Globe*, 4 January 1916, p. 6.

²⁶ "New High Record Set in Recruiting," *News*, 31 January 1916, p. 5; "Day's Recruiting Again Sets Record," *Mail and Empire*, 1 February 1916, p. 4.

²⁷ "Toronto Is Now a Huge Armed Camp," *News*, 11 February 1916, p. 2.

²⁸ See for example, "Enlistments Dropped in Toronto Yesterday," *World*, 18 March 1916, p. 4;

"Recruiting Again Sags Despite Many Efforts," *Globe*, 17 March 1916, p. 6.

²⁹ "Adopt New Plan to Secure Recruits," *News*, 6 April 1916, p. 8.

³⁰ "Bantams Start on Personal Canvass," *News*, 6 April 1916, p. 2.

³¹ See for example, "The Great Task" (ed.), *News*, 6 September 1916, p. 6.

³² "Recruiting Faster As Campaign Opens," *World*, 12 September 1916, p. 4.

³³ See for example, Ronald G. Haycock, *Sam Hughes: The Public Career of a Controversial Canadian, 1855-1916* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1986), pp. 288-310.

³⁴ "7,000 Recruits Needed in Toronto District," *Globe*, 17 November 1916, p. 6.

³⁵ "Moral Compulsion Will Be Employed," *News*, 17 November 1916, p. 2.

³⁶ Hubert Groves, *Toronto Does Her 'Bit'* (Toronto: Municipal Intelligence Bureau, 1918), Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, p. 7.

CITIZEN-SOLDIERS AS “LIMINARIES”: THE CEF SOLDIER RIOTS OF 1916 RECONSIDERED

P. Whitney Lackenbauer
and Nikolas Gardner

1916 was a tumultuous year. The Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) overseas was engaged in a painful learning experience amidst the bewildering and destructive conditions of the Western Front. In Canada, citizen-soldiers mounted their own offensives against perceived enemies. To borrow the apt characterization of Desmond Morton, unruly and ill-disciplined soldiers damaged local property and battled with local police forces across the country on “assorted ‘patriotic’ pretexts.”¹ In Calgary and Berlin (now Kitchener), newly recruited members of CEF battalions encamped near the cities engaged in such riotous activities. Although nativist² sentiments were clearly prevalent amongst many soldiers, this did not account for *why it was soldiers that initiated the rioting* rather than the citizenry at large.

Anthropological literature on rites of transition, and specifically on the liminal phase, offers significant insight into the riotous behaviour of locally-based battalions. As citizen-soldiers-in-training, new recruits were “betwixt and between” civilian and military cultures. New recruits in Calgary and Berlin, only recently drawn from the civilian population and undergoing the process of transformation into soldiers, had been given uniforms and billeted in barracks – they had thus been symbolically detached from their earlier roles in civil society, although their close physical proximity to the region from which they had been drawn obfuscated this detachment. Furthermore, they were not yet fully trained “soldiers” ready to disembark for combat overseas. The recruits found themselves in a marginal (liminal) realm in which they no longer saw themselves as simple civilians but did not possess all of the attributes of soldier status. In this context, the riotous behaviour of 1916 becomes almost comprehensible.

Liminality

While previous scholars have examined the CEF riots in Canada in a relatively myopic and superficial way – as simple manifestations of ethnic tensions – a more substantive assessment of why it was newly-recruited soldiers that rioted requires a new framework for analysis. Donna Winslow recently explored the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR) from a socio-cultural perspective using anthropological theory on rites of transition and various sociological literature.³ Her adoption of theoretical tools to explain the explicit initiation rites of the CAR and unlawful behaviour in Somalia suggests that unconventional approaches to military studies can provide insights beyond those allowed by conventional means.

Although there is no parallel to the CAR “hazing rituals” in the case of the Calgary and Berlin riots, there are clear indications that the new recruits were in a transition phase, and more particularly the “liminal” phase, at the time the riots in Calgary and

Berlin occurred. Anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep characterized all rites of transition as marked by three phases: separation, marked by symbolic behaviour signifying the detachment of the individual from an earlier fixed point in the social structure; margin (or *limen*), in which the state of the ritual subject is ambiguous; and aggregation, in which the passage is consummated and the individual takes on his new identity and classification.⁴ Victor Turner explained that during the liminal period “neophytes are withdrawn from their structural positions and consequently form the values, norms, sentiments and techniques associated with those positions” while at the same time they are also divested of their:

previous habits of thought, feeling and action. During the liminal period neophytes are alternately forced and encouraged to think about their society, their cosmos and the powers that generate and sustain them. Liminality may be partly described as a stage of reflection. In it those ideas, sentiments and facts that had been hitherto for the neophytes bound up in configurations and accepted unthinkingly are, as it were, resolved into their constituents. These constituents are isolated and made into objects of reflection for the neophytes by such processes as *componential exaggeration* and *dissociation by varying concomitants*. The communication of sacra and other forms of esoteric instruction really involves three processes, though these should not be regarded as in series but as in parallel. The first is the *reduction of culture into recognized components or factors*; the second is their *recombination in fantastic or monstrous patterns and shapes*; and the third is their *recombination in ways that make sense with regard to the new state and status* which the neophytes will enter.⁵

These neophytes, or “liminaries,” are “betwixt-and-between established states of politico-jural structure. They evade ordinary cognitive classification, too, for they are neither-this-nor-that, here-nor-there, one-thing-not-the-other.”⁶

Citizens who are being asked to put their life on the line and kill the enemy in the name of the state cannot help but be reflective. The primacy of the Crown and the state, and the explicit need to preserve and protect the “democratic” powers that sustain them and their society, was inculcated in the earliest training. Any perceived threat by “enemy aliens” was a natural component of the threat posed by the enemy and, according to theory, would be isolated and exaggerated during this period of monster- or fantasy-making. Therefore, the liminaries recombined anti-enemy anxieties in Calgary and Berlin into fantastic patterns and shapes that made sense to their emerging status as soldiers. Since enemy aliens were perceived to constitute a national security risk, or at the very least their presence represented an abject injustice in their respective communities, the new recruits chose to deal with them in a way compatible with the training they had received, namely by using force against their enemies and the institutions which they were seen to control. Of course, their unlawful action was a direct affront to the discipline and hierarchical control crucial to an effective and ordered military.

Calgary, Alberta

Western Canadians proved most receptive to the call to arms early in the war. As part of the locally-based recruiting scheme concocted by the Minister of Militia and Defence, Sir Sam Hughes, new battalions were organized (including the 56th, 82nd and 89th Infantry Battalions recruiting from the Calgary area) to handle the massive numbers

of anxious men. Throngs of new recruits signed up daily as the autumn of 1915 turned into the cruel winter of 1916, and the burgeoning ranks of trainees in the city found their billeting arrangements. The cold meant that the inexperienced citizen-soldiers found their visions of excitement and serious training dashed by long periods of indoor physical drills. News from overseas, foreshadowing a long war, only added to restlessness and anxiousness.⁷

As the dream of a short war died in the murderous attrition on the Western Front, tolerance in Canada met a similar fate. The flames of anti-German hysteria swept through the dry timber of Anglo-Canadian society. There was an increasingly sense that Canada was no longer participating in the war out of obligation to Britain; they were defending civilization itself.⁸ In Calgary, home to the largest urban German population in the Alberta, passions were incensed as Senator James A. Lougheed began to speak of the direct German menace to Canada.⁹ Such rhetoric, compounded by rumours that Germans were responsible for burning the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa in early February 1916, resonated in newly recruited battalions containing bored citizen-soldiers in a liminal state.

Within this context, some of new recruits stationed in Calgary decided to take matters into their own hands. A local restaurant had purportedly fired an Anglo veteran and had replaced him with an enemy alien. Such a rumour quickly circulated around the military camp,¹⁰ and through the process of ‘monster-making’ became a *cause celebre* amongst the liminaries. Consequently, on the evening of 10 February, a growing throng of several hundred soldiers marched four-abreast through downtown Calgary. Although a few members of the city police met the procession at its objective, the White Lunch Restaurant, they were no match for the excited soldiers, who quickly thrust their way inside. The rioters wrought their carnage on the restaurant at their will, while an excited crowd outside swelled to a couple of thousand onlookers. A “second division” of soldiers converged simultaneously on another White Lunch location, and destroyed the restaurant in one rush. Within a few minutes, the *Albertan* observed, the place “looked as though it were situated ‘somewhere in Ypres,’ and that a howitzer shell had exploded.” The district commander, Brigadier E.A. Cruikshank, proceeded to the scene and ordered the soldiers to return to their quarters – they quickly complied. By midnight all was quiet again, but the gaping fronts of the wrecked buildings and the littered debris of smashed furniture and fittings on the street bore witness to the night’s destructive events.¹¹

Cruikshank addressed all of the units under his command at their various quarters the following afternoon, and pointed to the penalties such outrages warranted. The officers, however, wildly missed the mark with their optimistic estimate that no more riots were forthcoming. That evening “trouble came like a bomb from the blue heavens, sudden, demoralizing, appalling.”¹² A group of five hundred soldiers and civilians proceeded to the Riverside Hotel on an anti-German pretext,¹³ absorbing soldiers and civilians as it moved along. Upon their arrival, the mob quickly overwhelmed the few police and military officers on the ground, and “for two hours a veritable reign of terror prevailed.” Little was left of the forty-eight room hotel when the mob had finished. The picquets ordered by the GOC that afternoon failed to arrive in time to arrest the destruction, and by the time they were hastily arranged and marched to the scene of the rioting it was too late. The mob, satisfied that its work was done at the hotel, confidently strode back over the bridge and dispersed uptown.¹⁴

In the wake of the riots, the military authorities, preoccupied with maintaining order, imposed stringent restrictions on the soldiers and the local battalions were sent on long

marches in the country to walk off “a whole lot of effervescent animal spirits.”¹⁵ City Council, succumbing to the rioters’ demands, immediately dismissed all civic employees of alien nationality and laid off all street railway company employees born in enemy countries. To curtail more lawless behaviour by soldiers, a rider was added to the motion stating that returned soldiers be replaced where possible in place of the discharged. These resolutions, coupled with media and public sentiment that condemned the unruly and destructive activities but upheld the explicit motivations of the rioters,¹⁶ meant that the soldiers had indeed achieved a measure of success.

Testimonies before courts of inquiry established to look into the riots provide insight into the reasons behind soldiers’ unlawful actions and the military authorities’ concomitant responses.¹⁷ The evidence given by those “soldiers” present at the riots was not only compatible with behaviour associated with the liminal phase, but the proceedings and allocation of responsibility exposed pervasive military-civil differences – the very cleavages that represented the socio-cultural transition required before the liminaries became *bona fide* soldiers ready for overseas service.

The testimonies substantiate the notion that the soldiers involved in the riots were in the midst of a liminal phase. Turner explained that “complete equality usually characterizes the relationship of neophyte to neophyte, where the rites are collective ... The liminal group is a community or commity of comrades and not a structure of hierarchically arrayed positions.”¹⁸ The liminaries turned to one another for guidance and support when they commonly faced the difficult issue of what to do about perceived enemy alien activities in the city. Blind comradeship and curiosity took precedence over the rigid military discipline and chain of command to which the recruits had only recently been subjected and which, as soldiers, they were supposed to regard as paramount. Most cited peer pressure as the reason they joined in the crowd – they were simply told to “fall in” as trained and they did, often unaware of where they were heading.¹⁹ This was, after all, part of what they had been taught in training.²⁰ Simple curiosity was the other driving force for participation.²¹ The liminaries, in a bastardized adaptation of the training they had received, applied a rudimentary understanding of military operations against their distorted and exaggerated conception of the enemy as it existed in Calgary.

The vast majority of liminaries testified that the raids were spontaneous acts with no particular leaders.²² The majority of ranks and non-commissioned officers who appeared before the court displayed a common reluctance to share any names, either of comrades involved in the riots or civilian “friends” who got them liquor. This mass amnesia could be partly explained by the excitement, the darkness, the free flow of alcohol, and the sheer number of people present. Anonymity was further preserved, however, by the fact that the soldiers participating in the raids had removed their regimental shoulder badges before engaging in their orgy of destruction.²³ The soldiers’ proclivity to rip off their insignia prior to the raid not only prevented identification, it also represented group bonding between men of different regiments. This abolishment of divisions between the citizen-soldiers along regimental lines supplemented the elimination of lines of authority normally respected within the military hierarchy. Badges mark a soldier’s place in the hierarchy, but as the ranks acted on their own volition (without official orders flowing down through the chain of command) the ordered structure embodied in the insignia was overturned for all symbolic and practical purposes.

Although the courts of inquiry were military by their very nature, the role of civilians in the riots was a subject of intense discussion and testimonies varied widely.

Military officers tended to stress civilians' participation in the raids, while civil authorities blamed the soldiers almost universally.²⁴ In the Chief of Police's assessment, commissioned officers belonging to the same battalions as the rioters made no effort whatsoever to stop them, and it was "common talk amongst the citizens and the soldiers who took part in the rioting or who were then in camp" that Cruikshank bore at least partial responsibility. Had the General taken ordinary preventive measures and "asserted his authority in a more vigorous manner," the Chief argued, the second attack would never have taken place.²⁵ The salient difference between the military and civilian authorities vis-à-vis civilian participation in the riots coloured their subsequent assessments of events.

From the local military's point of view, the court of inquiry yielded inconclusive evidence, and individual soldiers were turned over to the civilian authorities for trial rather than dealt with through the military justice system. Cruikshank strongly believed that military was not responsible for the riotous behaviour, choosing instead to blame the disturbances on "inflammatory letters and articles which appeared in certain newspapers, and the injudicious remarks made by civilians."²⁶ From this point onward military authorities denied any legal or moral obligations for the destruction. The men who composed the mob may have been in khaki uniforms, but when engaged in their destructive activity the military refused to consider them soldiers.²⁷ This official posture perpetuated what Turner described as the "structural invisibility of liminal *personae*, in which the neophytes are at once *no longer* classified *and not yet* classified." The "soldiers" were "betwixt and between" military and civilian society,²⁸ and their officers would not be held accountable for the absence of control and discipline over the liminaries.

Berlin, Ontario

The short, yet tumultuous history of the 118th Overseas Battalion has received ample scholarly attention. Characterizing the fledgling unit as a "vengeful mob" and an "outlaw gang," historians have demonstrated the repeated involvement of its members in the ethnic tensions that erupted in Berlin, Ontario during 1916.²⁹ While the excesses of the 118th have been well documented, scholars have devoted little effort to examining why members of the battalion proved to be the chief instigators of anti-German violence throughout this period, even though their actions clearly contravened military standards of conduct. The pressures of recruiting in a predominantly German area, combined with lax disciplinary regulations, prolonged the liminal phase for the members of the 118th Battalion. As a result, their conduct throughout 1916 reflected the transitional process in which they were involved.

The 118th Overseas Battalion was created in late 1915 under the same volunteer recruiting scheme as the Calgary battalions. Under this initiative, Sir Sam Hughes delegated responsibility for recruiting, training and commanding Canadian infantry battalions to community leaders across the country, in an effort to entice volunteers into the ranks with the prospect of serving under men they knew and presumably respected.³⁰ The minister's choice to command the 118th was W.M.O. Lohead, a local insurance executive and President of the Berlin Board of Trade. Hughes apparently deemed Lohead's status as a civic leader in Berlin as sufficient to compensate for his military experience, which consisted of only fourteen months service in a local militia unit. Consequently, in early November 1915, the minister assigned Lohead the rank of

Lieutenant-Colonel, and charged him with the task of raising a full infantry battalion in the federal electoral riding of Waterloo North and the rural provincial riding of West Wellington.³¹

Given the predominantly German population of Waterloo North, and the reality that most of the more enthusiastic supporters of the Canadian war effort had already gone overseas by late 1915, the challenge facing Lohead was considerable. Nevertheless, early recruiting efforts proved reasonably encouraging. By the end of November, the 118th boasted 15 officers, 20 non-commissioned officers, and 111 other ranks. While the bulk of the officers, like Lieutenant-Colonel Lohead, had no military experience beyond their service in the local militia regiment, they quickly commenced the process of moulding their new recruits into soldiers, creating a makeshift barracks out of a local shirt factory and teaching the men how to march.³² Thus, by late 1915, the first members of the 118th Battalion had begun the process of transformation from citizen to soldier.

Almost immediately, however, the difficulties of recruiting in Berlin and the surrounding vicinity began to complicate this process. Despite a series of public meetings in early December, at which provincial politicians, high-ranking Canadian soldiers and the officers of the 118th exhorted the young men of the area to “don the khaki,” the battalion’s rate of growth failed to keep pace with the initial surge following its creation. Consequently, in an attempt to bolster the ranks of the fledgling unit, its newly-enlisted members initiated their own recruiting efforts, with the apparent approval of their officers. As the Berlin *Daily Telegraph* reported, the soldiers took to the streets on the evening of 13 December and “waylaid the ‘Man-About-Town,’” escorting young men to the recruiting office, where they were forced to explain their reasons for not enlisting.³³ On subsequent nights, similar impromptu recruiting efforts became a familiar occurrence on the streets of Berlin.

Although these initiatives apparently resulted in new enlistments, they also prolonged and intensified the transitional stage in which the liminaries of the 118th were involved. Clearly, allowing new recruits to accost local citizens in public did little to inculcate the discipline expected of trained soldiers. Moreover, involving these men in the recruiting process increased the tendency towards reflection inherent in the liminal phase. The new members of the battalion were undoubtedly compelled by their own enlistment to contemplate the virtues of the society which they were preparing to defend, as well as the nature of their enemy. The task of convincing others to enlist encouraged further reflection by forcing the new recruits to articulate the ideas which had compelled them to volunteer. According to Victor Turner, this process of reflection involves the isolation of the constituent parts of one’s “cosmos,” and their exaggeration into “fantastic or monstrous patterns or shapes.”³⁴ In the predominantly German community of Berlin, Ontario, it was all too easy to identify an enemy and exaggerate the threat that it posed. Not only was evidence of German culture widespread, but large numbers of young men in the town, many of whom were of German descent, proved impervious to recruiting efforts in November and December 1915. Thus, with the rate of new enlistments flagging as 1915 drew to a close, the members of the 118th began to conceive of themselves as confronted by numerous enemies among the population of Berlin, whose indifference and even hostility to the recruiting campaign threatened the future of their battalion, and hence the Canadian war effort.

Having only recently enlisted in the 118th Battalion, its members were far from fully-trained at the end of 1915. Nevertheless, the fact that they had been issued uniforms

and billeted in barracks led the new recruits, as well as civilian observers, to see themselves as soldiers. Given this newly-acquired status, the members of the battalion chose to respond to the perceived threat posed by the "enemy" in Berlin through the use of force. Thus, by January 1916, their recruiting efforts on the streets of the town had become decidedly more confrontational. On the 22nd, the *Berlin News Record* reported: "The men in uniform were out in force and adopted a strong-arm system of canvassing, hustling in the civilians by force if they did not accompany the soldiers willingly." Many who resisted, the article alleged, were "carried in by six or seven soldiers. Their clothing was dirtied and their hats had been broken or lost in the tussle." In one instance, a woman claimed that she and a sergeant had become involved in a fistfight after her husband had been forcibly escorted to the recruiting office.³⁵

As the pace of recruiting remained sluggish in February and March 1916, the liminaries of the 118th intensified their operations against enemy elements in Berlin. On the night of 15 February, members of the battalion entered the Concordia Club, a local German cultural organization, and removed a bust of Kaiser Wilhelm I. After parading the trophy back to their barracks, they returned and looted the club, burning its contents in a bonfire out in the street.³⁶ On 1 March, several of the "118th boys" smashed the windows of A. Hanni's tailor shop in Berlin. Their only motive, reported the *Daily Telegraph*, was that "the name didn't sound British enough to suit them." The following night, members of the battalion visited several German-owned businesses in Berlin and neighbouring Waterloo, appropriating a painting of Wilhelm I and several other pictures of a "German nature." Afterwards, the men dispersed, with several entering a local restaurant with their plunder. When another patron objected to seeing a picture of the German Kaiser in their possession, the "soldiers" obliged by smashing it over the imprudent customer's head.³⁷ On 5 March, this campaign against enemy sedition culminated, as a party from the 118th visited the home of C.R. Tappert, a Lutheran clergyman from the United States who had outraged many Canadians in early 1916 by disputing many of the German atrocity stories circulating in the press. Having reneged on an earlier promise to leave Berlin by the first of the month, the unfortunate Tappert was abducted, beaten, and dragged to the barracks before being rescued by officers of the 118th.³⁸

The intervention of the officers of the battalion only after Tappert's beating occurred was typical of their role throughout 1916. In training new recruits, it is the responsibility of officers to ensure that disciplinary standards are maintained among the ranks, thereby expediting the liminal phase in which they are involved. The officers of the 118th, however, most of whom had little military experience themselves, imposed relatively lax discipline within the unit. The men involved in the aforementioned incidents, when they were penalized at all, were given only light punishments. The two members of the battalion convicted of assaulting Rev. Tappert, for example, were released with suspended sentences and a stern lecture.³⁹ According to the commander of the battalion, such lenient punishments were imposed precisely because its members were involved in the transitional stage between civilian and soldier. Following criticisms from his superiors later in 1916 regarding the high rate of absenteeism in his battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel Lohead explained his philosophy regarding discipline. As he responded:

My foremost thought is the correction of the individual and the minimum punishment that will effect the greatest good for the greatest number. I also

bear in mind that many offences are committed through ignorance, that is, not ignorance of the specific regulation involved, but a lack of appreciation of the true meaning of discipline, and this extends not only to the n.c.o.s and men, but to the officers as well. This sense of discipline can only be developed in the course of time and demands on the part of the officers unceasing vigilance, and a high standard of efficiency. How then, in justice to the soldier, can I expect to exact the full penalty of the law – a law that was laid down for professional officers and professional soldiers!⁴⁰

Admittedly, the officers of the 118th managed to curb the excesses of their men following the events of February and March 1916. Given Lohead's conception of discipline, however, it is hardly surprising that while under his command, the members of the battalion did not achieve standards of behaviour that approached those of "professional soldiers." The unit ceased active recruiting in mid-May 1916, having attained a strength of just over 700. It spent the summer of 1916 at Camp Carling, in London, Ontario, and Camp Borden, near Barrie. Both training and the inculcation of discipline were impeded in this period by harvest furloughs, which absented 25% of the battalion during the month of August, as well as weekend passes, which allowed up to 250 members of the 118th to visit Berlin every weekend.⁴¹ These regulations, combined with the permissive disciplinary standards that existed within the battalion, did little to encourage the transformation of the recruits of the 118th into fully-trained soldiers. On 19 October, the battalion passed through its recently renamed home town of Kitchener on their way from Camp Borden to its new billets in London. Spotting the Mayor among a crowd of onlookers as their train passed through Kitchener, members of the battalion pulled the train's emergency brake and pelted him with sugar beets, apparently due to the fact that he had opposed their posting closer to home.⁴² Even in the fall of 1916, the soldiers of the 118th remained determined to combat their enemies, in whatever form they took.

Conclusions

Commenting on the nature of "liminality," Victor Turner explained that the process of transition can be a protracted one. Between their detachment from civilian life and their reformulation as soldiers, liminaries in Calgary and Berlin were forced to reflect on the nature of their society. In the process of reducing their understanding of this society into its constituent parts, perceived and potential enemies close to home took on a hyperinflated significance. Sir Sam Hughes' decision to train new recruits near their places of origin exacerbated problems by not allowing for a cleaner break from societal prejudices and pressures influencing the aspiring citizen-soldiers. The consequent actions taken against the "monsters" in their midst were shaped by the liminaries' fragmentary understanding their role as soldiers. As a result, Canadian citizen-soldiers became threats to the very communities they pledged their lives to defend.

NOTES

- ¹ Morton, “‘No More Disagreeable or Onerous Duty’: Canadians and the Military Aid of the Civil Power, Past, Present, Future,” in David B. Dewitt and David Leyton-Brown, eds., *Canada’s International Security Policy* (Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall, 1995), 135; Directorate of History and Heritage, DHH 74/672, E. Pye Papers, Folder H, File, “Disturbances in Canada 1916.”
- ² By “nativism” the authors refer to a prevalent attitude in a society of rejecting alien persons or culture.
- ³ Donna Winslow, “Rites of Passage and Group Bonding in the Canadian Airborne,” *Armed Forces & Society* 25/3 (Spring 1999), 429-57.
- ⁴ Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960); Victor W. Turner, “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*,” chapter 4, *Forest of Symbols* (Ithaca: N.Y.: Cornell University Press), 356.
- ⁵ Turner, “The Liminal Period,” 366.
- ⁶ Turner, “Variations on a Theme of Liminality,” in *Secular Ritual*, Sally Moore and Barbara Myerhoff, eds., (Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1977), 37.
- ⁷ Desmond Morton, *When Your Number’s Up* (Toronto: Random House, 1993), 13, 62; John F. Meek, *Over the Top! The Canadian Infantry in the First World War*, 75, 85, 89; Fred Bagley & Dr. Harvey Daniel Duncan, *A Legacy of Courage: “Calgary’s Own” 137th Overseas Battalion, C.E.F.* (Calgary: Plug Street Books, 1993), 80-81, 163-4; *Albertan*, 14 February 1916, 8, 81.
- ⁸ John Herd Thompson, *Harvests of War* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978), 36-7.
- ⁹ Canada, *Senate*, 18 January 1916, 14-15. See also Howard Palmer, *Responses to Foreign Immigration: Nativism and Ethnic Tolerance in Alberta, 1880-1920*, M.A. thesis (University of Alberta, 1971).
- ¹⁰ A handwritten sign was posted in the camp canteen for all to read: “Keep away from the ‘White Lunch’: They fired two British waiters and engaged one German and one Austrian in their places.” Undated, handwritten sign, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 1255, File HQ 593-1-86, vol. 1 (hereafter NAC Calgary Riots).
- ¹¹ 1st, 23rd, 47th, and 73rd witnesses, Proceedings of the Court of Inquiry into the attack on the White Lunch Restaurants, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 1255, File HQ 593-1-86, vol. 1 (hereafter “White Lunch”); “Soldiers Take Own Action at Calgary,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 11 February 1916, 4; *Albertan*, 11 February 1916, 8.
- ¹² Memorandum, JAG to DM, DND, n.d., NAC Calgary Riots; *Albertan*, 12 February 1916, 1.
- ¹³ The prime motive for the riot, the Calgary police chief believed, was that “a number of foreigners had a big night in the Riverside Hotel, and did a lot of talking” after the Parliament Buildings fire in Ottawa. 34th witness, Proceedings of the Court of Inquiry into the Riverside Hotel, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 1255, File HQ 593-1-86, vol. 1 (hereafter “Riverside Hotel”).
- ¹⁴ Palmer, “Responses to Foreign Immigration,” 226-7; Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 48; *Albertan*, 12 February 1916, 1; *Calgary Herald*, 12 February 1916, 14.
- ¹⁵ Letter and Marginalia, GOC MD 13 to Secretary, Militia Council, 13 March 1916, NAC Calgary Riots; *Albertan*, 15 February 1916, 3.
- ¹⁶ Resolutions passed by the Council of the City of Calgary at their special meeting held at 10:30 a.m. February 12th, 1916, City of Calgary Archives, City Clerks’ Council Minutes, Reel 2, May 1914-Dec 1916, Vol. 1, Year 1916, Council Chamber, City Hall, 12 February 1916; Confidential War Bulletin, 14 February 1916, NAC; *Calgary Herald*, 12 February 1916, 1, 13, 14 February 1916, 1; *Albertan*, 14 February 1916, 8.
- ¹⁷ Courts of Inquiries are not judicial bodies; they are information gatherings established pursuant to military regulations, at the discretion of the convening officer, “to collect and record

information only, or it may be required to give an opinion also on any proposed question, or as to the origin or cause of certain existing facts or circumstances.” See Major-General Sir William D. Otter, *The Guide: A Manual for the Canadian Militia (Infantry)*, 9th ed. (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1914), 150-51. Cruikshank established a Court of Inquiry to investigate the attacks on the White Lunch restaurants on 11 February, the day after the initial riot. It was assembled at district headquarters the next day, along with concurrent but separate proceedings to look into the attack on the Riverside Hotel the night before. The court met daily until 24 February. Seventy-three witnesses, including the Calgary Chief of Police, police detectives, several military officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs), Mr. Nagel (proprietor of the White Lunch) and soldiers allegedly involved in the attack testified before the panel regarding the attacks on the restaurants. Another forty-three appeared to offer their testimonies on the Riverside riot.

18 Turner, “The Liminal Period,” 361-2.

19 19th and 26th witnesses Riverside Hotel.

20 What was missing, however, was the crucial understanding that proper orders to “fall in” were only to be obeyed when they came from a superior with sanctioned authority.

21 32nd witness, Riverside Hotel.

22 14th, 32nd, 36th, 37th, and 54th witnesses, White Lunch.

23 12th witness, Riverside Hotel; 28th and 73rd witnesses, White Lunch. For those that were undoubtedly at the scene of the crimes, drunkenness (and the associated amnesia) appeared to be an acceptable means of denying participation and evading responsibility. See, for example, 1st, 10th and 42nd witnesses, Riverside Hotel. Although drunken disorderliness was an offence, and could not absolve a soldier of all blame for his actions, alcohol was nevertheless a vice to which all soldiers were apparently apt to succumb.

24 See, for example, 2nd, 23rd, and 25th witnesses, White Lunch; 14th, 18th and 20th witnesses, Riverside Hotel.

25 Letter, Chief Cuddy to Messrs. Lent, Jones, Mackay & Mann, Barristers, etc., Calgary, Alberta, 8 May 1916, NAC Calgary Riots.

26 Letter and Marginalia, GOC MD 13 to Secretary, Militia Council, 13 March 1916, NAC Calgary Riots.

27 In one assessment, for example, the Judge Advocate General argued that: “As respects these claims [for damages by the owners of the Calgary properties] it has to be said that the Government is in no way responsible for the wrong-doing of its soldiers. If the claimants’ statements are true, the persons who did the injury in question were rioters, answerable to the law as criminals, and answerable to the injured for the damage done; but the public are not answerable for such conduct.” Memorandum, JAG to Assistant-Adjutant-General, 10 April 1916, NAC Calgary Riots.

28 Turner, *The Liminal Period*,” 357-8.

29 William Chadwick, *The Battle for Berlin, Ontario: An Historical Drama* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1992), 77; Patricia McKeegney, *The Kaiser’s Bust: A Study of War-Time Propaganda in Berlin, Ontario, 1914-1918* (Wellesley, Ont.: Bamberg Press, 1991), 156. See also Alexander Forbes, *Volunteer Recruiting in Waterloo County During the Great War*, (M.A. Thesis: University of Waterloo, 1977). For a different interpretation, see Nikolas Gardner, “The Great War and Waterloo County: The Travails of the 118th Overseas Battalion,” *Ontario History*, 89:3 (September 1997), 219-236.

30 On Hughes’s recruiting initiative, see R.C. Brown and D.M. Loveridge, “Unrequited Faith: Recruiting the CEF, 1914-1918,” in *Revue Internationale d’Histoire Militaire*, 51 (1982), 60.

31 Hughes to Lochead, 5 November 1915; Assistant Adjutant-General [A.A.G.] 1st Division to Lochead, 12 November 1915, Laurier Centre for Military, Strategic and Disarmament Studies, W.M.O. Lochead Personal Papers [hereafter Lochead Papers], folder 55; Berlin *Daily Telegraph*, 13 November 1915.

32 Lochead to A.A.G. 1st Division, 30 November 1915, Lochead Papers, folder 36; *Daily Telegraph*, 26 November 1915.

- ³³ *Daily Telegraph*, 14 December 1914.
- ³⁴ Turner, "The Liminal Period," 366.
- ³⁵ *Berlin News Record*, 22 January 1916.
- ³⁶ *Ibid*, 21 February 1916.
- ³⁷ *Daily Telegraph*, 2-3 March 1916.
- ³⁸ *News Record*, 6 March 1916. For a more graphic account of this incident, see John E. English and Kenneth McLaughlin, *Kitchener: An Illustrated History* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1983), 116.
- ³⁹ *Ibid*, 8 March 1916.
- ⁴⁰ Lohead to A.A.G. Military District No.1, 17 November 1916, Lohead Papers, folder 7.
- ⁴¹ Lohead to J. Dauberger, 11 August 1916, Lohead Papers, folder 60; *News Record*, 29 July 1916, 15 August 1916.
- ⁴² *Daily Telegraph*, 20 October 1916.

**OF FIGHTING *BAYMEN* AND *TOWNIES* –
TOWARDS A REASSESSMENT OF
THE NEWFOUNDLAND CONSCRIPTION CRISIS
1917-1918**

Jason Churchill

The issue of conscription divided Newfoundland society during the First World War. During this time frame, discord amongst the Newfoundlanders was multifaceted and complex – it was not (as current historiography suggests) determined exclusively by geographic demographics. The divisions were not as simple as the “townies,” (or St. John’s residents), versus “baymen” (rural folk who inhabited outports throughout Newfoundland).

There was a myriad of influences affecting Newfoundlanders decision to either support or oppose conscription. Some were affected by a deep-seated hostility and suspicion towards those in power, especially towards those in the capital St. John’s. Others were opposed to recruitment and conscription because of a wartime induced boom in the economy, (would rather stay home and work.) The news of mounting casualties also undoubtedly dissuaded others from supporting the war effort. At the same time, and often in the same communities, there were numerous fraternal and religious organisations actively supporting the war effort and propagandising in favour of conscription. These influences, however, especially with some churches, were sometimes conflicting. The history of the conscription debate from 1917-1918 is a much more complicated topic than historians tend to present.

Newfoundland historians such as Douglas Day, Ian Macdonald, S.R.J. Noel, and Patricia O’Brien have argued that conscription was advocated by St. John’s residents, *townies*, and resented by the people of the outports, *baymen*. The supporting arguments for the urban versus rural nature of the conscription debate rests upon the conclusion that there was a supposed lack of jingoism in outport Newfoundland during the Great War. The lack of patriotic enthusiasm is generally explained by the assumed absence of propaganda institutions in rural areas to promote the war effort.¹ Both of the ideas that outports lacked a jingoistic spirit and that there was a dearth of patriotic institutions in rural areas must be questioned. Previous research has not accounted for, among other things, the important role played by influential groups such as religious and fraternal organisations.

As elsewhere in the British Empire, the declaration of war on 4 August 1914 was greeted with great enthusiasm in Newfoundland. “Those who reckon with England, must reckon with England’s sons!” blared the headline of a St. John’s daily newspaper, *The Daily News*.² The response was immediate. Britain’s most “ancient and loyal” colony was determined to do its part for “King and Country.” As soon as the government indicated its intention to raise troops for overseas service, hundreds of volunteers rushed to join up, far more than actually needed in the first instance.

Unlike other nations within the Empire, Newfoundland's war effort initially was not run by the government. Prime Minister Edward Morris, in consultation with the Governor Sir Walter E. Davidson, established the Newfoundland Patriotic Association (NPA) to administer the war effort. The NPA, in effect, was an extra-parliamentary organisation directed principally by the Governor. The NPA was not replaced until the coalition National Government, with a specific Department of Militia, was established in 1917.³ Direct involvement by the government was necessitated by the failure of the NPA to maintain sufficient numbers for the Regiment through a voluntary enlistment system.

After the initial enthusiasm for the war waned, voluntary recruitment began to slow in 1916. In 1915 there were 1,418 recruits accepted for service, by 1916 this figure had deteriorated to 1,087 men with 1,123 rejections. The problem became critical by 1917. In the first six months of 1917 there were only 513 accepted men; the same period in the previous year provided 709 volunteers. Between September 1916 to April 1917, there were no new recruits sent from Newfoundland to reinforce the First, later Royal, Newfoundland Regiment.⁴ Voluntary enlistment was no longer adequate to maintain the Regiment in the field and conscription was viewed as necessary. The threat of conscription was enough to entice sufficient numbers of men to volunteer and to meet immediate demands. Between 3 April and 14 May 1917, 1,123 men offered themselves for service, of which 605 were accepted.⁵

The problem of slowing recruitment numbers was exacerbated by obscene losses in a relatively short period of time. In approximately a year and a half, from July 1916 to December of 1917 there were 1,932 Newfoundlanders killed or seriously wounded.⁶ After severe losses at the Somme, Gueudecourt, Monchy, Poelcappelle and Cambrai battle sites, the Regiment faced a serious shortage of men.⁷ By 1917 the situation had become desperate.

The National Government was under immense pressure from concern citizens and various religious and fraternal organizations throughout the country to act to maintain the Regiment as an active fighting force within the British Army. In response, in the fall of 1917, they launched a massive voluntary recruitment drive in hopes of staving off the need for conscription. A Recruiting Committee was established to send representatives throughout rural Newfoundland in one final effort to raise sufficient recruits. The final voluntary effort was timed to coincide with the end of the fishing season and was directed predominantly at the outports. In October public appeals were made and a group of approximately sixty men, mostly returned soldiers from the Regiment, canvassed the entire island hoping to secure 500 new recruits.⁸ The following month, when the fishing schooners were in St. John's, the Regimental band played and ex-soldiers boarded each vessel to try and convince the fishermen to enlist.⁹ As well, appeals were written and dispersed throughout the media.¹⁰

The Recruiting Committee reports provide an important window into the perceptions and attitudes that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians felt towards the war effort and the possibility of conscription. One of the first themes to emerge from reading the correspondences is a lack of uniformity of opinion and circumstances. There were areas that strongly supported the idea of mandatory service and other areas where recruitment and conscription was as adamantly opposed.

As the current historiography suggests, there were significant pockets of resistance to recruitment and conscription in rural Newfoundland and in Labrador. There were isolated cases where it appeared that some areas were not informed about the war, had

little interest in participating in the enlistment campaign and were hostile to any proposed conscription legislation. Lieutenant Spooner reporting from Carbonear, Conception Bay, found it “crowded with fit men who [laughed] at recruiting parties.”¹¹ Similar incidents were reported by a Lieutenant Colonel Cleary reporting from various communities in Bonavista Bay. At Keels, Cleary concluded, “the people were decidedly against both the recruiting party and enlistment.” At Broad Cove the recruitment party sang “God Save the King’ without the help of the audience, some of whom refused to stand up ... In most cases the party were told that most of the people would sooner be under German Rule.”¹² In Newtown, Sergeant Lewis was informed that he and his party should not have been allowed ‘up the tickle’.¹³ One man told Lewis that he had returned from Canada to escape conscription and had no interests in it being enacted in Newfoundland.¹⁴

In Labrador feelings of alienation and hostility were especially prevalent. Years of administrative neglect and isolation had created bitter sentiments towards the island portion of the country. In July, 1917 Dr H.L. Paddon wrote Governor Davidson explaining the deep-seated sense of alienation felt by Labradorians. Only after two or three years of high food prices were Labradorians convinced that it was in their interest to end the war.¹⁵ Davidson replied that early in the war it was decided not to take married men from Labrador nor to accept anyone with people dependent upon them. Davidson thought that it was “a sound principle still. The other points [were] not relevant.”¹⁶

In other rural areas objections and concerns about conscription were couched in far more pragmatic, rather than antagonistic, language. The main hindrance to further voluntary enlistment in most rural areas stemmed from the economic boom created by war time conditions. The increased demand for fish created almost full employment.¹⁷ There was an approximate 133% increase in the value of the colony’s trade.¹⁸ The war brought a higher standard of living and many rural people were unwilling to give up this rare ephemeral stint with prosperity to fight in a far distant war.¹⁹

A similar type of pragmatic concern stemmed from fears of what would happen to the families of those who were either killed or wounded while overseas. A Captain Goodyear reported from Green Bay that the people had numerous concerns about soldiers, their families and what happened to them upon their return from the front. Despite their queries, Goodyear stated that he did not encounter any opposition to the idea of conscription.²⁰ Similarly, Sergeant Lewis reported from Seldom-Come-By that few reasons were given for not enlisting and that the people appeared to support conscription. Reverend Hiscock of Newtown concurred with the statement that “You [would] never get them otherwise.”²¹ Corporal Renouef in Sandy Point said that people requested a petition to sign in favour of conscription. He found at St. George’s there appeared to be a consensus that mandatory service was the only option.²² Such evidence does not seem to suggest strong opposition to the idea of conscription, but rather an understanding that volunteers were no longer offering themselves and conscription legislation would be necessary. The sense that conscription’s time had now come implied a sense of inevitability that was reflected in the reports of other Committee members. For example, Private James said that in Belloram, parents would not allow their sons to enlist but preferred to wait for conscription.²³ Justice of the Peace, George Tuff, in Bay De Verde – Old Perlican said that the voluntary system had done its work and that the “time [had] now come for selective conscription.”²⁴

Current historiography suffers from applying specific incidences of opposition to the entire rural portion of the country. Such generalizations may not be fully justified.

Recruiting Committee reports often suggests that the recruitment/conscription debate created much animosity. For example, various reports suggest that parental objection to their children enlisting “very marked in all districts.”²⁵ In Port Blanford Sergeant Lewis reported that the women of the community brought pressure to bear against the men to keep them from enlisting.²⁶

Religion, as will be discussed below, was an influential and potentially divisive force in communities as demonstrated by Sergeant Lewis’ report from Wesleyville in Bonavista Bay. He described the people there as “about the most bitter of anybody about this coast.” Lewis further added that “They [were] so bad [in Wesleyville] that they [were] leaving their church and going to the Salvation Army on account of the ministers preaching about the War.”²⁷ One gets the impression that within some of these rural communities the conscription debate, and the war in general, caused a great deal of acrimony.

The final voluntary recruitment drive failed and conscription became necessary to maintain the Regiment in Europe. The final results of the attempts to raise significant numbers of recruits fell short of what was needed.²⁸ Despite the Recruitment Committee and the Department of the Militia’s best efforts the recruitment drive was rather disappointing, while 528 volunteered only 344 were accepted.²⁹ Lieutenant-Colonel Montogmerie concluded that “Little more than a spasmodic return could be expected from a continuance under present conditions.”³⁰ He told Bennett that the Department of Militia, with the full support of the National Government, could achieve results through conscription.³¹

Examining what groups were in favour and opposed to conscription casts doubts upon the geographic explanation. As one would expect with the apparent failure of the voluntary campaign the St. John’s centred NPA passed resolutions in favour of conscription.³² Research by historian Jessie Chisolm regarding the St. John’s based Long Shoreman’s Protective Union (LSPU) questions the notion of universal support for conscription within the city. The LSPU represented approximately forty percent of the city’s male labour force and was one of the few organisations to pass resolutions against conscription.³³ In contrast, several fraternal organisations, such as the Society of United Fishermen (SUF) and the Loyal Orange Association (LOA) – with extensive support in rural areas – were ardent supporters of conscription. Townie” support for conscription was apparently not universal; “baymen” opposition to conscription was far from universal in rural areas.

On 20 April 1918, the S.U.F. passed as resolution at its annual meeting in favour of mandatory service. The resolution stated that “voluntary recruiting [had] been exploited to all limits of practicability and [was] not calculated to give us the men necessary to fulfil our original pledge and to make instant and practical response to the Motherland’s call for more men.” The association wanted to be put on record as in favour of selective conscription in Newfoundland. Approximately 4000 men in forty-six branches throughout Newfoundland were represented by the S.U.F.³⁴

On 13 April 1918, a letter was sent to the Grand Master of the L.O.A. in Newfoundland, Mr. John C. Puddester requesting that an appeal for recruits be read in each of the Orange lodges in Newfoundland. Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Montogmerie said that he “was sure [this would] have [had] a far reaching effect and [he had] no fear in asking as the very name “Loyal” [signified] the willingness to do this.”³⁵ Puddester complied and made recruitment a personal crusade. He implored

Newfoundland Orangemen to do their part. Delegates from throughout the country attending the 1918 annual general meeting of the LOA in Newfoundland were asked by the Grand Master to bring this message back to their primary lodges: "Let all the Orangemen be volunteers in [the] great struggle and not conscripts".³⁶ In 1914, the LOA consisted of 175 Primary Lodges with a membership of approximately 15,600 Orangemen.³⁷ By 1917, the figure had grown to 16,021 Orangemen.³⁸

Newfoundland Orange historian Elinor Senior has argued that the LOA spread and prospered in the outports with greater enthusiasm than it did in St. John's.³⁹ With the size of its membership and its popularity, the LOA was an influential force in rural Newfoundland during the war years. Historian Ian Macdonald has argued that there was a substantial backlash in rural Newfoundland against conscription and it damaged Fishermans' Protective Union (FPU) president William Coaker's political career. From the formation of the FPU in 1908, Coaker had enjoyed phenomenal support in rural areas due in large part to his struggles against the "St. John's merchants." Macdonald argues that this outport (or rural) trust in Coaker's leadership was compromised by his support of conscription as he was perceived as siding with St. John's against rural Newfoundland. There however does not appear to be any evidence that either the LOA or the SUF ever suffered a similar backlash.⁴⁰

Both the SUF and LOA are only two of a number of fraternal organisations active in throughout Newfoundland at the time. Unfortunately there has been little study into the activities or groups such as the Freemasons, the Sons of England Society and to a lesser extent the Knights of Columbus.⁴¹ These organisations played an important role on the home-front during the war and further inquiries into their activities will help present a more complete picture of the domestic war effort.

In addition to fraternal organisations, churches were important vehicles for spreading propaganda to rural areas. Richard Allen, in *The Social Passion*, doubts if Canada could have maintained a successful war effort without the full support of the churches; they promoted recruiting, provided comfort to grieving dependants, helped give sacrifices meaning, etc.⁴² Although not yet fully explored, a similar argument could be made in with Newfoundland's situation. In 1918, Newfoundland's new Governor Sir C. Alexander Harris arranged for a recruitment appeal to be read in the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Methodist churches throughout the country as a part of their respective Sunday services.⁴³ Further denominational support for the war effort was evidenced in June and July 1918 when the Presbyterian and Methodists churches sent declarations from their annual conferences in full support of conscription.⁴⁴

A general survey of the journals and publications dispersed throughout the country by the denominational groups reveals a great deal about the messages and opinions that were being spread through the pulpits and parishes in urban and rural areas of Newfoundland. The Anglican *Diocesan Magazine*, *The Methodists Monthly Greeting* and the Catholic *Monitor* all consistently ran stories, articles and messages from the church leaders in favour of the war effort and encouraging parishioners to do their duty.⁴⁵

The above sections on fraternal organisations and religious denominations illustrate that there were institutions in rural Newfoundland that spread patriotic propaganda. In fact, by December 1914/January 1915, both the SUF and LOA branches from as far away as Port-aux-Basques, on the extreme west coast of the island, were writing to the Governor expressing their complete support and requesting information on enlistment.⁴⁶

There is ample evidence to suggest that the various support groups did help spawn some jingoistic sentiments in rural areas. The Governor and his aides decided to hold public rallies and pass resolutions reaffirming Newfoundlanders' commitment on the second anniversary of the start of the war. From the 4-7 August 1916, just a month after the devastating losses at Beaumont Hamel where the Regiment suffered 710 casualties, Governor Davidson received over thirty telegrams from throughout the country offering continued support for the war effort.⁴⁷ The response would seem to imply that there was more than just support for the troops, but substantial moral support for continuing to fight the war until its conclusion.

In addition to moral support for the war, fraternal, religious and women's auxiliaries in rural areas were also fully involved in fund raising and making of "comforts" for the men overseas. A survey of the newspapers throughout the war illustrate the extent to which fraternal organisations in rural communities contributed to the various war related funds. The Orange Association branches, often in small communities were continually listed among the donors for the Patriotic and St. John Ambulance Funds. Orange contributions to the Patriotic Fund, established to help care for the families of the men serving, by 1918 were upwards of \$6,000. Similarly contributions to St. John Ambulance were sufficient to maintain two wards of thirty beds each for a full year. In appreciation the Association's name was to be placed on plaques on the beds.⁴⁸

The most prolific of all support groups during the Great War in Newfoundland was the Women's Patriotic Association (WPA) under the leadership of Lady Margaret Davidson. Historian Gale Warren states that during the war "women from both the outports and St. John's worked together committed to a common patriotic purpose."⁴⁹ Especially in the outports, the WPA bonded with women's groups, such as the Ladies Orange Benevolent Association, and church associations to raise funds. There were approximately 218 WPA branches throughout the colony involving the work of some 15,000 women. By war's end, the WPA had raised over \$500,000 for the war effort, quite a sum when one considers the relative economic condition of the people.⁵⁰ In addition to money, the WPA created more "comforts" than the men of the Newfoundland Regiment could use; the excess supplies were then distributed to other troops.⁵¹ It is perhaps because of the large network of support groups that the eventual conscription legislation was implemented without many acrimonious incidents.

After numerous delays, the Military Services Act was enacted on 11 May 1918.⁵² The reaction in many rural areas to the enactment of the conscription legislation seems to present a picture of acceptance and even support for the measure; a scant 10% of eligible men did not comply. A Military Service Board was established to ensure the regulations were enforced and to preside over exemptions. By August the Board toured the country looking for defaulters. When news of the arrival of police spread throughout a community most defaulters reported or applied for an exemption. Only in Flatrock, Torbay and Bonavista were there any serious problems encountered by the Service Board representatives.⁵³ The lack of difficulty in enforcing the legislation would appear to indicate at least a tacit acceptance of the legislation.

There is a dearth of academic inquiry into rural Newfoundland and Labrador in the war years and on the role played by religious and fraternal organisations in support of the war effort. These groups were essential to the war effort in rural areas. We cannot begin to get a full picture of the domestic war effort in Newfoundland and Labrador between

1914-1918 without further investigation into the roles and activities played by fraternal and religious groups during this time.

The Conscription Crisis of 1917-1918 had a divisive effect on Newfoundland society, but we do not yet know enough to make broad generalised comments about the supposed geographic divisions implied in the current historiography. Current notions about the conscription debate being advocated by the capital St. John's and resented in the outports have not been conclusively proven. Evidence would seem to suggest that the nature of the controversy to be far more complex than a simple urban/rural dichotomy.

NOTES

- ¹ Douglas Graham Day, "A Well Run Dry: The Royal Newfoundland Regiment and the Conscription Crisis of 1917-1918," (Unpublished BAH Essay: MUN, 1981).
Ian McDonald, (J.K. Hiller editor), *"To Each His Own" William Coaker and the Fisherman's Protective Union in Newfoundland Politics, 1908-1925*, (St. John's; Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1987).
S.R.J. Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973).
Patricia O'Brien, *The Newfoundland Patriotic Association: The Administration of the War Effort, 1914-1918*. (Unpublished M.A. Thesis: MUN, 1981).
- ² N.A. *The Daily News*, 3 September 1914, p. 8.
- ³ The National Government was officially established 17 July 1917 and on 11 August the newly formed Department of the Militia, under J.R. Bennett, assumed many of the recruiting responsibilities formerly held by the NPA. The new government made immediate reforms, such as establishing a Food Control Board and placing a tax on business profits, but it feared the potentially divisive nature of a conscription debate. – Day, "A Well Run Dry," p. 19.
- ⁴ G.W.L. Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander: A History of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment*, (St. John's: The Government of Newfoundland, 1963), p. 366.
- ⁵ Day, "A Well Run Dry," p. 62.
- ⁶ During the opening day of the Somme Offensive alone the First Newfoundland Regiment, as a part of the 29th Division were annihilated, suffering 710 casualties out of an initial force of approximately 809 men. – Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, pp. 274, 277.
- ⁷ Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, p. 424.
- ⁸ J.R. Bennett, "Letter to Arch-Bishop Roche 12 October 1917," (ARCSJ: Box 107: Armed Forces 1915-1945 Collection. File 107-2: Bennett, Honourable J.R.), p. 1.
- ⁹ Day, "A Well Run Dry," pp. 24-25.
- ¹⁰ J.R. Bennett, "An Appeal to the People of Newfoundland," *The Newfoundland Quarterly*, (December 1917), p. 38.
- ¹¹ Lieutenant Spooner, "Extracts From Recruiting Reports 1917," (PANL: Governor Davidson's, GN 1/10/2: Box 12: "1918 Newfoundland Regiment"), n.p.
- ¹² L/C Cleary, "Extracts From Recruiting Reports 1917," n.p.
- ¹³ A tickle refers to a narrow salt-water passage or channel running between two land masses and is often difficult to navigate. - --- "tickle" – *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* (on Line), <http://www.heritage.nf.ca/dictionary/azindex/pages/5024>, viewed on 20 April 2000.
- ¹⁴ Sergeant Lewis, "Extracts From Recruiting Reports 1917," n.p.
- ¹⁵ H.L. Paddon, "Letter to Governor Davidson 10 July 1917," (PANL: Governor Davidson's Papers, GN2/14 WWI Correspondence: Box 13: File# 1: "Patriotic Association: Recruiting Committee Patriotic Fund, Finance Committee)," p. 1.

- ¹⁶ Governor Walter E. Davidson, "Reply to Paddon 23 July 1917," (PANL: Governor Davidson's Papers, GN2/14 WWI Correspondence: Box 13: File# 1: "Patriotic Association: Recruiting Committee Patriotic Fund, Finance Committee)," p. 1.
- ¹⁷ Frederick W. Rowe, *A History of Newfoundland and Labrador*, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited. 1980), p. 290.
- ¹⁸ McDonald, *To Each His Own*, pp. 86-87.
- ¹⁹ A. Montomigre, "Letter to J.R.Bennett 4 January 1918," p. 7; Private James, "Extracts From Recruitment Reports 1917," n.p.
- ²⁰ Corporal Goodyear, "Extracts From Recruitment Reports 1917," n.p.
- ²¹ Lewis, "Extracts From Recruitment Reports," n.p.
- ²² Reneouf, "Extracts From Recruitment Reports," n.p.
- ²³ Private James, "Extracts From Recruitment Reports 1917," n.p.
- ²⁴ George Tuff, "Extracts From Recruitment Reports," n.p.
- ²⁵ A. Montomigre, "Letter to J.R.Bennett 4 January 1918," (PANL: Governor Davidson's , GN 1/10/2: Box 12: "1918 Newfoundland Regiment"), p. 7.
- ²⁶ Lewis, "Extracts From Recruiting Reports 1917," n.p.
- ²⁷ Lewis, "Extracts From Recruiting Reports 1917," n.p.
- ²⁸ Montogomerie, "Letter to J.R.Bennett 4 January 1918," pp. 3-4.
- ²⁹ Day, "A Well Run Dry," p. 25.
- ³⁰ Montogomerie, "Letter to J.R.Bennett 4 January 1918," p. 1.
- ³¹ Montogomerie, "Letter to J.R.Bennett 4 January 1918," p. 1.
- ³² Day, "A Well Run Dry," p. 20.
- ³³ Interview with Jessie Chisolm with Jason Churchill 9 February 1998.
- ³⁴ J.C. Phillips, "Letter to W.W. Halfyard 20 April 1918," (PANL: Governor Papers GN 2/14, Box 10: File 16: "Correspondence"), pp. 1-2.
- ³⁵ Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Montogomerie, "Letter to J.C. Puddister Grand Master, L.O.A., 13 April 1918," (PANL: GN 1/10/2: Box 12: "1918 Newfoundland Regiment"), p. 1.
- ³⁶ John C. Puddester, "Grand Master's Address," *Journal of Proceedings of the Forty-Seventh Annual Session of R.W.P.G. Lodge of Newfoundland, L.O.A. of B.A.*, (1918), pp. 24-25.
- ³⁷ Loyal Orange Association, *1863-1913: Golden Jubilee Report of the Loyal Orange Association of North America Under the Jurisdiction of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Newfoundland*, (St. John's: Robinson and Company, 1914), p. 8.
- ³⁸ *Journal of Proceedings of the Forty-Sixth Annual Session of R.W.P.G. Lodge of Newfoundland, L.O.A. of B.A.*, (1917), p. 72.
- ³⁹ Elinor Senior, "The Origins and Political Activities of the Orange Order In Newfoundland 1863-1890," (unpublished M.A. Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1959), p. 221.
- ⁴⁰ McDonald, "To Each His Own," p. 70; Jason Churchill, "The Loyal Orange Association Role in World War I," *Newfoundland Quarterly*, (Vol. XIC, No. 1, Spring 1997), p. 31.
- ⁴¹ See passing reference to WWI in: Kathryn Pike, *The Knights of Columbus in Newfoundland*, (St. John's: NFLD Historical Society, 1985), pp. 14-15.
- ⁴² Richard Allen, *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-28*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973.) p. 35.
- ⁴³ Governor Sir C. Alexander Harris, "Letter to the Colonial Secretary 2 April 1918," (PANL: Governor Papers GN 2/14, Box 10: File 16: "Correspondence"), p. 1.
- ⁴⁴ Day, "A Well Run Dry," p. 20.
- ⁴⁵ For specific examples of the type of rhetoric spread in denominational journals see: N.A., *Methodist Monthly*, (February 1915), p. 9. Llewellyn Jones, "The Bishop's Advent Letter to the Diocese," *The Diocesan Magazine*, (December 1914), p. 177; Reverend Thomas Nangle, "Homily," Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St.John's (ARCSJ): Box 107: "Armed Forces 1915-1945 Collection;" File 107-2: Newfoundland Regiment 1916-1917, (no date), p. 2.

- ⁴⁶ Society of United Fishermen, “Despatch 28 December 1914;” Loyal Orange Association “Despatch 2 January 1915,” PANL: GN 1/3/A Governor’s Office: Despatch 200 From Channel.
- ⁴⁷ Many of the telegraphs stated that villagers from near-by communities joined the large crowd of local people in pledging their support for the resolution. As a result one must consider the resolutions to be representative of more than just the communities listed in the dispatches. ----- PANL: GN2/14 WWI Correspondence; Box 16: File#3: Local Miscellaneous Papers Re. War 1916.
- ⁴⁸ Churchill, “The Loyal Orange Association,” pp. 30-31.
- ⁴⁹ Gale Denise Warren, *The Patriotic Association of the Women of Newfoundland: 1914-1918*, (Unpublished BAH essay: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1996), pp. 12-13.
- ⁵⁰ Warren, *The Patriotic Association*, p. 44.
- ⁵¹ Warren, *The Patriotic Association*, p. 23.
- ⁵² Thanks to numerous delays the first draft of conscripts were not scheduled to arrive in the city until the middle of November; by which time the war had ended. No conscript ever left Newfoundland’s shores. It was an “unique record enjoyed alone by the Royal Newfoundland Regiment among the units, Allied or Enemy, which fought in the First World War.” Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, p. 439.
- ⁵³ The individuals which neither enlisted or applied for an exemption were arrested and brought before the magistrate. The men were given the option of either enlistment or jail, most chose to serve. – Day, “A Well Run Dry,” pp. 56-62.

The Second World War 1: Home Front

La Deuxième Guerre mondiale 1 : l'arrière

POCKETBOOKS AND PATRIOTISM: THE “FINANCIAL MIRACLE” OF CANADA’S WORLD WAR II VICTORY BOND PROGRAM

Wendy Cuthbertson

Mobilizing “the people’s” money to fight what government propagandists were calling the “people’s war” was one of the Dominion government’s most ambitious undertakings during the Second World War.

In 1940, three weeks after taking over as Canada’s finance minister, James Ilesley crisply told the House of Commons the primary task of war finance was “to restrict civilian demand for economic resources.”¹ From 1939 to 1945, Ottawa faced the challenge of raising \$24 billion to cover its wartime expenses.² At the same time and more important to Ilesley, it had to prevent the inflation he feared would result from such a massive infusion of funds into the economy. The solution was to take the money out of the economy – that is, out of Canadian pockets – almost as quickly as it went in. To accomplish this, Ottawa raised taxes dramatically, to a wartime total of \$14 billion.³ The balance it borrowed, much of it from ordinary Canadians. Over the course of the war, Ottawa was able to persuade the Canadian public, numbering about 11 million people, to buy \$11.8 billion in government securities, called Victory Bonds, an enormous sum.⁴ In 1945, for example, Canadians bought the equivalent of one-seventh of the country’s Gross Domestic Product that year in Victory Bonds – or about \$130 billion in today’s dollars.⁵ Toronto’s quota alone today would be \$30 billion. Market penetration of bonds reached close to 100 percent: virtually every Canadian who could afford to buy a bond did.⁶ Too much money never pursued too few products; with the help of strict wage and price controls, inflation was virtually eliminated.

Such success was not always assured, however. These first two war loans, floated in 1940, relied on the traditional method of government fund-raising, with banks and investment dealers working on commission and competitively vying for sales.⁷ These traditional methods, however, were not adequate, raising less than \$500 million. A separate borrowing program, War Savings Stamps and Certificates, was showing weakness as well. By late 1941 it was becoming clear that in spite of the overwhelming presence of the war in the media and in people’s lives, loan and savings campaigns were faltering. As a result, the Dominion government was forced to borrow what it considered to be inflation-producing money from the banks.

By 1941, furthermore, it was apparent that the war was not going to end quickly, and that it was going to cost, not millions, but billions. A sharp increase in voluntary savings would be needed. In June 1941 the Dominion government launched its First Victory Loan and for the first time used a central committee in Ottawa to coordinate the work of provincial and local committees across the country. The campaign was more successful than the 1940 efforts, garnering just under a million subscriptions and raising \$836 million, but observers had worried about its sluggish start. That fall, moreover, a war savings certificate drive was planned but came to nothing, a failure owing in part to squabbling between the war bonds people and the war savings certificates advocates.⁸ It was becoming clear that the government's borrowing programs needed to be integrated as well as national.

In December 1941, by order-in-council, the government set up the National War Finance Committee (NWFC), which among other things merged the war bonds and the war savings certificates programs under a single organization. Headed first by Bank of Montreal president George Spinney and later by Bank of Canada chief Graham Towers, the NWFC reported to Parliament through the Minister of Finance. The 60-member national committee was to provide advice to NWFC staff about how to approach the various interest groups, such as labour, manufacturing, mining, trade, commerce, agriculture, financial institutions, professions, civic organizations, and women's groups whose representatives the government had appointed to the committee.⁹ Local National War Finance committees were also set up for each province and for each county or municipality. The NWFC's mandate was the "continuous planning, organization, and administration of arrangements for public loans."¹⁰ Accordingly, the NWFC conducted all further Victory Loan campaigns – two every year, held each spring and fall – from the Second Victory Loan held in the spring of 1942 to the Ninth in the fall of 1945. It also undertook campaigns for War Saving Certificates.

The NWFC success is indisputable. The number of Victory Bond buyers rose steadily, from 986,259 in the First Victory Loan drive of 1941, conducted before the creation of the NWFC, to more than three million by the 1943 Fifth Loan.¹¹ The savings rate of the average Canadian peaked at 25 percent of disposable income, in spite of hefty income tax increases.¹² The NWFC, moreover, did not have a monopoly on separating Canadians from their hard-pressed dollars. Canadians did have choices about how to spend their money, even in the midst of wartime rationing and a war-induced dearth of consumer goods. Innumerable other war-related fund-raising campaigns, for example, appealed to Canadians, whose budgets were also being strained by steep new income taxes. Retail sales grew 67 percent between 1939 and 1943 as the nation's citizens recovered their pre-Depression standard of living. Spending in restaurants, for example, rose 22 percent, on women's clothes 33 percent, and on shoes 43 percent.¹³ And while it is true that wartime rationing reduced people's spending on cars, tires, and gasoline, they bought train tickets instead.¹⁴

What did the NWFC organizers do that turned the bond campaigns from disappointment to successes? How did they translate the public's awareness of the war into the specific action of buying a bond and holding on to it until the war was over?

First, the NWFC introduced public opinion polling and based its selling strategies on polling results.¹⁵ Prior to the use of polling, war bond appeals had been based primarily on emotional calls for patriotism, sacrifice, and the need for victory. NWFC polling found, however, that self-interest was an increasingly strong motive for bond purchases.

An NWFC poll conducted in May 1942 following the Fourth Loan reported that 16 percent of those who bought bonds had done so “because they were a good investment.”¹⁶ A year later, in 1943, that figure had risen to 27 percent.¹⁷ The NWFC responded, organizing, for example, an exhibition called “Your Peacetime Dollars and Industry’s New World” for the Fifth Victory Loan held that year. The travelling exhibition displayed the consumer products that were going to be available after the war – products, the NWFC reminded exhibition visitors, Victory Bond savings could buy. “We are aware of the growing appeal of the rational self-interest theme in promoting bond sales,” NWFC spokesperson Herbert Richardson explained to a business journalist.¹⁸ In the loan drive conducted in the fall of 1944, the self-interest theme was featured in 25 percent of NWFC publicity, rising to 40 percent in drive held the following spring.¹⁹

Research also influenced how the NWFC described what it was selling. The design of the savings instruments – stamps, certificates, and bonds – pre-existed the NWFC. What research influenced was the NWFC’s design of its intangible product: the values and purposes that bonds stood for in the public mind. Initially, NWFC publicity used patriotic themes to define what Victory Bonds stood for. Citizens were urged to buy a bond not as a savings instrument or means of controlling inflation, but as a product that would bring a quick end to war, support the armed forces, let one shoulder a fair share of the war effort, or build a better world. Early in 1943, however, responding to the market research described above, the NWFC began to define bonds as a way of assuring personal security for the uncertainty of war’s end. Later in the war, the NWFC was portraying bonds as the means to a prosperous future, telling Canadians that Victory Bond savings would allow them to buy the good life once the war was over.²⁰

Another NWFC technique, in addition to market research, was saturation. The objective was to occupy massive amounts of public and private space in order to heighten a campaign’s effectiveness.

One means to saturation was to establish distribution channels in every aspect of Canadian life, both public and private. Like the Coca-Cola people, NWFC organizers wanted their product to be available whenever someone reached out his or her hand. To this end, the NWFC used existing distribution channels and created others. The most ambitious – and potentially most coercive channel – was the on-the-job canvas. Workplace solicitation, often carried out by supervisors and managers, encouraged workers to buy bonds either through cash or payroll deduction at the work site. Some 100,000 unpaid volunteers descended on their co-workers during a bond campaign.²¹ The armed forces conducted their own workplace canvasses, with predictable intensity.²² Private space was also invaded, by way of the door-to-door household and rural canvas. This channel was worked by 15,000 professional bond salespeople who took unpaid leave from their regular jobs and knocked on doors in city neighbourhoods and along rural routes.²³ The NWFC committee used civic and community networks to sell bonds, one example being women’s organizations. Women’s Institute members canvassed their rural neighbours, while the Toronto NWFC Women’s Committee sent speakers to 500 women’s groups meetings held during the Fourth Victory Loan alone.²⁴

Saturation was also the aim of NWFC advertising and publicity. The NWFC launched its advertising efforts two weeks before a Loan drive and continued them right through the three weeks of the drive. It spent the largest part of its public relations budget placing advertisements in newspapers and magazines.²⁵ This was supplemented by

similar print advertising bought by companies wanting to associate themselves with a bond drive.²⁶ The result was that for the period of a drive, virtually all print advertising featured Victory Bond themes. The NWFC also paid for hours of Victory Bond specials carried on the CBC and its affiliated radio stations. NWFC publicists produced promotional films and slides so bond appeals could be made in commercial movie theatres.²⁷ They distributed hundreds of thousands of striking, brilliantly coloured posters, which were displayed in work sites and public places across the country.²⁸ NWFC advertising appeared on billboards and in streetcars. Loan publicity even reached into the home. Every Canadian household, for example, was sent a letter by Finance Minister Ilsley at the beginning of 1943's Fourth Victory Loan.²⁹

Special events were a central feature of a Loan drive and reveal to what extent the occupation of public and private space was a feature of the NWFC's approach. In Toronto, City Hall Square was taken over by Loan events for the entire three weeks of a drive. Performers brought in from New York's Metropolitan Opera Company for the Fourth Victory Loan in 1943 attracted such huge crowds in the city they blocked streetcar traffic.³⁰ Even places of worship turned over their "space," offering prayers for peace – and for the current Loan.³¹ In the city's neighbourhoods, Loan organizers sponsored everything from modest military parades to magic shows for school children. So important were Loan events that other special events were cancelled to give a Loan drive all the public space available. The C.C.F. and the Communist Party went without their respective May Day parades in 1943 so as not to interfere with the Fourth Victory Loan.³²

Though hardly representative of the Canadian elite, left-wing leaders were following the pattern of more mainstream groups. The NWFC's 60-member national committee, representative of key regions and community groups and explicitly created to give NWFC bureaucrats advice on how to approach their respective memberships, was an effective way of co-opting potential dissidents such as labour and farm interests. The NWFC allowed newspaper publishers to assume full responsibility for designing, producing and placing all government-paid Victory Bond advertising, a fair sum of money and another method of co-opting potential critics. The armed forces were allowed to run their own campaigns, diminishing the chance of destructive intra-government turf wars. Religious leaders were canvassed to give their public support. Financial houses and banks were enlisted, and their top executives given key NWFC leadership positions. Committees responsible for advertising and for radio programming gave separate consideration to NWFC efforts in Quebec.³³ The NWFC also encouraged the creation of joint management-union committees for the workplace canvas, thus helping bring labour into the fold.³⁴

Leaders of various interest groups could also help the NWFC with the specialized messages it produced for various target audiences. Farmers, for example, were told how German armies in occupied Europe had slaughtered livestock, sent harvests to Germany, and pressed farmers into forced labour. "The fertile fields of Canada are one of the richest prizes a conqueror would demand," warned an NWFC ad in a farm magazine.³⁵ For Quebec audiences a film, *Glaive de l'Esprit*, was produced showing Catholic churches destroyed by German bombs.³⁶

At first sight, it seems the NWFC's techniques – public opinion research, saturation, and the orchestration of elite opinion – created an hegemony about the necessity and virtue of buying bonds that was never challenged. "If you want to be lonely, don't buy a bond," warned one newspaper editor.³⁷

A closer look, however, does reveal some resistance to the bond campaign. Some believed the money to fight the war should come from the rich and from war profiteers – and should not earn interest.³⁸ The comfortably off, meantime, felt that industrial workers should bear the burden since clearly they had benefited most from the booming war industry.³⁹ Editorialists unsympathetic to the government inveighed against “unnecessary expenses” incurred in the campaigns.⁴⁰ There were complaints about “saturation.”⁴¹ Field reports told the NWFC that many people had bought a bond “under compulsion.”⁴² There were warnings against what appeared to be coercive selling in some workplaces and reports of workers consequently cashing in bonds as soon as a drive was over.⁴³

On one occasion at least the bond campaign gave the forces of resistance the edge they needed to succeed. Liquor-rationing legislation proposed just before the opening of the 1943 Fourth Victory Loan produced a feisty “No Beer, No Bonds” campaign among drinkers objecting to their supply being cut off. Field reports tried to downplay the seriousness of the challenge, but these failed to convince Ilsley. When Cabinet discussed the beer crisis, Ilsley told his colleagues nothing was to interfere with his bond drive, not even the temperance interests. Cabinet softened the legislation.⁴⁴ Holding the bond drive for ransom, the forces of disorder had succeeded in moving authority. The *quid pro quo* was reversed in Vancouver in 1943, after the Boeing Aircraft Company locked out 9,000 employees during a loan drive. In an inspired public relations move, a mass meeting of workers voted unanimously to contribute a day’s pay to the bond drive, if the employer lifted the lockout. In this case, the tactic did not succeed. The company maintained its lockout, but workers set up their own Victory Loan office, which enjoyed brisk sales.⁴⁵

The difference made by NWFC marketing techniques to the success of the bond campaigns can be assessed to some extent by examining the success of the bond drives in Quebec. There, the population was far more lukewarm towards the war than was English-speaking Canada. Stirring appeals to patriotism, even when couched in terms that appealed to Quebec, would not have the same impact as in English Canada, where support for the war was stronger. But a good-quality savings product that was advertised to appeal to self-interest and that was readily available, sold almost as well in Quebec as in English Canada. For the whole of Canada, payroll subscriptions, for example, peaked at 97 percent of the industrial workforce; the comparable figure for Quebec was a very respectable 93.4 percent.⁴⁶

Comparisons to the results of the U.S. bond drives may also give a sense of the success of NWFC marketing techniques. While half of Canada’s Victory Bonds were purchased by individual Canadians, only 27 percent of U.S. bonds were held by individual Americans.⁴⁷ About 45 percent of American industrial workers participated in a payroll deduction plan, compared to the peak of 97 percent in Canada.⁴⁸ U.S. workers directed less than five percent of total payroll to bond purchases compared to the average 16 percent by Canadian workers, who were paying higher wartime taxes on lower wages.⁴⁹ Several differences between the Canadian and U.S. marketing strategies may account for the disparity between the two countries’ records.⁵⁰

A key difference was that U.S. bond campaigns were largely volunteer efforts. American campaigns did not use commissioned sales people; and reliance on volunteer canvassers would have cut the size of a bond drive’s labour force significantly, probably inhibiting success in the household market in particular, largely canvassed in Canada by a commissioned sales force. The U.S. government did not buy advertising space either,

relying on private companies to sponsor advertisements. Since large advertisers tended to buy space only in metropolitan areas, where most of their customers lived, and had little interest in the market segments served by the kind of weekly, rural, foreign-language, and labour publications the NWFC bought space in, U.S. publicity coverage would have been limited.⁵¹ The result of the American reliance on volunteerism meant that bond drives did not achieve the degree of saturation – the occupying of private and public space – in the United States as they did in Canada.

Another difference between the bond campaigns in the two countries was in the nature of the appeals made to the public. Though U.S. public opinion surveys showed Americans bought bonds for much the same reasons as Canadians, the theme of self-interest was barely mentioned in U.S. publicity until late in the war. This reluctance to appeal to the public's self-interest may well have hurt U.S. marketing efforts.⁵² While the increasing optimism about the war's outcome might account in part for the public's warm response to arguments of self-interest, the NWFC, unlike its American counterpart, did not hesitate to exploit it.

Contemporary analysts granted full marks to the government's information and marketing efforts regarding its financial program. Political economist R. Craig McIvor, a witness to the Victory Bond campaigns, wrote in 1948 that the objectives of the Canadian government's wartime finance program "were achieved to a degree unsurpassed by any of the other major belligerents."⁵³ *The New York Times* in a 1943 editorial said that Canada's financial policy was "one of the financial miracles of this war. The fact that such relatively large amounts have been raised from the sales of securities to non-banking purchasers despite the heavy burden of taxation is a magnificent tribute to the Canadian people."⁵⁴ Even *Saturday Night*, no friend of the Liberal government in Ottawa, said the "highly-effective" NWFC had done "a wonderful job."⁵⁵

Using the new tools of public opinion research to fashion its appeal, the NWFC helped bring a new, technocratic approach to government's attempt to influence its own citizens.⁵⁶ To this end, it also used modern marketing techniques such as identifying target audiences and designing specialized messages and distribution channels for those audiences. The NWFC's "saturation" approach, in both its publicity and distribution methods, occupied public and private space to an unprecedented degree. The NWFC used these technocratic techniques in conjunction with the time-tested device of orchestrating elites in support of the loan campaigns. In combining new methods of public opinion manipulation with traditional methods of enlisting elite support, the NWFC created a remarkable public consensus about buying war bonds.

Yet, even though the NWFC used sophisticated techniques to influence public behaviour, it was forced to respond to the public's continuing independence of mind. The bond campaigns were appropriated by popular resistance efforts, which were sometimes successful. And even in wartime, in spite of the almost crushing number of idealistic appeals from government and others for duty, sacrifice, teamwork, and altruism, self-interest remained stubbornly robust. The NWFC, however, was prepared to accept and even capitalize on self-interest, rather than sticking to purely patriotic themes. A hard-headed acceptance of the realities of human motivation – and the limits to manipulating it – accounted for at least some of the NWFC's success.

NOTES

- ¹ Director of Public Information, *Canada Carries On* (Ottawa: 1940), 40.
- ² Slater, D., *War Finance and Reconstruction* (Ottawa: Department of Finance, 1995), 77. Pre-war budgets had been running about \$120 million a year. By 1945, the federal budget was \$5.5 billion.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 70.
- ⁴ National War Finance Committee, *Statistics and Information on the Dominion Government's Borrowing Programme* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1945), 21.
- ⁵ Granatstein, J. and D. Morton, *Victory 1945* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1995), 82. The \$130-billion figure is based on Canada's 1999 GDP of roughly \$920 billion.
- ⁶ In 1943, for example, when more than 1.5 million workers bought bonds through the payroll canvas in the Fourth Victory Loan, there were 1.86 million industrial workers in Canada. However, half earned less than \$1,600 a year, the minimum income needed for savings, according to the 1941 Marsh Report. (NWFC, *Statistics and Information*, 20; *Canadian Unionist* 16(10), March 1943, 254; *Canadian Business*, May 1943, 66).
- ⁷ NWFC, *Statistics and Information*, 5; Slater, D., *op. cit.*, 80.
- ⁸ Slater, D., *op. cit.*, 86-87.
- ⁹ NWFC, *Statistics and Information*, 5.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.
- ¹¹ Slater, D., *op. cit.*, 86; NWFC, *Statistics and Information*, 15.
- ¹² Slater, D., *op. cit.*, 93.
- ¹³ *The Toronto Star*, April 15, 1943.
- ¹⁴ Wartime Information Board, *Canada at War*, No. 45: *Recapitulation Issue* (Ottawa, 1945), 94.
- ¹⁵ NWFC publicity chief David Mansur, for example, told his fellow senior managers the proposed themes for the Spring 1943's Fourth Victory Loan were based in part on the findings of an Elliott-Haynes poll done following the Third Victory Loan of Fall 1942. (Bank of Canada Archives, NWFC 24-4, "Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting," March 2, 1943).
- ¹⁶ Bank of Canada Archives, NWFC 4 -11, "A Nation-Wide Survey of the Diet and Buying Habits of the Canadian People." As a pure savings instrument, Victory Bonds were a good investment, paying three percent, while savings accounts were paying two percent (Slater, D., *op. cit.*, 82; advertisement for the Charter Trust and Executor Company, *Globe and Mail*, April 7, 1943, 8).
- ¹⁷ Bank of Canada Archives, NWFC 4-2, "Elliott-Haynes Poll of Public Opinion of the Fourth Loan."
- ¹⁸ *Canadian Business*, October 1943.
- ¹⁹ Bank of Canada Archives, NWFC 2-5, "Minutes of Meeting of Public Relations Sections, Feb. 28-29, 1944."
- ²⁰ Bray, B., "From Flag-Waving to Pragmatism: Images of Patriotism, Heroes, and War in Canadian World War II Propaganda Posters," *Material History Review* 42 (Fall 1995), 85.
- ²¹ NWFC, *Statistics and Information*, 7.
- ²² One naval captain ordered all hands on deck, harangued them, and then remained on deck to observe the results, as eager ratings armed with Victory Bond applications rushed their comrades. One hundred percent signed up (*Globe and Mail*, May 18, 1943).
- ²³ Bank of Canada Archives, NWFC 25-2, "Budget Highlights, March 1943."
- ²⁴ Bank of Canada Archives, NWFC 25-2, "Intermediate Organization Prior to the Fourth Victory Loan, Feb. 24, 1953;" *Toronto Telegram*, April 24, 1943.
- ²⁵ Bank of Canada Archives, NWFC 2-1, "Fourth Victory Loan: Allocation of PR Budget Funds."

- ²⁶ Newspaper publisher Frederick Ker, chair of the Canadian Publishers War Finance Publicity Committee, estimated that sponsored ads supplied three of every four Victory Bond newspaper advertisements, worth about \$800,000 per bond drive (Ker, F., *Press Promotion of War Finance* [Toronto: Southam, 1946], 21). Although Ker's committee made camera-ready art available to sponsors, many developed their own. (Bank of Canada Archives, NWFC 2-5, "Report of Public Relations Section, Feb. 26-27, 1943").
- ²⁷ Bank of Canada Archives, NWFC 2-5, "Report of Public Relations Section, Feb. 26-27, 1943." The NWFC worked with the National Film Board for at least some of their productions; the NFB also slanted its regular "Carry on Canada" films towards NWFC themes during a Loan drive. (Bank of Canada Archives, NWFC 24-4, "Minutes of Management Committee, Jan. 12, 1943").
- ²⁸ National Archives of Canada, RG36/31 Vol. 19 3185, File 4928-40, "Minutes of Publicity Coordinating Committee, May 18, 1943."
- ²⁹ Bank of Canada Archives, NWFC 2-5, "Report of Public Relations Section, Feb. 26-27, 1943." *Globe and Mail*, April 24, 1943.
- ³⁰ *Ibid*, May 1, 1943.
- ³¹ *Ibid*, May 1, 1943.
- ³² Bank of Canada Archives, NWFC, *Statistics and Information*, 8.
- ³³ NWFC, *Statistics and Information*, 7.
- ³⁴ *Country Guide*, 62 (5), May 1943.
- ³⁵ Bank of Canada Archives, NWFC 10-16, "War Finance Review, Fourth Victory Loan Edition."
- ³⁶ The Stratford *Beacon Herald*, quoted in the *Globe and Mail*, May 5, 1943.
- ³⁷ That was the position taken by Mimico's reeve, Robert Ainsworth, at a Mimico Council meeting on the eve of the Second Victory Loan in February 1942. After making his speech, he nonetheless voted in favour of council spending \$200 to support Loan publicity efforts in the city (*Globe and Mail*, February 10, 1942, 5).
- ³⁸ National Archives of Canada RG19, E5(g).Vol. 4028, 129W-1-7, Wartime Information Board "Field Reports," June 29, 1943.
- ³⁹ Toronto *Telegram*, April 28, 1943.
- ⁴⁰ National Archives of Canada RG36/31, Vol. 19, 3185, File 4928-40. "Minutes of Publicity Coordinating Committee, Feb. 16, 1943."
- ⁴¹ National Archives of Canada, RG19 E5(g) Vol. 4028, File 129W-1-7, "Wartime Information Board Field Report, June 9, 1943."
- ⁴² Some respondents to a 1942 NWFC survey told interviewers that "most people buy bonds because their bosses made them" (Bank of Canada Archives, NWFC 4-11, "A Nation-wide Survey of Certain Diet and Buying Habits of the Canadian People"); National Archives of Canada, RG 19 E5(g) Vol. 4028, 129W-1-3, Wartime Information Board "Field Reports," May 19, 1943.
- ⁴³ Pickersgill, Jack, *The Mackenzie King Record* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), 485-486.
- ⁴⁴ Toronto *Telegram*, April 29, 1943.
- ⁴⁵ NWFC, *Statistics and Information*, 70.
- ⁴⁶ Martin, T., "Inflation: The Second World War," *Current History*, April 1953, 298.
- ⁴⁷ Blum, J. M., *op. cit.*, 19; NWFC, *Statistics and Information*, 71.
- ⁴⁸ Blum, J. M., *op. cit.*, 24. The top wartime tax rate in the U.S. never exceeded 19 percent (Ohanian, L., *The Macroeconomic Effects of War Finance in the United States* [New York: Garland, 1998], 13), while Canada taxed the average wage earner 25 per cent (*Canadian Business*, "How Canada's Workers Have Fared," December 1943). The average U.S. industrial wage in 1943 was \$46.43 a week (Samuel L., *op. cit.*, 29) and \$30.98 in Canada.
- ⁴⁹ Differing attitudes towards government may account for the differences between the Canadian and U.S. bond marketing approaches. The Canadian government may have believed the Canadian public would be comfortable with its spending money on the Loan program, whereas

the U.S. government may have feared a backlash. The difference could also have been a simple matter of superior NWFC competence in moving more quickly to self-interest arguments. An undoubtedly large factor accounting for the differing results of the two countries' campaigns was that U.S. inflation was running at about nine percent a year, which probably hurt its Victory Bond sales. Here again, Canadians' greater trust in government would have helped: they grumbled about government wage and price controls but for the most part adhered to them.

⁵¹ Ker, F., *op. cit.*, 22. The Canadian campaigns were not profligate, however. Spending on Victory Loan campaigns amounted to less than 1 percent of the money raised. In the Fourth Victory Loan about \$12 million was spent to raise \$1.3 billion. About \$2.3 million of this was spent on sales commissions and \$1.4 million on publicity (Bank of Canada Archives, NWFC, *Statistics and Information*, 15).

⁵² Bank of Canada Archives, NWFC 2-5, "Report of Meeting of Public Relations Section, Chateau Laurier, Aug. 23-24, 1953." At this meeting, confidential polling results were discussed showing motivation for buying bonds were the same in Canada and the U.S. At a war finance conference in April 1945, NWFC staff met with a group of their American counterparts, who told them the U.S. was now concentrating on self-interest themes in its publicity efforts. (NWFC 2-3, "Notes on a Trip to New York.") For most of the war, U.S. publicity highlighted self-interested only about 9 percent of the time, compared to the 25 percent in the Canadian Fifth Victory Loan, a figure which rose to 40 percent for the Sixth Loan (Bank of Canada Archives, NWFC 2-5, "Minutes of Meeting with Public Relations Section, Feb. 28-29, 1944.>").

⁵³ McIvor, R. Craig, *op. cit.*, 4.

⁵⁴ *The New York Times*, "Canada's Fiscal Miracle," November 14, 1943.

⁵⁵ *Saturday Night*, January 16, 1943.

⁵⁶ See Robinson, Daniel J., *Polling, Consumers and Citizens: Opinion Sample Surveys and the Rise of Canadian Marketing polity, 1928-1945*. Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, York University, 1996, 255. Robinson argues that "government technocrats turned to rationalized methods not only for the mass production of war materials but for the mobilization of mass consent behind state-prescribed war goals."

THE POLITICS BEHIND BCATP BASE SELECTION AT PRINCE ALBERT, SASKATCHEWAN

Rachel Lea Heide

Canada's political system, since before Confederation, has incorporated patronage as a means of running the government. Because these historical precedents, it is difficult to imagine politicians not using large expenditures of public funds to reward the politically faithful and punish the politically wayward. Nevertheless, taking a precedent of patronage from the past or present, and assuming this is how circumstances always were, is to commit an anachronistic error. Consequently, prudence must be exercised when considering the aerodrome selection in the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) during the Second World War.

In early schools of thought on this subject, some historians have suggested that aerodromes were granted to communities on the basis of the tenacity of lobbying efforts,¹ while other researchers have explicitly claimed the Liberal government granted schools on the basis of political affiliation. After completing his MA Thesis on the BCATP in Saskatchewan,² Peter Conrad published that

most Liberal constituencies received a school early in the war, followed by constituencies that had a CCF member of Parliament, especially those CCF constituencies that had previously been Liberal ... Few Conservative constituencies received facilities.³

The primary documents in the records of WLM King, CG Power, CD Howe, the Department of Transport (DoT), the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), and the Aerodrome Development Committee (ADC) put forth a different story. Despite Canadian constituents and politicians expecting patronage to govern the choosing of schools, the selection process was intentionally designed to delegate authority away from those with political agendas and into the hand of experts who would select sites according to technical merit. Precisely how technocracy governed the decisions made in the selection process can be seen in the response of the Department of National Defence for Air (DNDA) to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan's, lobbying for more favourable consideration with respect to BCATP base selection.

Once the Canadian and British governments began seriously negotiating for the RCAF to train Commonwealth aircrew members on Canadian soil, constituents earnestly lobbied members of parliament, DoT officials, RCAF officers, and the Prime Minister, hoping their communities would have a better chance of hosting an aerodrome if the vicinity was brought to the government's attention. Lobbyists argued that aerodromes could alleviate the financial hardships of the Depression, reward communities that had contributed much in manpower and monetary donations to the war effort, or secure votes for Liberal candidates in the next election.⁴ Because of lobbying pressure, on 13 June 1940, the Minister DNDA publicly requested in the House of Commons that his colleagues and their constituents cease lobbying the selection officials, for "over energetic representations made in the interest of particular localities can serve only to

retard progress and to divert from their duties officers already completely engrossed in work of primary and essential importance.”⁵ Because of wartime exigencies, patronage traditions were not followed. Instead, base selection was awarded according to merit, and the selection was conducted by technical experts, not politicians.

Making sure the training commenced quickly, that the flow of graduates was constant, and that aircrew members were of high quality were of greater political importance than providing patronage to secure votes for the next election. When the Canadian government committed itself to providing trained aircrew for the Allied war effort, Canada agreed to an aerodrome construction schedule and a training schedule on which Great Britain could plan its war effort. It would have been of greater political detriment to the Liberal government’s future if the air war was poorly executed, or even lost, because Canada had delayed training with patronage wrangling. By insisting that schools be selected because of Liberal affiliation, suitable sites would have been disqualified, opening of schools may have been fallen behind schedule, and trainee output might have been delayed – and the quality diminished – if flying was continually grounded by poor aerodrome conditions or bad weather. Any government that lost a war by inefficiently handling its commitment would soon be removed from political power in the next election.⁶

In the BCATP agreement signed 17 December 1939, the Canadian government agreed to open its first schools by May 1940.⁷ Consequently, construction had to begin as soon as the weather permitted in the spring. In order to expedite the selection and construction of aerodromes – surveying potential sites while the fall weather permitted and drawing up plans, blueprints, and estimates during the winter months – the government assigned these tasks to the technical experts, the RCAF and the DoT. The RCAF would be running the training program; hence, it was considered they would know best what their training regimes would need. The DoT would provide aerodrome selection experience since the officials from this department had built the Trans Canada Airway during the interwar period. Hence, these individuals would save time since they knew what geographical areas of Canada were most conducive to air training and what topographical conditions would result in high costs.⁸ By Privy Council Order on 17 November 1939, the Liberal government gave the DoT the responsibility of investigating and surveying potential sites, preparing aerodrome layouts, purchasing land, and building the airports. At the same time, final selection authority was delegated to the RCAF: “the selection of suitable sites ... [and] preparation of development plans and specifications [are] subject to the approval of the technical officers of the Department of National Defence.”⁹

The government had the confidence to delegate such power away from its self and into the hands of technocrats because these experts had specific technical criteria (derived from DoT interwar experience) that would result in the completion of aerodromes which were safe from hazards, usable in adverse weather, completed as quickly as possible and as economically as possible. Generally, certain parts of the country were immediately disqualified. Officials wanted to avoid densely populated areas so that training accidents would not endanger civilian communities. Aerodromes would not be built near the Rocky Mountains of British Columbia and Alberta because such obstacles were dangerous for flying and for emergency landings. As long as the United States remained neutral in the war, aerodromes were kept at least five miles away from the international border to avoid lost trainees being detained. The potential of enemy attack on the Atlantic and Pacific

coasts necessitated the absence of training schools and the presence of Home War Establishment aerodromes.¹⁰

More specifically, when inspecting sites, technical officers noted the amount of levelling a site needed, the number of obstacles that required removal, and the number of flying hazards that could not be removed (such as chimneys, radio transmitters, water towers, or bridges), the suitability of the surrounding area to forced landings, the slope of the land for drainage, the availability of gravel, sand, construction supplies, and utilities, as well as the nature of railroad connections, road conditions, climate, and land value.¹¹ After potential sites were fully investigated, the merits of each were compared, and the site that could be built the quickest, at the least cost, and would not frequently be closed because of poor weather or poor runway construction, would be selected.

Despite technical criteria guiding aerodrome selection, there appears to be ample opportunity for political considerations to influence the final decision. The site inspectors were not immune from contact from lobbyists while conducting field investigations and surveys, and both Deputy Ministers for DoT and DNDA (political appointees) were exposed to the correspondence sent by lobbyists. After the DoT reported to the RCAF, the RCAF had to answer to the Minister DNDA (CG Power) who was an elected politician with vested interests in the success of the Liberal government in power. Despite the potential for political influence, this possibility was never exercised. After the DoT had prepared surveys, blueprints, and estimates for sites, the ADC (a body of RCAF officers) would consider the submissions, reject unreasonable set-ups, recommend cost reductions to promising sites, and approve suitable plans. Political appointees and politicians made no changes to the final recommendations of the ADC. Despite each site having to have approved by the Minister DNDA, Power never refused to forward an ADC recommendation for the standard assent of the Privy Council. The authority to select aerodromes rested with the RCAF, and those who would assumably have benefited from patronage merely 'rubber-stamped' the technical experts' recommendations.

Although constituents expected patronage to govern the BCATP selection process, the politicians in charge voluntarily delegated authority away from themselves and into the hands of technical experts to ensure that the process was conducted as quickly and as efficiently as possible. The selection of sites in each province confirms that this merit-based process was not usurped, but taking the example of one town's efforts alone will also demonstrate this fact. Prince Albert, Saskatchewan's three waves of lobbying (to secure a BCATP base – 1938-9; to demand a larger school – 1940-1; and later to protest the closing of one of its schools – 1942) reflects the technocratic nature of the BCATP decision-making process.

Prince Albert's first wave of lobbying is not only typical of lobbying efforts across Canada, but the lobbying also demonstrates what the constituents expected, as well as how the DNDA explicitly announced that it would not deviate from policy. Great Britain had been trying to open negotiations with the Canadian government concerning aircrew training in Canada since 1936, but it was not until 1938 (and the obvious possibility of an European war) that the Canadian government intimated it would seriously consider such a proposition.¹² When it was publically known that a Canadian air training plan was being discussed, the city of Prince Albert wasted no time in advertising the community's interest and advantages.

According to lobbyists representing Prince Albert, the city was ideal because the area was remote from enemy coastal attack and the area could provide seaplane facilities

in addition to regular flying facilities. Besides railroad and highway connections, the weather was suitable for flying, and the clear land around the already existing civilian airport made it safe for forced landings. Training in navigation and map-reading was possible because of the varied topography of the vicinity – grain fields, forests, lakes, streams. Prince Albert could also offer repair shops for both aircraft and engines, as well as a plant for manufacturing ski pedestals.¹³ More importantly, Prince Albert, having been involved in commercial flying for fifteen years, was very air-minded. Consequently, because many people were experienced with in aviation, “a large number of recruits of the proper stamp would be available.”¹⁴

When the governments of Great Britain and Canada agreed in the spring of 1939 to train a small number of pilots and aircrew in Canada, Prince Albert was not selected to host a training base. As soon as it was agreed in September 1939 that the training plan would be greatly expanded in response to the outbreak of war,¹⁵ lobbyists from Prince Albert brought the perceived merits of their city to the government’s attention again. While highlighting the technical merits their civilian aerodrome had to offer,¹⁶ constituents revealed their expectations: “it is reasonable that the citizens of this city and district feel that any benefits that might accrue from the emergency ... should be distributed as far as possible throughout the country.” In the meantime, Prince Albert was feeling overlooked, especially since Regina, Saskatoon, Moose-Jaw, and Weyburn were getting aviation centres while Prince Albert had not even been inspected yet.¹⁷

The only air activity that had commenced at this point was the formation of twelve Auxiliary Active Air Force Squadrons. In response to Prince Albert’s lobbying, the DND explained that these squadrons were distributed to areas that satisfied four criteria: strategic requirements, provincial population distribution, the presence of flying clubs, and the presence of industrial centres from which mechanics could be drawn. From the beginning of the war, lobbying efforts were resisted by the DND, for the department plainly stated that forming a squadron at Prince Albert “would involve a major alteration of the present policy in respect to the organizations of the RCAF.”¹⁸ Consequently, the DND would not abandon policy simply to appease constituents.

Once given a BCATP base, Prince Albert was not content with its size and began to lobby for a larger establishment. This phase of lobbying reveals the constituents’ expectations of favouritism, how meeting technical criteria determined the original decisions, and how selection officials would not change their decisions simply to satisfy the demands of the Prime Minister’s riding. In January 1940, the mayor of Prince Albert was informed – along with eleven other cities – that the government was interested in using the city’s civilian aerodrome for training purposes.¹⁹ Once selected, Prince Albert complained that it only received an Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) and an Air Observer School (AOS) rather than the more populated Service Flying Training School (SFTS) for which the city was originally investigated. Lobbyists were upset that others towns – Saskatoon in particular – were getting larger schools, for Prince Albert also wanted the financial benefits of having large numbers of air force personnel patronizing their businesses.²⁰

Some lobbyists expected the situation to be rectified to ensure that the Liberal affiliation of the riding (and support for the Prime Minister) was maintained. One constituent wrote that if the school was changed into a larger type, “it will create a more favourable atmosphere around this city.”²¹ Another constituent (a self-proclaimed life-long Liberal) noted that he felt the Prime Minister had won the riding because of the

expected large BCATP school. The fact that the election was “astonishingly close” should have concerned the Prime Minister, according to the constituent, especially now that the school given to the city was substantially less than what was anticipated before the election. Forcing a larger school for the city was “expected by all constituents, and particularly the good Liberals who worked so hard for [King’s] support.”²²

The reasons for not granting a SFTS were based on meeting technical criteria. SFTSs needed two emergency landing fields that were between five and twenty-five miles away from each other and from the main aerodrome, but such fields could not be found in the Prince Albert vicinity. Instead, the already existing aerodrome was put to maximum usage by establishing an EFTS and an AOS.²³ Residents then requested that the size of the EFTS be doubled to make up for the smaller base population.²⁴ This request was also denied since it was policy to not build double-EFTSs if another school was using the aerodrome for fear of congestion, delayed training, or increased danger of collisions. A double-EFTS also required an emergency landing field, and “the vicinity of Prince Albert does not afford such locations.”²⁵ Decisions made according to technical merit show that the concern of selection officials was building the safest and most efficient aerodromes, not keeping voters happy.

Upon expansion of the BCATP in 1942, the EFTS in Prince Albert would be doubled, but at the same time, the AOS was being disbanded, thus igniting a flurry of protest. This final wave of protest is exemplary of how the Prime Minister was impotent to change the decisions, how the authority of technical experts was not usurped, and how the decisions were made using the predetermined criteria. In response to the Royal Air Force’s (RAF) request that training be expanded, the RCAF agreed to add the equivalent of nine new AOSs, making Canada’s total nineteen. This was accomplished by combining two Air Navigation Schools into the equivalent of two AOSs, doubling eight existing AOSs and keeping one AOS as a single school.²⁶ Now having one AOS in excess, the DNDA would close Prince Albert since it had poor aircraft serviceability, low flying times, and hence less training for graduates.²⁷ This allowed the EFTS to be doubled since two schools were no longer sharing one aerodrome.²⁸

The immediate response of lobbyists to Prince Albert being the least efficient AOS was that the runways should have been hard-surfaced from the school’s beginning. Not only would this have reduced operating costs, but flying time would have been increased since sod runways would not have been closed by bad weather.²⁹ The DNDA had recently decided that AOSs needed hard-surfaced runways since larger planes were being used, but now that their AOS was being closed, Prince Albert had lost “all chance of securing a modern airport comparable with that secured by every other city in this province.”³⁰ Furthermore, at the same time, Davidson, Saskatchewan’s, vacant EFTS was being turned into an AOS. The only justification conceivable to Prince Albert representatives was that Conservative John Diefenbaker’s BCATP criticisms would finally be silenced by establishing an AOS “in the heart of his constituency.”³¹

As the Minister DNDA answered each of King’s protesting letters, the technical basis of the decisions became increasingly obvious. The Prince Albert AOS originally had not received hard-surfaced runways because it was combined with an EFTS, and it was standard policy to not pave EFTS runways. For beginner pilots, narrow looking runways were difficult to land on and stay on. With sod landing strips at EFTSs, trainee pilots had the liberty of landing from any direction anywhere on the field.³²

Davidson was not getting Prince Albert's AOS, as assumed by Prince Albert residents. The AOS at Chatham, New Brunswick was slated to be moved because this aerodrome was suitable for easy conversion to an Operational Training Unit (OTU). The Chatham AOS had runways that were 5,000 feet long (which OTUs required), was strategically located for defensive or offensive use, and converting the AOS to an OTU (thus forcing the AOS to relocate) was cheaper than building a new site for an OTU, which would cost \$3,000,000.³³ Conversion of the AOS aerodrome was estimated at \$620,000.³⁴ Davidson was chosen as the site for the displaced Chatham AOS because the aerodrome was unoccupied, complete, and had paved runways (an undertaking paid for by the British Air Ministry when Davidson was originally an RAF station).³⁵

The DNDA chose not to move Prince Albert's EFTS to Davidson and leave the AOS in Prince Albert because the sod runways would have to be paved, which "would have been a serious interruption to the flying training."³⁶ There would be no cost incurred and no interruptions to flying by opening the AOS where the hard surface runways were available, and by doubling the EFTS where excellent sod runways existed.³⁷ Despite the pressures by the Prime Minister, the decision to double the Prince Albert EFTS and close the AOS stood firm. Although these difficult decisions were made according to technical merit, and although the Chatham AOS never moved to Davidson because the Chatham AOS never materialized, the Prime Minister was not comforted. Davidson, a "mere village" had hard-surfaced runways while Prince Albert, "a large community which is a natural focus of civilian flying" was still without modern facilities.³⁸

The selection process, as documented in politicians' papers, DoT, RCAF, and ADC files, and as seen in the Prince Albert example, clearly was based on selecting aerodromes according to technical merit and was designed to give the final selection authority to the technical experts. Approval of ADC recommendations never being denied by the Minister DNDA or his colleagues shows that policy was respected and that the civilian government never took advantage of its authority over the subordinated military to further political agendas. Instead, the BCATP selection process, from 1939 to 1945, is an example of the civil-military relations of the time. The civilian government determined what tasks its military would be assigned (running the BCATP), but the military was allowed to carry out its task (constructing bases and training aircrew) with no interference from the government.

The fact that most BCATP bases were built in Liberal ridings is not evidence that the BCATP was governed by patronage considerations. Because the majority of ridings in the country were Liberal, the majority of BCATP bases were in Liberal ridings, for there was not an abundance of non-Liberal ridings from which to choose. (After the March 1940 election, in Saskatchewan, twelve of twenty-one ridings were Liberal, in Manitoba, fourteen of seventeen, and in Ontario, fifty-seven of eighty-two.) In the end, it was more politically expedient for the future of the Liberal party to pass up a patronage opportunity and hence ensure that Canada's war commitments were carried out as promised, and that the ultimate goal was achieved – an Allied victory to the war.

NOTES

- ¹ B. Greenhouse and N. Hillmer, "The Impact of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan on Western Canada: Some Saskatchewan Case Studies," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 16 (Fall-Winter 1981): 134.
- ² Peter Conrad, *Saskatchewan in War: The Social Impact of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan on Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan MA Thesis, 1987).
- ³ Peter Conrad, *Training For Victory: The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan in the West* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989), pp. 14, 16.
- ⁴ Rachel Lea Heide, "The Politics Behind BCATP Base Selection in Saskatchewan," paper presented at the *Underhill Graduate Students' Colloquium* held at Carleton University.
- ⁵ 13 June 1940, *Dominion of Canada Official Report of Debates of House of Commons* (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most excellent Majesty, 1940), p. 740.
- ⁶ Rachel Lea Heide, "The Politics Behind BCATP Base Selection in Saskatchewan," paper presented at the *Underhill Graduate Students' Colloquium*, held at Carleton University, 4 March 2000, p. 11.
- ⁷ 17 December 1939, *British Commonwealth Air Training Plan Agreement*, RG 25 Volume 1858A File 72-T-38.
- ⁸ 13 October 1939, Memorandum, RG 24 Volume 4775 File HQ 103-74/68 Part 1.
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THE THIRTIETH RECOMMENDATION: BLIMPS FOR CANADA

Jeff Noakes

One of the many consequences of the Second World War for the relationship between the United States and Canada was the creation of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence (PJBD) in 1940. The product of the Ogdensburg Declaration, which in itself marked a growing closeness in Canadian relations with the United States, the Board was charged with the task of considering “in the broad sense the defence of the north half of the Western Hemisphere.”¹ Composed of military and civilian representatives from both countries, the Board played an important role in this country’s military co-operation with the United States.

One of the most tangible and readily accessible records of the Board’s wartime work is the list of the thirty-three recommendations it presented to the Canadian and American governments between 1940 and 1944. The thirtieth of these, approved during meetings in New York City on 1 and 2 April 1943, recommended that the Governments of the United States and Canada, having a mutual interest in the proposal to utilize non-rigid airships in antisubmarine activities in Eastern Canadian waters at the earliest practical date, appoint a Joint Canadian-American Board of officers to investigate, consult and report on the proposal, and on the selection of suitable base sites and facilities, in that area, to support the operation of not more than twelve airships commencing about May, 1944.²

On 13 April 1943, the American government gave its approval. The Canadian government did not do so, but had no objection to the board of officers being appointed to examine the problem. A subsequent meeting of the PJBD decided that this action met the essence of the proposal, and there the issue seems to come to an end. The limited literature concerning the wartime PJBD, if it discusses the thirtieth proposal at all, appears to furnish no additional information on this topic.

Examination of primary sources, however, reveals a more extensive and complicated series of events than has been described in the secondary literature. The operation of blimps from Canadian bases had been considered by the United States Navy since at least January of 1942, and had been the subject of unofficial discussions between American and Canadian officers – and between the Royal Canadian Navy and Royal Canadian Air Force – for several months before the PJBD made its recommendation. Although the secondary sources state simply that the Canadian government did not give its approval, the process that led to this decision was in reality quite complicated. In addition to continuing debate between the navy and the air force, much of which was driven by their particular interests, the Cabinet War Committee and Chiefs of Staff Committee were involved in discussions of this issue.

The possibility of operating blimps in Canadian waters did not end as soon as is implied by the secondary literature. The Joint Canadian-American Board appointed to investigate the issue produced its report in early July 1943, finding that the operation of blimps from Eastern Canadian bases was feasible, and recommended trial operations

from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia in order to determine the viability of such operations. By the end of the month, however, events both external and internal to the decision-making process prompted the Chiefs of Staff Committee to eventually recommend against approving the recommendations of the Joint Canadian-American Board on blimps. Although seemingly at an end, the proposal of blimp operations in Canadian waters was again discussed in late 1944 and early 1945, but was once again defeated.

While the debate surrounding the operation of blimps in Canadian waters is intrinsically interesting for some people, it merits examination for other reasons, too. It serves as a case study that sheds light on the Canadian-American defence relationship during the Second World War, especially on the operations of the PJBD, and it permits a discussion of Canadian decision-making processes during this time. The relatively small scale of the archival paperwork and discussions make it a manageable study. The Thirtieth Recommendation is also of interest since it is one of *only two* PJBD proposals *not* fully accepted or endorsed by both governments. More precisely, it is an example of an American defence suggestion that was refused by Canada because of operational and other considerations. Studying the history of the recommendation thus provides useful insights into the Canadian-American defence relationship, the process of policy-making in Canada, and their relationship to this country's participation in the battle against German submarines in the Atlantic Ocean.

By 1942, the United States Navy had been operating lighter-than-air craft for about twenty years. Despite the catastrophic losses of three of its rigid airships in the 1920s and 1930s, and the fiery loss of the German Hindenburg at Lakehurst, New Jersey in 1937, lighter-than-air aviation still had its die-hard supporters within the navy.³ By the late 1930s, the only airships left in US naval service were blimps, which relied on the pressure of helium within their huge rubberized fabric envelopes to maintain their shape. The helium, being lighter than air, lifted the weight of their crew, fuel, engines, armament, and equipment.

Since helium provided the lifting power for blimps, they differed from conventional heavier-than-air craft because they did not rely upon maintaining forward speed in order to remain airborne. This allowed them to operate at very slow speeds or to hover over a fixed point. In many ways, they offered the capabilities of helicopters before the invention of and operational improvements in the latter. The speed advantage of blimps over surface ships, as well as their range and endurance, were also advantageous for convey escort and anti-submarine work.⁴ Unfortunately, their large size, relatively slow speed and need to maintain a weight approximately less than an equivalent volume of air meant that they required large permanent hangar facilities and ground handling crews and that they could be sensitive to adverse weather conditions.

Standard equipment on blimps included centimetric surface search radar and Magnetic Anomaly Detector, or MAD, gear, which could detect anomalies in the earth's magnetic field caused by the presence of large bodies of ferrous metal like submarines. The low speed capabilities of the blimps increased the effectiveness of this equipment when searching for submarines. In theory at least, this equipment, coupled with depth charges and, later in the war, homing torpedoes and sonobuoys that could detect the noise made by submarines moving underwater made the blimp a useful anti-submarine weapon.

As the United States entered the war, the Navy obtained authorization for additional blimps to increase its patrol and anti-submarine capabilities, and began construction of operational bases on the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf coasts.⁵ In January 1942, shortly after

America's entry in to the war, the United States Navy began internal discussions about the operation of blimps in Canadian waters.⁶ By mid-October of the same year, the Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics raised the subject "quite unofficially" with the Air Member of the Canadian Joint Staff in Washington, proposing to operate blimps in the Nova Scotia coastal area, in order to extend what were described as the "peculiar abilities" of their submarine detecting equipment – a veiled reference to the Magnetic Anomaly Detector mentioned above.⁷ That the operation of blimps in Canadian waters would have increased the importance and influence of lighter-than-air aviation was probably an additional incentive for the blimp's boosters within the United States Navy.

Although the initial proposal produced little reaction from the Canadians, by late November the US Navy was asking for a reply from the RCAF.⁸ The Royal Canadian Navy seems to have received some notification of the proposal, for at approximately this time it began to make unofficial inquiries to the RCAF about the latter's reaction to the proposal, since the Americans wanted to start examining Canadian meteorological records and assessing possible sites for airship bases during the winter and any decision on this subject would require air force support.⁹ Shortly thereafter, official communication about the proposal began between the RCAF and RCN. In a letter to the Chief of Naval Staff, the Chief of Air Staff discussed the American proposal in some detail, and noted that the Americans had been advised that if they cared to make an official proposal concerning blimp operations in Canadian waters, it would receive "careful study and consideration."¹⁰ The letter proposed that the Naval and Air Staffs hold a conference to discuss the issue once an official proposal had been received, and also noted that "the question of control was raised, and it appeared had not been considered very seriously by USN as yet. The opinion was expressed that the operations would be entirely under control of Eastern Air Command."¹¹

This passing reference was the first indication of an issue that would trouble members of both the RCAF and the RCN. The RCN, motivated by concerns about the proposal that included the issue of air force control of blimp operations, promptly sent its staff officer concerned with air operations to the United States to initiate unofficial contact with the USN and to gain a working knowledge of the airships.¹² Part of Commander Stead's report discussed operational control of anti-submarine aircraft and blimps, and concluded that the plans for blimp operations provided an opportunity for the RCN to gain first-hand experience of coastal air operations, which would prove useful when the RCN would be "obliged to operate aircraft in some form or another." Stead suggested that "all influence within reasonable diplomatic grounds be brought to bear on the authorities concerned in order that operational control of any airships in Canada be under the RCN."¹³ He argued that the RCN should not "control such operations for political or selfish reasons," but instead use it as the "thin edge of the wedge" towards a unified anti-submarine warfare command on the Eastern Coast of North America.¹⁴ Naval Service Headquarters' support for this argument was qualified; while acknowledging that it would be desirable for the RCAF to administer the daily operations of the blimps, the Operations Division "considered that it is most desirable to have them under the operational orders of the Canadian Naval Commands or Sub-Commands."¹⁵ Although this was the first time it was discussed by the RCAF and RCN, the issue of operational control would surface again in discussions about blimps for Canada.

By late January 1943, the RCN's naval staff had given "serious consideration" to the proposal, and concluded that the blimps would be particularly useful for operations over

coastal waters and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. RCN discussions with the US Navy had also borne fruit in the form of an agreement that Canadian officers would undergo blimp training at Lakehurst.¹⁶ The Naval Staff recommended that the Americans be formally asked if they would consider operating blimps in Canadian coastal waters, and that if they were they should send suitable officers for discussions and examination of possible base locations in consultation with Canadian naval and air force officers. Since blimp operations would depend on air force co-operation in the accommodation of crews, provision of ground handling personnel, weather forecasting, and the provision of other services, approval from the Chief of Air Staff was necessary before a formal request could be made to the Americans.¹⁷ The RCAF had no objection to a formal request being made of the USN, but objected to the use of air force bases because of potential interference with aircraft operations and other considerations peculiar to lighter-than-air operations, suggesting that the selection of bases be left until preliminary discussions with the Americans had been completed.¹⁸

The suggestion that blimps be operated over the St. Lawrence was an acknowledgement that the U-boat war in the Atlantic had reached Canada's shores in 1942. Following Germany's declaration of war on the United States of America, U-boats began to operate off the American and Canadian coasts and even within the lower River and Gulf of St. Lawrence. Twenty-one ships were sunk in the Gulf and river, but the Canadian defenders, although they eventually suppressed U-boat operations, were unable to sink any of the attackers. As a result of these shipping losses, the St. Lawrence was closed to ocean shipping in September 1942.¹⁹ In the aftermath of these events, Canadian military planners anticipated a renewed U-boat offensive in the Gulf when the ice cleared and it was re-opened for shipping in 1943. Plans called for the deployment of increased naval and air assets in the Gulf to counter this threat, and at a February 1943 conference on operations in the St. Lawrence the offer of American blimps to bolster defending forces presented an appealing possibility for Canadian planners.²⁰

In March 1943, discussions about blimp operations in Canadian waters came to the attention of the PJBD. On the 17th John Hickerson, secretary of the American section, contacted Hugh Keenleyside, secretary of the Canadian section. Keenleyside was informed of the discussions between the USN and RCN, and was also notified that the Americans did not have enough blimps to conduct such operations in the summer of 1943 as had originally been intended, but that operations could commence sometime around May 1944. The US naval members of the PJBD were working on a proposal which had not yet been finalized, but which included the appointment of a joint Canadian-American board to investigate and report on suitable bases in Canada for the operation of airships beginning in about May of 1944, recommended that the Canadian government construct, man, and operate the necessary shore facilities, and suggested that the USN initially provide the blimps, with Canadians trained at Lakehurst taking over their operation as early as practicable.²¹ Whether the navy or the air force would operate the blimps was left unsaid, and the issue of their operational control would feature in future discussions. In any case, this information soon found its way to the RCN and the RCAF, prompting the CAS to note that "as blimps will not be available this year it is considered serious thought should be given to any further progress in this matter. Have they any sinkings to their credit. Will not sufficient aircraft be available to provide adequate coverage?"²² The RCAF, which had previously supported the proposal, had begun to question its benefits. Despite these reservations, the plan to operate blimps in Canadian waters was discussed by the PJBD on April 1 and 2, 1943. Meeting at the Mayor's house in New York City,

the Board discussed a United States Navy's proposal virtually identical to that received by Keenleyside in March. After discussing the proposal, the Board approved its Thirtieth Recommendation, an approval that marks the starting point of discussions of the Thirtieth Recommendation in the secondary literature.²³

Less than two weeks after the PJBD's approval of its Thirtieth Recommendation, the RCAF expressed its reservations about blimps to the RCN. After noting that plans for holding preliminary discussions of the issue between USN, RCN, and RCAF representatives before bringing it to the attention of the PJBD had not been carried out, the Chief of the Air Staff noted that the original proposal had planned for blimp operations in 1943, while the PJBD's recommendation made it clear that such operations could not take place before May 1944. He also noted that RCAF operations in the Gulf of St. Lawrence for 1943 involved an increase of at least 100% over 1942 levels, and that both Naval and Air Force Staff considered this adequate to meet the U-boat threat in the Gulf. An increasing number of aircraft were also available for operations off the Canadian coast. Despite the support of some USN and RCN officers, the CAS concluded that blimp operations, with their requirements for special bases, personnel, and large expenditures, and with unproven effectiveness were "not a practical nor economical means of combating the U-boat threat in our coastal regions."²⁴ As a result, the CAS did not consider that any worthwhile purpose would be accomplished by the appointment of a joint Canadian-American board to study blimp operations in Canadian waters, and recommended that the thirtieth recommendation of the PJBD not be approved.²⁵

Despite the objections of the Chief of Air Staff, the Chiefs of Staff Committee, which was responsible for providing inter-service professional advice on the country's military problems,²⁶ discussed the PJBD's Thirtieth Recommendation a few days later and made a submission to the Cabinet War Committee, which was responsible for the Canadian government's high policy decisions, that a joint Canadian-American board of officers be appointed to investigate the issue.²⁷ The Cabinet War Committee decided that although the Government was not prepared to approve the Thirtieth Recommendation, they were agreeable to the appointment of the joint board.²⁸ At a meeting on 6 and 7 May 1943, the Permanent Joint Board on Defence "agreed that this qualified approval met the essence of the original proposal." By this date, the RCAF and the RCN had selected members for appointment to this committee, and the Americans were similarly prepared.²⁹

Although this is the point at which discussion of the Thirtieth Recommendation and blimps for Canada in the secondary literature comes to an end, activity and discussions surrounding the issue continued for some time. The activities of the Joint Canadian-American Board on Lighter-than-Air operations, which held its first meeting in Ottawa on 5 July, consisted of a number of meetings in Ottawa involving the Joint RCN-RCAF Anti-Submarine Warfare Committee as well as a tour of potential bases in the Maritimes and the Gulf of St. Lawrence.³⁰ During the lead-up to this first meeting, the RCN and RCAF continued to investigate the issue of blimp operations, and as before formed very different opinions. The RCN sent the director of its Operations Division, Captain H.N. Lay, to visit American airship facilities at Lakehurst, and he returned convinced that the blimps' Magnetic Anomaly Detectors and radar would make them "extremely effective" anti-submarine weapons – especially if operating in conjunction with surface anti-submarine vessels.³¹ The RCAF, however, was concerned about the potential for blimp interference with operations by conventional aircraft. It also had an internal difference of

opinion – the Air Member for Air Staff believed that the RCAF should operate blimps if they were adopted, while the Chief of the Air Staff believed that the RCAF should not become involved in lighter than air operations.³² Once again the issue of operational control was influencing players in the blimp debate.

The Joint Canadian-American Board on blimps released its report on 10 July. The board concluded that it was feasible to operate non-rigid airships from bases on the Atlantic coast and from the Gaspé from June to October, but that operations during the rest of the year would require more extensive facilities at a central location such as Halifax. Based on these conclusions, the board recommended that limited trial operations be carried out from the RCAF station at Yarmouth, Nova Scotia as early as possible in the summer of 1943, and that a final determination of whether or not to use airships in Eastern Canadian waters be made jointly by the RCN and RCAF after a study of these operations. After reviewing the report, the Joint RCN-RCAF Anti-Submarine Committee forwarded a copy of the report and of the Committee's support for it to the Chiefs of Staff Committee.³³

While the Board's report was awaiting the attention of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, internal discussions in the RCAF revealed that service's continuing reservations about the operation of blimps in Canadian waters. A memorandum written on 14 July noted that the specialized facilities required for anything more than token blimp operations would prove costly, but "because it is not desired to overlook any weapon that might be of possible use" and because airship operations from Yarmouth would not interfere with conventional aircraft operations, the RCAF concurred in the recommendation.³⁴

The Chiefs of Staff Committee was scheduled to discuss the Joint Canadian-American airship board's recommendation on 16 July, but this meeting was rescheduled to the 20th, at which time the issue was deferred to the next meeting.³⁵ That same day, however, an American blimp was shot down while attacking a surfaced U-boat in the Gulf of Mexico. News of the incident was quickly passed to Canadian authorities, and an American report of a merchant ship lost while under blimp patrol in June was also passed on to RCAF headquarters in Ottawa.³⁶ These events almost certainly influenced the decision made by the Chiefs of Staff Committee on 27 July not to approve the proposals to operate blimps over Canadian waters. Foremost among the reasons given for their decision was the "recent change in U-boat tactics" which resulted in U-boats fighting back against attacking air forces instead of attempting to submerge and escape underwater. Improved coverage by aircraft – an issue raised earlier by the RCAF – weather and technical limitations, and the very high cost of establishing permanent facilities for blimps were further reasons given to support the CSC's decision. Shortly thereafter, the Cabinet War Committee concurred in the Chiefs of Staff's decision, and the matter was considered closed. Correspondence tying up loose ends and informing various participants in the decision-making process continued intermittently until the beginning of September 1943.³⁷

The matter of blimp operations in Canadian waters was not entirely closed, however. In late 1944 the issue was raised again, this time in response to renewed German submarine operations in the western Atlantic, especially the inshore campaign in Canadian waters.³⁸ Since the schnorkel – the technological development that made inshore operations possible – allowed the U-boats to run on their Diesel engines for long periods and long distances just below the surface and thus greatly reduced the risk of

detection by aircraft and surface ships, the operating characteristics and equipment of blimps were seen as a way of increasing the effectiveness of Allied anti-submarine operations. Aircraft in particular faced serious problems in detecting and attacking schnorkel-equipped U-boats.³⁹ A series of American tests revealed that because of blimps' slower speeds and ability to hover, their radar was more effective in detecting schnorkelling U-boats, while their MAD gear offered the ability to track submerged targets. After further discussion, however, the decision was reached by the RCN and RCAF in March 1945 not to ask the USN to operate blimps in Canadian waters.⁴⁰ Canada was not alone in considering the merits of blimps for anti-submarine warfare at this time, since British and American officials were discussing the possible use of blimps against U-boats operating inshore in waters around the British Isles as the war in Europe came to an end.⁴¹

Much of the wartime Canadian-American defence relationship took place through the PJBD, and examination of the events surrounding the proposal to operate blimps in Canadian waters provides a useful case study of the origins of a PJBD recommendation. Unofficial communications between American and Canadian officers progressed to official communication between the American and Canadian sections of the Board and the eventual production of a recommendation that was dealt with by the highest levels of the Canadian government and military.

Despite American interest, however, the recommendation was first modified and then turned down by Canadian decision-makers, and here the history of the Thirtieth Recommendation also permits an examination of Canadian decision-making processes during this time, including the RCN-RCAF relationship and the differing interests of the two services. "Behind-the-scenes" discussions took place between them even before the issue of blimps for Canada was officially considered by the PJBD. These discussions reveal different priorities and interests. Some of these were related to the RCN's plans from mid-1943 onwards for the creation of its own air arm, while others were related to the ongoing concerns about operational control of antisubmarine aircraft on Canada's Atlantic coast. The RCAF was concerned about interference with its operations, both physically as a consequence of blimps operating from its bases and in a broader sense as a result of increased demands for facilities, personnel, and financial expenditures. The possibility of naval control of the blimps also touched the on-going sensitive debate about which service would control anti-submarine operations on Canada's eastern coast. Although the relevant documents are not available from Canadian sources, the airship advocates in the United States Navy almost certainly saw the events surrounding the Thirtieth Recommendation as an opportunity to expand their sphere of operations and their influence within their own service.

Once the issue of blimps for Canada was brought to the attention of the Canadian government through official PJBD action, the events that followed are a case study of the decision-making process, which included dealings with the Chiefs of Staff Committee, the Cabinet War Committee, internal decision-making within the Navy and Air Force, and the struggle between the two services to protect and advance their own interests. Canada's involvement in the war against the U-boats was also a factor in the decision-making process, and the changing patterns of the war against Germany's submarines influenced the debate surrounding the Thirtieth Recommendation at some of its crucial stages.

Defence relations with the United States, decision-making processes in Canada, and Canadian involvement in the Battle of the Atlantic were all part of the debate resulting from the proposal that blimps operate in Canadian waters. Although the PJBD's Thirtieth Recommendation has at best been consigned to footnotes by some of the few historians who have encountered it, and has at worst been completely passed over, a closer examination of the recommendation and the events that surrounded it provides us with useful insights into Canada's wartime experience.

NOTES

- ¹ C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970), p. 339.
- ² Colonel Stanley W. Dziuban, *Military Relations between the United States and Canada, 1939-1945* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1959), p. 361.
- ³ See Martin L. Levitt, *The United States Navy and lighter-than-air aviation*, PhD, Temple University, 1991, especially Chapters 2 and 4, for a discussion of the efforts of lighter-than-air advocates both within the Navy and elsewhere.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 46-48.
- ⁵ The "10,000 Plane Act" of June 1940 authorized the acquisition of forty-eight non-rigid airships by the United States Navy, and in June of 1942 the limit was raised to two hundred airships. New Naval Air Stations were also built to provide operational bases for these blimps. Levitt, *The United States Navy and lighter-than-air aviation*, pp. 51-52, 152, 142-145; J. Gordon Vaeth, *Blimps and U-Boats: U.S. Navy Airships in the Battle of the Atlantic* (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute Press, 1992), pp. 11-12, 173.
- ⁶ "Visit of Staff Officer (Air) to Washington and Lakehurst, N.J.," 14 December 1942, Department of National Defence, Directorate of History and Heritage (hereinafter referred to as DHH), Naval Historian's Files, 1700-219, "Naval Aviation 1940-49." Operating blimps in Canadian waters may have been considered earlier than this date; Levitt quotes an early August 1941 memorandum from the Chief of Naval Operations, who expressed an interest in having the US Navy "establish as many as five airship stations outside the Continental Limits, the exact locations not yet having been determined." Navy Department Memorandum, "Non-Rigid Airship Program," Document Op-22-F, 1 August 1941, LTA Section, Naval Aviation Archives, quoted in Levitt, *The United States Navy and lighter-than-air aviation*, pp. 142-143.
- ⁷ Air Member, CJS Washington, to Secretary, DND for Air, "Lighter-than-air Coastal Operations – Nova Scotia," 28 October 1942, National Archives of Canada (hereinafter referred to as NAC) RG 24, Vol. 5202, File S.15-24-36, "Coastal Operations – Lighter than Air."
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- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*

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- ¹⁵ Memorandum, DOD to V/CNS, 15 December 1942, NAC RG 24, Vol. 11975, File N.M.S. 275-2-1, "Aircraft-Lighter-than-Air." This memorandum was sent as a cover letter for Stead's report.
- ¹⁶ Two RCNVR Lieutenants eventually underwent training at Lakehurst and served with a USN blimp patrol squadron before being recalled to Canada. NAC RG 24, Vol. 11975, File N.M.S. 275-2-1, "Aircraft-Lighter-than-Air-Training of Officers and Ratings for," passim.
- ¹⁷ CNS to CAS, "Lighter-than-air Coastal Operations," 27 January 1943, NAC RG 24 E1, Vol. 5202, File S.15-24-36.
- ¹⁸ Memorandum, DCAS to CNS, 10 February 1943, NAC RG 24 E1, Vol. 5202, File H.Q.S.15-24-36.
- ¹⁹ W.A.B. Douglas, *The Creation of a National Air Force: The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force*, Vol. 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), p. 493.
- ²⁰ Memorandum, AMO to D/AMAS(Ops), "Anti-Submarine Warfare Committee – First Monthly Meeting," 16 January 1943, NAC RG 24, Vol. 5273, File S.28-6-3, "Anti-Submarine Warfare: RCAF Committee;" "Minutes of St. Lawrence Operations Conference Held in Ottawa, 22-24 February 1943," 8, DHH Naval Historian's Files 1650-239/16B, Vol. 2, "North American Waters (River and Gulf of St. Lawrence)."
- ²¹ Hickerson to Keenleyside, 17 March 1943, NAC RG 24 E1, Vol. 5202, File S.15-24-36.
- ²² See Minute, CAS to AMAS, on AFCS Washington to RCAF Ottawa, signal A.86, 24 March 1943, NAC RG 24 E1, Vol. 5202, File S.15-24-36.
- ²³ PJBD, "Journal of Discussions and Decisions at the Meeting of the Board, New York, April 1 and 2, 1943," DHH 314.009 (D25).
- ²⁴ Memorandum, CAS to CNS, "Use of Non-Rigid Airships for A.S.W. in Eastern Canadian Waters," 14 April 1943, NAC RG 24 E1, Vol. 5202, File S.15-24-36. The RCAF appears to have been concerned about the costs of a Canadian airship programme from the outset of serious discussions with the United States; one of the two members it appointed to the Joint Canadian-American Board to examine the issue of blimps was a representative of the Air Member for Air Finance. Memorandum, AMAF to AMAS(DOR), "Committee to investigate and report on the proposal to utilize non-rigid airships," 1 July 1943, NAC RG 24 E1, Vol. 5202, File S.15-24-36.
- ²⁵ Memorandum, CAS to CNS, "Use of Non-Rigid Airships for A.S.W. in Eastern Canadian Waters," 14 April 1943, NAC RG 24 E1, Vol. 5202, File S.15-24-36.
- ²⁶ Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments*, p. 69.
- ²⁷ CSC submission to CWC, 20 April 1943, NAC RG 24 E1, Vol. 5202, File S.15-24-36.
- ²⁸ Memorandum, MND to CGS, 23 April 1943, DHH 193.009 (D21).
- ²⁹ PJBD, "Journal of Discussions and Decisions at the Meeting of the Board, Montreal, May 6 and 7, 1943," 1-2, DHH 314.009 (D25).
- ³⁰ See "Minutes of Joint Canadian-American Board on Non-Rigid Airships Operations in Eastern Canada" [*sic*], 10 July 1943, NAC RG 24, Vol. 5202, File S.15-24-36.
- ³¹ Report by H.N. Lay, A/Captain RCN, re: "Lighter-than-Air Operations in Gulf of St. Lawrence, 1943-1944," 10 May 1943, NAC RG 24 E1, Vol. 5202, File S.15-24-36.
- ³² See typewritten copy of minute sheet, n.d., in NAC RG 24 E1, Vol. 5202, File S.15-24-36. Based on other references, these minutes date from 24 May 1943 or later. See Secretary, Joint RCN/RCAF Anti-Submarine Warfare Committee to Chairman, Joint Canadian-American Board of Officers to report on non-rigid Airships, 8 June 1943, NAC RG 24 E1, Vol. 5202, File S.15-24-36.
- ³³ Joint Canadian-American Board on Non-Rigid Airship Operations, "Report of Board on feasibility and utility of non-rigid airships as an anti-submarine unit in Eastern Canadian Waters," 10 July 1943; Memorandum, D/AMAS to CAS, 14 July 1943, NAC RG 24 E1, Vol. 5202, File S.15-24-36. The Board's report undoubtedly contributed to RCAF concerns about the expenses connected with blimp facilities, since one of its appendices provided an itemized list of costs for the construction of the lighter-than-air station at NAS Glyco, Georgia. In total, these costs came to over ten million US dollars.

- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee, to CGS, 13 July 1943; Extract from Minutes of 240th Meeting of Chiefs of Staff Committee held on 20th July 1943, DHH 193.009 (D21).
- ³⁶ See signals traffic, 20-26 July 1943 in NAC RG 24 E1, Vol. 5202, File S.15-24-36. The tanker had been under escort by a blimp, but the airship had departed to avoid storms shortly before the attack. Another tanker, the *Persephone*, was torpedoed on 25 May 1943 by U-593 while actually under blimp escort. Ironically, considering the influence the sinking may have had on Canadian decision-makers, the *Persephone* is believed to be the only merchant ship ever lost to submarine attack while actually under airship escort. "Extract from United States Fleet Anti-Submarine Bulletin Dated July, 1943," NAC RG 24 E1, Vol. 5202, File S.15-24-36; Vaeth, *Blimps & U-Boats*, pp. 20-21.
- ³⁷ "Extract of Minutes of 242nd Meeting of Chiefs of Staff Committee held on 27th July, 1943," Chiefs of Staff to Cabinet War Committee, 30 July 1943, MND (Air) to CAS, 23 August 1943, CAS to AOC-in-C, EAC, 27 August 1943, Air Member, CJS Washington to Secretary, DND (Air), Ottawa, 2 September 1943, NAC RG 24 E1, Vol. 5202, File S.15-24-36.
- ³⁸ "Minutes of 36th Meeting held at 1500 Hours Thursday, 30th November, 1944," NAC RG 24, Vol. 11026, File CNA 7-19-2B, "Joint RCN/RCAF A/S Warfare Committee – Minutes of Meetings."
- ³⁹ Memorandum, AMAS to CAS, "Anti-Submarine Warfare – Use of Non-Rigid Airships – Magnetic Airborne Detector (MAD)," 17 February 1945, NAC RG 24 Vol. 5202, File S.15-24-36.
- ⁴⁰ "Minutes of 40th Meeting held at 1600 Hours Thursday, 8 February 1945," NAC RG 24, Vol. 11026, File CNA 7-19-2B, "Joint RCN/RCAF A/S Warfare Committee – Minutes of Meetings," CAS to AOC-in-C, EAC, 14 March 1945, NAC RG 24 Vol. 5202, File S.15-24-36. Consideration was also given to using blimps to create a MAD barrier in Cabot Strait to prevent its use by schnorkelling U-boats. "Minutes of 36th Meeting Held at 1500 Hours Thursday, 30th November, 1944," NAC RG 24 Vol. 5273, File S.28-6-4A, "Anti-Submarine Warfare: Joint RCN-RCAF Anti-Submarine Warfare Committee: Minutes of Meetings;" "A/S Warfare – M.A.D. Barrier," attached to agenda for 37th Meeting of Joint RCN-RCAF ASW Committee, "Minutes of 37th Meeting, 28 December 1944," "Minutes of 40th Meeting, Thursday, 8 February 1945," NAC RG 24 Vol. 5273, File S.28-6-4, "Anti-Submarine Warfare – RCAF-RCN Inter-Service Committee."
- ⁴¹ See correspondence in PRO ADM1/17382 held by DHH.

**The Second World War 2:
North-West Europe
La Deuxième Guerre mondiale 2 :
le front principal**

**INTER-SERVICE AND ANGLO-CANADIAN
CO-OPERATION: THE LONG AND TROUBLED
DEVELOPMENT OF AIR SUPPORT FOR BRITISH
AND IMPERIAL ARMIES IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

David Ian Hall

The provision of direct air support was of central importance to the success eventually enjoyed by Anglo-Canadian and American armies in the latter half of the Second World War. First in North Africa, and later in Italy and North West Europe, American, British and Empire armies fought most if not all of their battles with the knowledge that they enjoyed unassailable air superiority throughout the battle area and, consequently, they expected considerable air support. This advantage was the product of costly and hard-earned battle experience; it also was the outcome of a long and tortuous debate that raged throughout much of the war, primarily between the British Army and the Royal Air Force, but also with Canadian participation.

This paper is a very brief canter through the debate, charting the rise fall and rise of an effective British and Imperial air support system from 1914 to 1945. At issue were the questions of “who should control aircraft on the battlefield, what type of aircraft should be employed and how should these aircraft be used.” The emphasis is on the operational level – the development of doctrine and organisation to achieve a decisive military result in battle – but there is also a “symbiotic relationship” between the operational and tactical levels of war, and interaction (both direct and indirect) between the RAF and the RCAF in turning theory into practice and then refining practical procedures to obtain optimum results: a process of innovation within co-operation.

Both the apparent impasse in providing British and Imperial armies with effective air support during the early years of the Second World War and the eventual solution to this dilemma are found in the ten or twenty years before hostilities began. It is axiomatic that the strategy and operations of any war can be understood only in the light of the conditions and preparations that preceded them. Technology, doctrine, training, and leadership – what Peter Paret calls the essentials of action in war – are the products of

both peacetime development and neglect. Battle experience will lead to change but pre-war elements continue to affect the way nations and their armed forces fight even the longest wars. Paret's theory that the nature of military action has its antecedents in the past has proven merit as a methodological approach to the study of military history.¹

At the end of the First World War, Great Britain stood alone amongst the great Powers as the pre-eminent air Power in the world. When the Armistice took effect on 11 November 1918, the Royal Air Force (RAF) mustered some 22,000 aircraft and just under 300,000 personnel.² In less than five years of war, British combat aviation had undergone an extraordinary transformation from its humble pre-war beginning of two small reconnaissance forces of fifty front line aircraft each for the Army and the Royal Navy.³ Between 1914 and 1918, the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS), followed by the RAF, performed every major air power role and mission,⁴ the very roles and missions that make up the core capabilities of modern air forces today. The wide variety of these first experiences in air operations should not mask the fact that Britain's first air war was an army co-operation war.⁵ Most of Britain's air effort was subordinate to the Army's military campaigns on the Western Front where army commanders increasingly were pre-occupied with the tactical problems of achieving a breakthrough. The Army viewed aircraft as auxiliary forces, similar to artillery and the new tanks, which were sub-allotted to army Corps at the front, and placed under the direct control of each respective Corps commander.⁶

These practices became increasingly problematic for Britain's airmen. Reflecting on their own operational experience, it was not long before they identified a number of enduring air power characteristics – height, speed, and reach. They also deduced the benefits to be had from a system of centralised command and control. Employment of such a system would enable an air commander to concentrate all available aircraft at critical points and times in a battle and, most important, ensure a maximum effort 'in support of the decisive tasks' or, as it is called today, the operational main effort. The army's preferred method of decentralised command was regarded by many airmen as wasteful and inefficient; it also entailed dispersion of effort on inconsequential objectives. In August 1918, at the Battle of Amiens, the RAF tried, for the first time in the war, a rudimentary system of centralised control; both Services, also for the first time, conducted their operations in accordance with a joint army-air plan. The air operations were only a limited success, but Amiens, and subsequent air operations during the last hundred days of the war, convinced British airmen that better results were achieved when air forces were concentrated against targets both above and beyond those traditionally selected by army commanders. When the attainment of air superiority was the first objective, followed by operations designed to isolate the battlefield, air forces had demonstrated enormous potential to make a decisive impact on operations taking place on the ground. Encouraged by their recent discoveries, Britain's airmen espoused a yet unwritten doctrine that emphasised a more strategic application of air forces based on air power's core capabilities of air superiority, interdiction and long-range bombing.⁷

Air power, Britain's air practitioners and fledgling theorists believed, offered a new way of approaching the strategic and operational challenges of war. A number of ambitious post-war expansion plans for the RAF were proposed. Britain's airmen also envisaged both an independent strike force for home defence and an air policing force to patrol the Empire. By all accounts the future should have looked very bright for the new Service with its special contribution to safeguarding national interests and fighting any

future war. But this was not to be. Instead of expansion the RAF underwent a massive reduction. Less than two years after the war had ended, the world's largest air force was reduced to twenty-five squadrons and less than 27,000 officers and other ranks.⁸

The post-war years were difficult ones for the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) too. Canada did not have a national air force during the First World War. Thousands of Canadian airmen did make a contribution to the advent of air warfare but most of them did so as individuals serving in British air forces. The Royal Canadian Naval Air Service and the Canadian Air Force (overseas), both small and very late creations, were established and disbanded during the last year of the war. Two years would pass before the Canadian government established a small, non-permanent Canadian Air Force (CAF), designed along "militia" lines, and firmly tied to the civil sector. In 1924, it received "Royal" designation, became a permanent force that was a directorate of the Army, and mustered some 68 officers and 307 other ranks. Air defence following RAF concepts was the RCAF's primary military role, but throughout the 1920s and most of the 1930s, it was responsible for a wide variety of civil and military functions. Whilst Canadian airmen favoured the development of an independent air force, similar to that of the RAF, Canada's soldiers preferred a force that corresponded to the old military wing of the Royal Flying Corps. Heavily influenced by Brigadier General A.G.L. McNaughton, a dedicated advocate of air power in the land battle, the RCAF's inter-war experience and training leaned more towards co-operation with the Army than the exercise of independent air power.⁹

The rise of international tensions in the mid-1930s did lead to a reduction of the RCAF's civil duties and in 1938 the RCAF became an independent Service. Still small in size, numbering some 150 officers and less than 1,000 other ranks, and operating 31 obsolete aircraft, the RCAF was hardly a modern air force ready to go to war. Training, such as it was, was carried out by individual squadrons and emphasised tactical procedures in air-to-air fighting, ground attack, and torpedo runs. The RCAF would start the war as an auxiliary air arm to land and naval units.¹⁰ This was, in fact, the exact type of air force the British Army wanted had its vision rather than that of the RAF been accepted.

The debate over the strategic application of air forces in national defence was more hotly contested in Britain during the 1920s than it was in Canada. Air Marshal Sir Hugh Trenchard, Chief of the Air Staff for the second time, was increasingly worried that his colleagues in the Army and the Royal Navy neither had the ability nor the desire to develop air power properly. After extensive analysis of the use and misuse of air forces in the Great War, Trenchard and the Air Staff establish a set of first principles of air warfare – offensive initiative, air superiority, concentration of force, and the need for centralised command and control.¹¹ The RAF's advocacy of these principles and its advancement of the concept of "air power" exacerbated already severely strained relations with the Army and the Royal Navy, the latter state of affairs being a sad legacy of the deep cuts in defence expenditures in the early 1920s. Division and hostility were compounded further by the lack of a common approach within the Services to the planning and conduct of war at the strategic level. Whilst the RAF concentrated on how to defend Britain from air attack and the Royal Navy concerned itself with maintaining open seas – both strategic tasks – the Army focused on the tactical practicalities of defending the Empire. Worse still, none of the Services, either individually or in any combination, possessed the

doctrine, force structure, or operational level of command necessary to make the vital link between the strategic direction of war and its tactical execution.¹²

On the subject of air support for the army, the RAF and the Army waged a fierce political battle over the proper employment of finite air forces in war – an acrimonious and divisive struggle that remained unresolved until the spring of 1943.¹³ As a general rule, the airmen tended to see a wider, strategic application of air power. In a land battle, once command of the air over the intended area of operations had been established, air forces would make their greatest impact through offensive action designed to “isolate the battlefield” from enemy reinforcement and supply. Both pre-war training exercises in the UK and lessons drawn from the wars in China and Spain convinced the airmen that air attacks in the forward battlefield area were ineffective and uneconomical.¹⁴ Targets were difficult to find and hit, losses in aircraft and crews were unacceptably high, and finite air forces that were quickly depleted in a close support role lost their ability to maintain the all-important condition of air superiority. Army officers were unimpressed by this logic.

Irreconcilable differences on matters of principle and deep-seated mistrust over intent bedevilled most dealings between the two Services as they struggled to find a mutually acceptable solution to the air support dilemma. The ignominious defeat of the British Expeditionary Forces in France in June 1940, and early setbacks in the Middle East against Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and the *Deutsche Afrika Korps*, merely made a bad situation worse. A severe lack of resources, and technical problems with both aircraft and rudimentary communications systems, also hindered the rapid development of a comprehensive, flexible and quick to react air support system. But these problems, severe as they were, were still much easier to overcome than the conceptual differences over air-ground co-operation between Britain’s soldiers and airmen.

Defeat convinced most soldiers that they had been right all along: the army required its own aircraft if it was to have any chance of success in a modern war. Furthermore, the War Office claimed that the army required its own specialised air forces, consisting of a fighter umbrella for defence and dive-bombers for close offensive support, sub-allotted to ground commanders at both corps and divisional levels. This, claimed the General Staff, was what the German Army enjoyed.¹⁵ The Air Staff disagreed. Effective air support, cited the airmen, was dependent on a high degree of air superiority. To achieve this superiority demanded an air force superior in strength to the enemy air force opposite: a unified air force consisting of bombers, fighters, reconnaissance, communication and transportation aircraft all operated under centralised command with the flexibility to switch from one task to another as strategic circumstances dictated. Success was not to be found in vast numbers of specialised support aircraft tethered to the ground forces.¹⁶

During the exceedingly anxious late summer and autumn of 1940, the two Services searched for answers to the air support question. Despite the obvious animosity and differences between their respective Services, some soldiers and airmen did manage to work well together on a number of effective joint army-air reforms. The most important of these were the air support experiments conducted in Northern Ireland by Group Captain A.H. Wann and Colonel J.D. Woodall.¹⁷ Wann and Woodall identified the need for a tactical air force: an RAF formation that was equipped and trained to obtain air superiority by offensive air action and to attack battlefield targets in close co-operation with the ground forces. From 5 September to 28 October 1940, they directed a series of signals exercises and command and control trials that led to the formation of a rudimentary combined (army/air) battle headquarters equipped with direct

communication links to forward troops and both forward and rear airfields. By the end of the year both the Army and the RAF would celebrate three notable achievements: the creation of a Combined Central Operations Room at GHQ Home Forces, the adoption of Close Support Bomber Controls on the Wann Woodall model and, on 1 December, the formation of Army Co-operation Command.¹⁸ For almost three years, from 1941 to mid-1943, under the direction of Army Co-operation Command, RCAF army co-operation squadrons and most RCAF fighter squadrons in the UK developed and refined their tactical procedures for close and direct support operations in a land battle.¹⁹

A parallel air-support system was forged in the hard test of battle in North Africa during the spring and summer months of 1941.²⁰ Air Support Controls (ASC) – an innovative joint command structure to control combined land-air operations – was constructed and tested. In addition to command and control exercises, a number of air trials tested bomber and fighter aircraft in a variety of tasks to determine their optimum roles in ground support operations. Out of these efforts emerged a new tactical air system, one that eventually proved effective in both attack and defence and against both pre-arranged and impromptu targets. The joint command and signals network was the nervous system of the new air support system and the fighter-bomber was its talons and teeth.

RAF historian, Sir Maurice Dean, identified three vital elements necessary for effective army air co-operation: goodwill, sound principles and tactics, and reliable communications.²¹ By the summer of 1942, all three were in evidence in the Western Desert. Similar levels of co-operation and understanding between the Army and the RAF did not exist back in England. In March 1942, the CIGS, General Sir Alan Brooke, reopened the bitter and protracted debate on an air arm for the Army. Brooke wanted 111 squadrons of specialised close support aircraft and another 207 squadrons of transport aircraft to meet the Army's minimum requirements. Additional support, namely fighter protection and bomber attacks against enemy troops and positions, was also requested from the independent air forces. Air Marshal Sir Charles Portal, Chief of the Air Staff, rejected the CIGS's preposterous demands; he pointed out that the number of aircraft the Army wanted for its own independent air arm exceeded the first-line strength of the entire RAF.²² Portal, therefore, appealed to his army counterpart to adopt the principles of the Middle East system as the basis for developing future army air support.²³

Brooke was not moved to agree. Many other generals, including Canadian General McNaughton, and even a few airmen, were also openly critical of the RAF's approach to integrated air-ground operations.²⁴ The General Staff wanted Army Co-operation Command built up to an active fighting command. Another proposal, co-authored by Air Commodore Henry Thorold and Colonel Claude Oxborrow, called for the creation of a new RAF Army Air Support Group consisting of twelve squadrons of bombers and fighters specially designed for ground attack.²⁵ The new Group, if established, would operate independently and in addition to Army Co-operation Command. All of the Army's proposals, however, violated RAF principles of centralised command and concentration of force. Perhaps most telling was a report written by the Joint Planning Committee, which warned:

Under the existing set-up there are too many RAF Commands concerned ... we must have a single air force command. The nucleus of this command must be established now.²⁶

Support was growing for a composite group of all types of aircraft under one air commander. On 21 July 1942, Air Marshal Sir John Slessor presented his proposal for such a force: a mixed force of fighters, light bombers, army support and reconnaissance squadrons organised in groups all under the command of a single AOC-in-C. Fighter Command, with its recent experience in offensive air operations over the continent, its superior communications, and its centralised command and control system, was Slessor's designated choice to host the new composite force.²⁷

After almost a year of rancorous discussion over who would develop Britain's new tactical air forces, either Fighter Command or Army Co-operation Command, the new Air Expeditionary Force Headquarters finally was established in Fighter Command. The Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) would provide a Composite Group for each British and Canadian army taking part in the Normandy invasion and all subsequent operations thereafter. Each Composite Group contained fighter, bomber and reconnaissance aircraft but they were not restricted to a prescribed "fixed strength." The AOC-in-C was free to move aircraft from one group to another as circumstances and opportunities dictated in order to exploit the inherent flexibility and striking power of his force. Command arrangements conformed closely with the proven methods of the Western Desert Air Force.²⁸

AEF was renamed the 2nd Tactical Air Force on 1 June 1943, and eventually it comprised No. 2 Group (transferred from Bomber Command) and Nos. 83 and 84 Composite Groups. About half of the squadrons attached to No. 83 Group were Canadian. Seventeen RCAF squadrons eventually served in 2nd TAF in a variety of air superiority and ground attack roles. Throughout the Northwest Europe campaign, two RCAF fighter wings (Nos. 126 and 127) and one fighter-bomber wing provided a small part of the overwhelming air superiority enjoyed by Allied armies.²⁹

Anglo-Canadian partnership in the development of tactical air forces was multifaceted and highly successful. In particular, the RAF and the RCAF drew on their respective differences in operational heritage, exchanged ideas and shared tactical experiences to their mutual advantage. From the summer of 1944 onward, British and Canadian armies finally had in operation a joint army/air system that provided effective and timely air support at the operational level. Problems with tactical execution were, however, still encountered. At times unfamiliar operating procedures confused both soldiers and airmen, and inaccurate weapons, namely rockets and free-fall bombs, made for a fairly blunt and resource intense instrument.³⁰ These shortcomings do not, however, detract from what was a remarkable achievement in inter-Service and Anglo-Canadian co-operation during the Second World War.

NOTES

- ¹ See Shelford Bidwell and Dominick Graham, *Fire-Power. British Army Weapons and the Theories of War 1904-1945* (London, 1982); Harold Winton, *To Change an Army. General Sir John Burnett-Stuart and British Armoured Doctrine, 1927-1938* (London, 1988); John A. English, *The Canadian Army and the Normandy Campaign: A Study of Failure in High Command* (New York, 1991); James S. Corum, *The Roots of Blitzkrieg. Hans von Seeckt and German Military Reform* (Lawrence, Kansas, 1992); and Peter Paret, *Understanding War* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1992).
- ² Norman Gibbs, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. I (London, 1976) p. 46; and Malcolm Cooper, *The Birth of Independent Air Power. British Air Policy in the First World War* (London, 1986) p. xv.
- ³ At the beginning of August 1914, the Royal Flying Corps despatched 50 aircraft to France with the BEF. It left behind in the UK another 75 aircraft of assorted types, most of which were not fit to fly. The Royal Naval Air Service counted 100 aircraft and one air ship on its order of battle but half of its aircraft were unable to fly. Both air arms planned to use their small number of aircraft as 'eyes in the air', and employed them accordingly on observation and reconnaissance missions. See Malcolm Cooper, *op. cit.*, pp. 9 and 18; and Shelford Bidwell and Dominick Graham, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-103.
- ⁴ During the war, British aircraft were deployed on reconnaissance missions, artillery observation, air transportation, escort and interceptor missions, air-to-air combat, bombing and strafing enemy troops and positions, close air support, direct air support, indirect air support, fighter sweeps and air superiority work, and independent bombing operations of a strategic nature. Detailed accounts of Britain's air effort during the First World War are provided in Sir Walter Raleigh and H.A. Jones, *The War in the Air 6 vols.* (Oxford, 1922-1937); Sir W. Sholto Douglas, *Years of Combat. A Personal Story of the First World War in the Air* (London, 1963); Lee Kennett, *The first air war, 1914-1918* (New York, 1991); and S.F. Wise, "Canadian Airmen and the First World War," *The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force*, Vol. I, (Toronto, 1980).
- ⁵ J.C. Slessor, *Air Power and Armies* (Oxford, 1936) p. 1.
- ⁶ Malcolm Cooper, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-62; J.C. Slessor, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-88; Sir Maurice Dean, *The Royal Air Force and Two World Wars* (London, 1971) pp. 21-23; and Lee Kennett, "Developments to 1939," in *B.F. Cooling, Close Air Support* (Washington, DC, 1990) pp. 15-16.
- ⁷ PRO AIR 8/13 Cmd Paper 100: Synopsis of British Air Effort During the War (1 January 1919); MRAF Lord Trenchard Papers MFC 76/1/357 Lecture XII "The Value of a Centralised Air Force," RAF Museum, RAF Hendon; J.C. Slessor, *op. cit.*, *passim*; Shelford Bidwell and Dominick Graham, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-145; and Peter Daybell, "The March Retreat of 1918 – The last battle of the Royal Flying Corps," *Air Power Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1998) pp. 86-101.
- ⁸ Brooke-Popham Papers: VII/22, "RAF History – The first 25 Years" (unpublished, 1943), Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College London; David E. Omissi, *Air Power and Colonial Control* (Manchester, 1990), pp. 19-21, 29; and Malcolm Smith, *British Air Strategy Between the Wars* (Oxford, 1984), p. 22.
- ⁹ S.F. Wise, *op. cit.*, pp. 579-620; and W.A.B. Douglas, "The Creation of a National Air Force," *The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force*, Vol. II, (Toronto, 1986) pp. 37-90.
- ¹⁰ W.A.B. Douglas, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-148; and B. Greenhouse, S. Harris, et al., "The Crucible of War 1939-1945," *The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force*, Vol. III, (Toronto, 1994), pp. 172-174.

- ¹¹ PRO AIR 5/299 The RAF's first official attempt to codify the lessons of the 1914-1918 War and produce an air doctrine began in 1922 with the publication of RAF Operations Manual CD 22 (sometimes referred to as Air Publication (AP) 882). This manual was re-named and re-issued in 1928 as AP 1300 RAF War Manual, Part I – Operations. See also MRAF Lord Trenchard Papers MFC 76/1/357 RAF Museum, RAF Hendon.
- ¹² Shelford Bidwell and Dominick Graham, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-4; and Harold Winton, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.
- ¹³ See David Ian Hall, "The Birth of the Tactical Air Force: British Theory and Practice of Air Support in the West, 1939-1943," D. Phil Thesis (University of Oxford, 1996).
- ¹⁴ PRO AIR 10/5547 Air Publication 3235, *The Second World War 1939-1945. The Royal Air Force, Air Support* (London, 1955) pp. 9-11. See also AIR 40/342 and 343 Air Staff Notes on Air Operations in China; and AIR 40/219 and 222 Air Staff Notes on Air Aspects of the Spanish Civil War.
- ¹⁵ PRO CAB 106/246 Despatch from the C-in-C, BEF, General the Viscount Gort, 25 July 1940; and WO 106/1754 Co-operation of the Air Forces with the BEF during the period 10-31 May 1940, Memorandum prepared by MO7, 18 June 1940.
- ¹⁶ PRO AIR 35/354 Battle of France: BAFF, Despatch by AOC-in-C Air Marshal Sir Arthur Barratt, July 1940.
- ¹⁷ Group Captain A.H. Wann commanded the Advanced Air Striking Force, RAF (AASF) light bomber squadrons in France in 1940 and Colonel J.D. Woodall was Air Marshal Barratt's Military Staff Officer at Headquarters British Air Forces in France (BAFF). A copy of the Wann Woodall Report is reprinted in full in the War Office narrative "Army Air Support," PRO WO 277/34 Appendix C (1945). See also PRO AIR 39/140 Close Support by Bomber and Fighter Aircraft (1940-41); and Ian Gooderson, *Air Power at the Battlefield: Allied Close Air Support in Europe 1943-45* (London, 1998) pp. 24-25.
- ¹⁸ C.E. Carrington, "Army/Air Co-operation, 1939-1943," *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute*, Vol. 115 (December 1970) pp. 38-43.
- ¹⁹ No. 414 Sqn RCAF joined No. 400 Sqn RCAF in Army Co-operation Command in August 1941. Both squadrons were equipped with Curtiss Tomahawks and later with North American Mustang Is. Brought together into No. 39 Army Co-operation Wing, RCAF, they were joined by No. 430 Sqn in January 1943. Following brief stints with Fighter Command, and later a fighter-reconnaissance role, the three squadrons again served together as No. 39 Wing in No. 83 Group, 2nd Tactical Air Force. See B. Greenhous, S. Harris, et al., *op. cit.*, p. 164.
- ²⁰ Lord Tedder, *With Prejudice* (London, 1966) pp. 124, 127-8, 138-143; and Sir Maurice Dean, *op. cit.*, p. 212.
- ²¹ Sir Maurice Dean, *op. cit.*, p. 215.
- ²² PRO CAB 80/35 COS(42)164, 10 March 1942; and J.R.M. Butler, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. III, pt. II, pp. 529-544.
- ²³ PRO AIR 8/989 Air Forces for co-operation with the Army and the Navy, DO(42)34, 1 April 1942.
- ²⁴ B. Greenhous, S. Harris, et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 226-227.
- ²⁵ PRO AIR 20/2812 Army Co-operation: The "Thorold" Paper, 25 May 1942; and C.E. Carrington, *Soldier at Bomber Command* (London, 1987) pp. 83-4.
- ²⁶ PRO AIR 8/1063 Command and Planning, JP(42)517, 21 May 1942.
- ²⁷ PRO CAB 80/37 COS(42)351 Continental Operations 1943: Operational Organisation and System of Command of the RAF, 21 July 1942. The 'Slessor' Report is reprinted in full in WO 277/34 Army Air Support, Appendix K.
- ²⁸ PRO AIR 10/5547 Air Support, pp. 41-3.
- ²⁹ B. Greenhous, S. Harris, et al., *op. cit.*, p. 165.
- ³⁰ Ian Gooderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-8.

PONDERING CANADA'S ARMY LEADERSHIP IN WAR AND PEACE

Geoff Hayes

In wartime, armies and soldiers have a well-defined role, and there is little need to ponder the nature of good soldiering or effective military leadership. The answers usually become evident when battle is joined.¹

If this is so, then why did Lieutenant-General H.D.G. Crerar issue a memorandum in June of 1943 to all of his commanding officers that began: "Much confused thinking is prevalent at the present time in respect to who is, and what constitutes, an 'Officer.'"² Crerar's memorandum speaks to the enormous task of finding Canadian army officers of the junior ranks – the lieutenants, the captains and the majors. Charles Stacey wrote in 1955 that "Much could be written on the problem of finding the very large number of new officers required by the Canadian Army during the war, and few topics are more important." Stacey's brief treatment of the issue in the first volume of the army's official history revealed a truly dramatic evolution of the commissioned ranks. The 42,613 commissions granted for the active wartime army to June 1946 represented an almost sixfold increase from the start of the war.³

This paper argues that Canada's wartime army officer corps evolved amidst a great deal of pondering about the nature of good soldiering or effective military leadership. Faced with rapidly changing and unexpected demands, army planners kept returning to debate who would become a better officer: a soldier with proven military experience, or a formal education. Despite considerable advances in the search for leadership, the army consistently turned to educated men for the King's Commission.

A wide literature has studied this search for some kind of balance of skills and qualifications in an army officer.⁴ Morris Janowitz summarized this conception by referring to the history of the "modern military establishment ... as a struggle between heroic leaders, who embody traditionalism and glory, and military 'managers,' who are concerned with the scientific and rational conduct of war."⁵ It is tempting to apply such labels in this case; it is enough to observe here that military leadership, Canadian and otherwise, is a product of social, political as well as a military forces. In 1914, Sam Hughes chose his officers for the First Contingent with criteria so arbitrary, that upon the first contingent's arrival in Devonport, J.F.C. Fuller was to have remarked that the contingent was satisfactory only "if the officers could be all shot."⁶ As Stephen Harris relates, soon the idea emerged within the Canadian Expeditionary Force [CEF] that military experience, not Sam Hughes, should be the measure of an officer.⁷

In the two decades between the wars, Canada's tiny army began to consider the need for formally educated officers, those considered most useful in a future war in which technology would play a large part.⁸ Both Stephen Harris and John A. English have argued that General A.G.L. McNaughton's favour of technically trained officers during his time as Chief of General Staff (CGS) limited the role of the professional soldier in much the same way that Sam Hughes did during the First World War.⁹ No doubt

McNaughton was guilty of all kinds of sins, but he would have been unique among Chiefs of Staff in the western world if he had overcome the tiny budgets and apathy that so limited Canada's tiny Permanent Force before 1935.

McNaughton had little choice but to depend on the militia officer or the "scientifically educated officer" in any future war. Partly for this reason, the Canadian Officers Training Corps (COTC) became an important source of officers. The first COTC contingents in Canada opened at McGill and Laval Universities on the eve of the First World War. They allowed candidates to continue their schooling and graduate with the rank of captain. While some Commanding Officers (CO's) overlooked the qualified COTC graduate who lacked means or social position, by the late 1930's CO's granted a "satisfactory proportion" of new appointments to COTC graduates.¹⁰

When war came in September 1939, the rabid enthusiasms of Sam Hughes were nowhere in sight. As the foundations of the Canadian Active Service Force (later Canadian Army (Active)) took shape, an orderly scene was played out in armouries from Halifax to Vancouver. Commanding Officers of newly mobilized units submitted a slate of potential officers for approval to their District Headquarters, then to National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa. Candidates could be drawn from the Active or Reserve Lists, graduates of the Royal Military College, as well as members or qualified graduates of the Canadian Officers Training Corps. From the start the army wanted educated officers: a candidate was required to have senior matriculation (high school) or equivalent.¹¹

The government further distanced itself from the legacy of Sam Hughes and his often "uneven" appointment criteria. On 18 October 1939, Routine Order No. 70 made it clear that "the granting of commissions and promotions are to be determined by the proper Service authorities on the basis of merit alone ... There must be no political or personal bias of any kind."¹² Another routine order issued in March 1940 outlined the importance of finding officers from the enlisted ranks. But Defence Minister Norman Rogers cautioned that commissions from the ranks would come only when forces were in the field. As late as 24 May 1940, Rogers deflected criticism about limited officer training opportunities by arguing that "Naturally we do not want to expand the officers training corps to the point of creating expectations of appointments which cannot be realized."¹³

The events of May and June 1940 quickly destroyed any hopes the government may have had for a small ground force. The strategic uncertainty that kept the army out of permanent operations until 1943 made battle experience a scarce commodity, and further complicated the problem of just where the army would get its officers. It also placed at risk Rogers' earlier promise that enlisted men could have a chance at a commission. In November 1940, Rogers' successor as Defence minister, J.L. Ralston, announced that henceforth, "every candidate for a commission in the Canadian Army must first pass through the ranks." This requirement he explained would standardize officer selection and discourage elected officials from using their influence to get men a commission, a practice to which one at least Member of Parliament bravely admitted.¹⁴

These developments brought no immediate changes to the kind of young men who first entered Officers Training Centres (OTCs) in Brockville, Ontario and Gordon Head, British Columbia in early 1941. Candidates with four months enlisted experience took 12 weeks of training after which they received the King's Commission at the rank of second lieutenant. The regulations then favoured the reserve forces and the COTC recruit, who was then considered part of the reserves. Eight weeks of officer training at the OTC

could be done in three installments, allowing a university student a chance at becoming a fully qualified lieutenant in the active force when he graduated.¹⁵ The official view was that time spent in a COTC contingent provided the same experience as enlisted service in an active unit.

The Canadian army overseas anticipated developments in Canada when 38 cadets chosen from the ranks overseas began a 12 week course in August 1940 at a Canadian Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU) in Bordon, England. Efforts to coordinate Canadian officer production between Canada and England met with mixed results when General Crerar recommended in December 1941 that officer instruction in England be closed and centred in Canada. Crerar reasoned that the chance of a return home would provide a useful incentive to overseas troops and expose those in Canada to men with overseas experience. The Chief of Staff at Canadian Military Headquarters in London (CMHQ) Major-General the Honourable P.J. Montague, opposed the move. He maintained that Canadian facilities benefitted from British innovations, and that valuable time and shipping space would be lost if officer candidates returned to Canada. Ottawa's view prevailed, but only for a short time.¹⁶

In July 1942, a series of overseas manpower studies reached Ottawa under Montague's signature. They concluded that the army overseas faced far graver shortages than previously thought and that the requirements to address such shortages would "be very substantial indeed." Senior army officials rushed to England to hear that the army's manpower estimates required "drastic revision." The figures projected a shortage in the overseas army of some 39,000 other ranks and some 4,300 officers by 1 May 1943.¹⁷

These disclosures forced a serious debate about the nature of the army's officer corps. Upon arriving in England, the new Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant-General Kenneth Stuart, pointed out that two possible policies could address the potential officer shortage: "a Short Term policy would be to use personnel with longer Army service but possibly with a lower educational standard; and Long Term policy, to use men with lesser Army service but with a better education." Stuart felt strongly that the long-term policy "would make the better officers." But only through the short-term policy could the "requirements of the target date" be met. In the event, Lieutenant-General A.G.L. McNaughton, then commander of First Canadian Army, forged a compromise. Overseas officer training would resume, and the army would begin to look for "suitable [officer] material wherever it may be found."¹⁸

The sudden officer shortage prompted quick action, and an end to some of the long-held traditions of officer selection. Gone was the "magic eye" – the long-held belief that the seasoned judgment of a Commanding Officer could best choose men fit to lead.¹⁹ In its place came innovations and techniques drawn from business and applied psychology.²⁰ In November 1942, the new Deputy Adjutant General (Officers), Brigadier Howard Kennedy, MC, quickly set to work on a centralized officer selection system derived from the British War Office Selection Boards (WOSBs) that had started earlier in the year. An Officer Selection and Appraisal Centre (OSAC) opened in March 1943 at Three Rivers, Quebec; another took in its first candidates in May at Chilliwack, British Columbia. A similar facility started for the Canadians overseas in Ash, Surrey in July. For up to 26 days, candidates in Canada endured a series of practical tests and interviews while teams of army examiners, psychiatrists and educational officers "measured" their aptitudes and intelligence. A final appearance before the selection board sealed an

individual's fate: rejection and a return to unit; acceptance into an OTC outright; or acceptance subject to further training.²¹

Had the conception of the Canadian officer changed with the office shortage? Brigadier Kennedy said as much to the Defence Minister in April 1943:

The new [officer selection] system stresses the quality of leadership above all others and in the matter of educational qualifications recognizes the necessity of considering the candidate's present knowledge rather than making selections based on the amount of formal education which the candidate may have undergone several years before.²²

New standards reinforced this emphasis. Officers from the COTC and the reserves lost their favoured status by the summer of 1943 and appeared before the selection and appraisal boards like everybody else. Candidates required more enlisted experience (from 4 to 5 months) with lower intelligence and educational levels, the latter from senior matriculation to a Grade 10 equivalent. Soldiers still applied for officer training through their commanding officers, though they no longer required their COs' approval.²³

The army had grown beyond the regimental officers' mess where young lieutenants had once learned the "niceties of dress and discipline, and the influence of the old hand ..." Instead there came the "application to training of the mass production method of industry ..." which, in the view of E.L.M. Burns, was not the "ideal" solution.²⁴ Burns was right, but there were few other options. To convert young men into effective leaders required short cuts. The monthly publication received by all officers, *The Canadian Army Training Memorandum*, offered a few hints to those newly commissioned in 1943. Appearances were important. The note warned against cheap clothing and boots. It also advised that new uniforms be worn properly. It further stressed that "THE FIRST DUTY OF A SOLDIER IS TO OBEY ORDERS." In the absence of orders or instructions, one was to do what one's commanding officers would do. Choosing an officer to imitate was further counselled. This advance was repeated for emphasis: "Don't talk too much. Keep your eyes and ears open and your mouth shut."²⁵

It may not be surprising that the new regulations were met with a flurry of inquiries. The matter became urgent enough to prompt General Crerar, then preparing his troops for the Mediterranean, to define who could best become an officer. After outlining that officers required "... certain characteristics and attributes ..." Crerar admitted that his main measure of commissioned rank remained education. The argument required some explanation:

In the past, Commissioned officers came from moneyed families and generally from what were termed the 'upper classes'. Now, apart from any 'snob' background for this arrangement, there was a very practical reason for it, as only those with money, in the past could secure good education – and higher education is *essential* to Officers who aspire to Commissioned rank. Their wider responsibilities as higher Commander can *not* be carried out without this mental equipment.

This state of affairs no longer holds good. The widespread institution of State schools and University scholarships has permitted the able and ambitious sons of poor families to obtain all the benefits of higher education. There is now no reason or excuse for the inclusion of 'family', or 'money', as factors in respect to appointment to Commissioned rank. Given the required characteristics of a

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leader, *and* good education, progression from Corporal to Colonel, or higher, is a matter which largely lies in the hands of the individual concerned. [His emphasis]²⁶

To maintain that education was no longer the preserve of any one class may have held some weight, for university enrollments increased significantly before the war.²⁷ But limited enrollment still meant limited opportunity. For the ambitious, experienced, but less educated private or NCO, the General's message was clear: without higher schooling, one still had little chance of earning the King's Commission.

The debate about qualities required by the commissioned ranks seemingly became moot in August 1943 when the army discovered it had an officer surplus. After only five months of operation in Canada, and just two weeks working in England, the "short term" selection process ended just as the army was committed to active operations. Army staff were optimistic through the fall of 1943, concluding that the "Lowest Estimated Ultimate Officer Surplus" in one year's time would be 4,000 officers, and maybe more.²⁸ So confident was Major-General H.F.G. Letson, the Adjutant General, that he arranged a loan of surplus infantry officers to the British army. The CANLOAN scheme, as it came to be called, was a remarkably generous gesture that reflected the confidence of army planners.²⁹

Yet efforts to seek a balance of skills within the Canadian army officer corps did not end in the summer of 1943. In September of that year, General Letson announced that in future, those with overseas experience would be favoured for commissioned rank. The idea was sound, but complicated because both Infantry and Army Service Corps training was still based in Canada. Officials in London realized that potential candidates for these arms simply would not tolerate delays of up to a year before they could return overseas. In December, the newly appointed Chief of Staff, CMHQ, and Acting Army Commander, General Stuart cabled Ottawa and noted that to provide proper incentives to battle experienced soldiers, officer candidates should no longer be returned to Canada, but absorbed into British facilities.³⁰

Major-General J.C. Murchie, Stuart's successor as CGS in Ottawa, ultimately agreed with Stuart, but not without wondering

if there is sound reason for believing that the type of soldier who has been a Sergeant for a year in the field in England is likely to become a better officer than a person who after careful consideration of Educational qualifications and background and after extensive military training has spent a year or perhaps longer on intensive instructional duty or in an operational role in Canada.³¹

This was the same argument for a "long term" policy that Stuart himself had advocated in 1942. The war had changed, and Stuart recognized the logic of favouring overseas soldiers for training centred in England.

There was a hitch, for a series of ad hoc selection boards in the Mediterranean theatre received only 73 applications for commissions to the end of 1943.³² For NCO's already leading troops in battle, the prospect of returning to the "classroom" for officer training must have seemed absurd. An alternative was field commissions. In February 1944, Defence Minister Ralston was asked in the House if the army was considering granting commissions in the field, a practice that had been used in the First War. The questioner noted that "... a lot of hard feeling was caused in the last war by

sending green officers over to take charge of men who had had two, three or four years service.” The Minister saw the dilemma, but was cautious in his reply:

There is some discussion as to what is best to do; ... whether an officer who has had officer training should be used when there is a surplus of officers, or whether the appointments should be made directly on the field without further training. ... Obviously there are many advantages in having a man who is battle-trained. He has been a non-commissioned officer, he knows conditions; at the same time there are certain qualifications which are required by commissioned officers which can, I think, best be obtained by long-term training. ... There is something to be said for using officers when you have them rather than making ad hoc appointments in the field. The matter is under consideration.³³

It was a timely question. The army still had a surplus of officers, but infantry officers were beginning to face much higher casualty rates than expected. Brigadier A.W. Beament – who had first warned of the manpower shortfall in 1942 – first reported this ominous trend in Italy where he had been transferred late in 1943. His strong opinions made him no ally of General Stuart, but his posting to Italy did not curb his forcefulness. He urged that infantry officer production be increased, and that non-infantry be retrained. Beament cited little supporting evidence, however, and CMHQ was not convinced.³⁴

Still the prospect of infantry officer shortages caused concern through the spring of 1944. Distant Canada remained the main source of infantry reinforcements, and though the army no longer sent overseas men home for an infantry commission, the vast majority of those training as officers in England were becoming tankers and gunners, not infantrymen.³⁵ Such concerns cut the CANLOAN scheme short. On 7 April 1944, as the first 52 “Canloaners” landed at Liverpool, Ottawa notified London that the original ceiling of 1,500 officers would be reduced. Only 673 Canadians served with the British under the scheme.³⁶

As II Canadian Corps began fighting in Northwest Europe through the summer of 1944, infantry officers faced over twice the rate of casualties than were forecast.³⁷ The measures to find replacements for them were borne of desperation, as well as a certain consistency. The choice between education and military experience – between the educated officer in Canada and the sergeant with field experience in England or Europe – had already been decided in favour of the former. Some 112 artillery officers in Canada converted to infantry in November 1944 to free themselves from what the army called the “comparatively inactive and somewhat deadly routine [in Canada] to the invigorating atmosphere of an active unit, actively employed.”³⁸ Altogether some 848 infantry officers were remustered and dispatched overseas by February 1945.³⁹ Many accepted a reduction in rank to do so. Surplus RCAF officers were also invited to become infantry officers, but only 72 of them took up the offer by March 1945.⁴⁰ Although a Parliamentary report in January 1945 did not rule out commissions in the field,⁴¹ none were ever granted in First Canadian Army. When Lieutenant-General E.W. Sansom issued his report on the army’s manpower situation in March 1945, he noted that First Canadian Army still faced a shortfall of English-speaking infantry officers.⁴²

The structure of the Canadian army worked against those who led the fighting. An individual’s chances for commissioned rank declined the closer he got to battle. Though the main fighting formations below division consistently gained a greater proportion of officers through the war, placing leadership where it was most needed, a stronger

opposing trend persisted throughout the army. As late as January 1945, one found a greater proportion of officers the further one moved away from the battlefield.⁴³ By late 1944, almost as many active army officers were in Canada as overseas.

The concentration of officers in the relative safety of Canada posed an image problem. First War veteran W.H. Marsden complained bitterly to the Defence Minister that the number of officers in Canada resembled too closely Sam Hughes's officer corps: "[These officers in Canada] were not fit for their ranks when sent overseas and were soon found out. I have no complaint against any one singly. My complaint is against the whole lot of the parasites and hangers-on."⁴⁴ While a series of Survey, Classification and Disposal Boards tried to address Marsden's complaints in Canada,⁴⁵ army statisticians probed the Canadian performance overseas. One such summary comparing the battle casualties suffered by officers and enlisted men found its way to General Crerar, then General Officer Commanding, First Canadian Army. He learned that Canadian officers of the rank of major and below suffered casualties between 6 June and 10 December 1944 equal to about 69 percent of their war establishment; the comparable rate for the enlisted ranks was 51 percent. General Crerar's personal assistant suggested that these findings be sent to the army's newspaper, *The Maple Leaf*, "to correct the impression that the private soldier, N.C.O. takes the 'rap'."⁴⁶

So what lessons were learned from the Canadian army's wartime officer corps? Defence Minister Douglas Abbott's lengthy tribute to the nation's soldiers in the House of Commons in October 1945 mentioned the army's commissioned ranks only briefly. He noted that of the army's more than 45,000 officers, "over half ... received their promotion from the ranks of the active army." Colonel Stacey also stressed the importance of the "through the ranks" policy in the army's official history.⁴⁷ The phrase told much about how Canadians wished to see their army's leaders, for it implied that men had earned their commissions, not by favour or social status, but by merit.

Officers were important symbols, so it was far more difficult to observe that the army's senior staff consistently looked to formal education as the main measure of commissioned rank. A British officer once observed that the scientific search for "leadership" was unheard of in an earlier generation when officers were gentlemen, thus natural leaders of men.⁴⁸ Canadians seem to have retained their traditional wariness of "gentlemen" officers, especially when they felt that "educated" officers were simply "gentlemen" by another name. One Member of Parliament caustically observed in 1944 that graduates of the barber colleges needed not apply for the King's Commission.⁴⁹ General E.L.M. Burns was even more critical of wartime officer selection after the war. Speaking in 1946 before a committee examining a peace-time officer corps, Burns stated that "The continuation of the university or the O.T.C. system through World War II in Canada was a grave departure from the democratic system of service and of officer selection which we should have followed. If every youth who attended university got there on his merits, in equal competition, there might be a defence for the university O.T.C. system, but it is, of course, well known that, in most cases, a young man goes to college because his parents are well enough off to send him there."⁵⁰ Far easier was it to see the wartime army's officers coming "through the ranks" than through the college door.

Nearly sixty years on, we continue to ponder the nature of Canadian military leadership. We hear of "officer bloat," a lack of professionalism and a tendency towards careerism. We also hear that only half of the officers of the present Canadian army have

earned a university degree.⁵¹ Some still question the need for an “educated” officer corps, whose main job, after all, is to train and lead troops in battle.⁵² Canada’s wartime army was far from perfect: it too suffered from “officer bloat” and all but a few of its leaders were civilians before the war. But if we assume, naively perhaps, that First Canadian Army was ultimately a remarkable fighting organization, then possibly we might wish to ponder more carefully how its officer corps was created.

NOTES

- ¹ David Bercuson, *Significant Incident: Canada's Army, the Airborne, and the Murder in Somalia* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1996), p. 92.
- ² National Archives of Canada, Record Group 24 (hereafter NAC, RG 24) Vol. 10,771 file D283, General Crerar to All Commanders and Commanding Officers, 1 Canadian Corps, 18 June 1943.
- ³ C.P. Stacey, *Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War, Vol. 1: Six Years of War, the Army in Canada, Britain and The Pacific* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1957), pp. 127, 131.
- ⁴ F. Warhurst, “Training Army Officers: An Analysis of Some Results Obtained in War,” *Army Quarterly* 52:2 (July 1946): 253; Sir John Hackett, *The Profession of Arms* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1983) p. 196; Norman F. Dixon, *On The Psychology of Military Incompetence* (London: Futura Publications, 1979) pp. 216 ff.
- ⁵ Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1960), p. 21.
- ⁶ Ronald G. Haycock, *Sir Hughes: The Public Career of a Controversial Canadian* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986), pp. 184-185; Fuller’s quip is cited in Stephen Harris, *Canadian Brass: The Making of a Professional Army, 1860-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 98.
- ⁷ Harris, *Canadian Brass*, Chapters 6 and 7.
- ⁸ The writings in Canadian Defence Quarterly reflected this trend. See for example, Lieutenant-Colonel H.F.G. Letson, “The Influence of Mechanization and Motorization on the Organization and Training of the Non Permanent Active Militia,” *Canadian Defence Quarterly* 11 (October 1936): 23, 30, 32-34; Major E.L.M. Burns continued the argument in an article entitled, “A Step Towards Modernization,” *CDQ* 12 (April 1935): 305.
- ⁹ Harris, *Canadian Brass*, pp. 206, 208; John A. English, *The Canadian Army and the Normandy Campaign: A Study of Failure in High Command* (New York: Praeger, 1991), p. 46.
- ¹⁰ Hartley Munro Thomas, *The History of the Canadian Officer’s Training Corps at the University of Western Ontario* (London: University of Western Ontario, 1956), p. 79; Canada, “Report of the Department of National Defence for the Year Ending 31 March 1931,”: 30; “DND Report, 1937-1938”: 74.
- ¹¹ Stacey, *Six Years of War*, pp. 127, 130.
- ¹² DGHist, DND file 113.1 (D1), H.Q.C. 301-3-3 (Vol. 2) Adjutant General’s Letter No. 42 “Appointments, Promotions, ... Militia Service.” (9 October 1939).
- ¹³ Stacey, *Six Years of War*, p. 130; Canada, House of Commons *Debates* (24 May 1940) pp. 211-212. *Globe and Mail*, Friday 5 May 1940: 1.

- ¹⁴ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (15 November 1940, Mr. Ralston) p. 145; (26 November 1940, Mr. Lockhart) p. 409; (3 December 1940, Mr. Hanson) p. 611.
- ¹⁵ Out of approximately 18,852 officers in the Canadian army by the end of March 1941, there were over 8,000 reserve officers. See, Unpublished Sessional Papers, NAC, RG 14, D2, Vol. 421, Order of the House of Commons, No. 169 (31 March 1941). Methods of commissioning are described fully in House of Commons, *Debates* (11 March 1941) pp. 1437-1439; *Canadian Army Training Memorandum* (1 April 1941) pp. 11-13.
- ¹⁶ Historical Section, Canadian Military Headquarters, Report No. 156, "Selection and Training of Officers for the Canadian Army Overseas, 1940-1945," pp. 7-8; NAC RG 24, Vol. 2283 file HQS-20-3-A Vol. 1 Telegram GS 115 Canmilitary to Defensor (CMHQ to NDHQ) 10 January 1942.
- ¹⁷ NAC, RG 24, Vol. 12,239, file 1/Manpower/2(DAG), Montague to Secretary, NDHQ, 11 July 1942; NAC Manuscript Group (MG) 30, E 133 A.G.L. McNaughton Papers, Vol. 184, file PA-5-3-8 Vol. 1 "Minutes of Conference with Chief of General Staff Department of National Defence at CMHQ on 3 August 1942."
- ¹⁸ "Conference, CGS, NDHQ 3 August 1942."
- ¹⁹ Major H.S.M. Carver, "Personnel Selection in the Canadian Army: A Descriptive Study." (Ottawa: 1945) p. 167; R. Ahrenfeldt, *Psychiatry in the British Army* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958) p. 52; DGHist, Army Headquarters, Historical Section Report #37, "The Policy Governing the Finding and Selection of Officers for the C.A.S.F. (later C.A. (A))." p. 6.
- ²⁰ A more detailed discussion of officer selection practices after 1942 is found in my "Science and the 'Magic Eye': Innovations in the Selection of Canadian Army Officers, 1939-1945" *Armed Forces and Society: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 22:2 (Winter 1995/1996): 275-295.
- ²¹ Carver, "Personnel Selection," p. 177; Army Headquarters Historical Report #37, Appendix A.
- ²² NAC, RG 24, Vol. 13,274 *War Diary* Deputy Adjutant General (Officers) April 1943, Memo Initialled "HK" (H. Kennedy, DAG(O)) to CGS, 4 April 1943; Also cited in Memo (AG to Minister) 8 April 1943, in AHQ Historical Report #37, Appendix "B," p. 2.
- ²³ NAC, RG 24, Vol. 13,274. *WD* DAG(O), DAG(O) to AG (Kennedy to Letson), re: Development of Officer Potential, 21 November 1942; "Progress Reports on Set up of Officer Candidates Selection and Appraisal Boards," 12 February 1943, 2 March 1943; AHQ Historical Report #37, p. 12.
- ²⁴ Lt.-Col. H. Wyatt Johnston, "From Civilians to Colonels," *Canadian Defence Quarterly* 12 (April 1935): 264; E.L.M. Burns, *Manpower in the Canadian Army 1939-1945* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1956) p. 79.
- ²⁵ *Canadian Army Training Memorandum* (CATM) 24 (March 1943): 10.
- ²⁶ NAC, RG 24, Vol. 10,771, file D283, General Crerar to All Commanders and Commanding Officers, 18 June 1943.
- ²⁷ Between 1920 and 1940, university enrollments in Canada increased by over 58%, from 23,418 to 37,225. See Robin S. Harris, *A History of Higher Education in Canada, 1663-1960* (Toronto: 1976) p. 351.
- ²⁸ NAC, RG 24, Vol. 13,295 *WD* Directorate of Organization (Requirements), Colonel H.M. Wallis, "Review of Officer Surplus Position," 27 October 1943.
- ²⁹ DGHist, file 113.3P6 (D1) "Opportunity for Early Overseas Service with the British Army." (n.d.); See also, Canadian Military Headquarters Historical Report #145, "The 'Canloan' Scheme, 1943 to July 1945," 27 September 1945. See also Wilfred I. Smith's *Code Word CANLOAN* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1992).
- ³⁰ NAC, RG 24, Vol. 13,274. *WD* DAG(O), DAG(O) to AG, (Roome to Letson), Re: Cable No. G.S. 3274. 6 January 1944; CMHQ Historical Report #156, p. 19.

- ³¹ *Ibid*, p. 19.
- ³² NAC, RG 24, Vol. 10,115, files 22/OCTU/2,3; see also CMHQ Historical Report #156, p. 22.
- ³³ House of Commons, Debates (14 February 1944, Mr. Quelch; Mr. Ralston), p. 465.
- ³⁴ Beament had gotten on the wrong side of Stuart, for in March 1943, Stuart wrote to Minister Ralston that Warwick Beament was “Overbearing, sarcastic, no consideration for feelings of others. Heartily disliked by many of those with whom he comes in contact in many quarters of the Canadian Army Overseas, resulting in a far worse reputation than his undoubted abilities deserve. ...” Only Stuart’s assessments of the Corps commanders were more extensive. NAC, MG 27 III BIII, J.L. Ralston Papers, Vol. 54. Stuart to Ralston; Beament to Senior Officer, CMHQ, 1 December 1943 cited in C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1970) p. 425.
- ³⁵ Of the 649 Canadians who graduated from British OCTU courses during the first eight months of 1944, 80% of them were tankers and gunners; only 27 cadets trained in the infantry. NAC, RG 24, Vol. 18,712, file 133.065 (D323), 2/Res OCTU/1/4, A.G.6 Monthly Returns, “OCTU Graduates.”
- ³⁶ Colonel Stacey cites the telegram that limited the CANLOAN scheme as Defensor to Canmilitary, 7 April 1944. See C.P. Stacey, *Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War, Volume III, The Victory Campaign* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1960), pp. 634, 731.
- ³⁷ Forecasts anticipated that infantry officers would sustain only about 623 casualties or 30 percent of all officer casualties for the period 1 July to 30 September 1943. In fact, the infantry officer suffered about 1037 casualties in the two theatres, or 61 percent of all officer casualties. See NAC, RG 24, Vol. 12,239 file 1/Manpower/2/3 re: Reinforcements, Canadian Army Overseas, 15 October 1944.
- ³⁸ *Canadian Army Training Memorandum* 45 (December 1944) p. 26.
- ³⁹ NAC, RG 24, Vol. 13,274. “Minutes of Meeting Re: Reinforcements and Training Officer (CIC) Situation,” 7 February 1945.
- ⁴⁰ NAC, RG 24, Vol. 13,301 *WD*, Directorate of Personal Services, November, December 1944, February, March 1945; Vol. 13,274, “Minutes of Meeting re: Reinforcements and Training Officer (CIC) Situation,” 7 February 1945.
- ⁴¹ In January 1945, the Directorate of Personal Services noted that “If, in future operations, the rate of casualties should be greater than the supply of suitable reinforcement officers, then it may become necessary to commission officers directly in the Field.” NAC, RG 24, Vol. 13,301, *WD*, Directorate of Personal Services, “Annual Army Estimates 1945-46, House of Commons Debates Report on Officers,” January 1945, p. 20; CMHQ Historical Report #156, pp. 22, 23.
- ⁴² On the Sansom report, see AHQ Historical Report #63, pp. 278, 279.
- ⁴³ Officers represented some 6.88% of the total strength of First Canadian Army at January 1945, then divided between the Mediterranean and Northwest Europe. Officers represented 12.21% of the strength of the Canadian army in the U.K., and 8.59% of the strength of the army’s strength in Canada and the adjacent territories. NAC, RG 24, Vol. 10,258. “Authorized Composition, Canadian Army Overseas as at 31 January 1945;” Army Headquarters Historical Report #63, “Manpower Problems in the Canadian Army,” Table 10.
- ⁴⁴ NAC, RG 24, Vol. 13,274. W.H. Marsden to Col. J.L.Ralston, 9 March 1944.
- ⁴⁵ Between 18 October 1943 and 15 September 1945, the OSCBs in Canada and those in place in England in 1944 interviewed a total of 14,466 officers, fully a third of the entire wartime officer corps. NAC, RG 24, Vol. 13,301. “Report on Officers,” 21 September 1945, Appendix C.

- ⁴⁶ NAC, MG 30 E 157, H.D.G. Crerar Papers, Vol. 5, file 958C.009 (D121) "Battle Casualties – By Formation, from 6 June 1944 to 10 December 1944;" Lt. Col. J.W. Weir (PA) to GOC in C, January 1945.
- ⁴⁷ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (Mr. Abbott) 16 October 1945, p. 1129; Stacey, *Six Years of War*, pp. 131-132.
- ⁴⁸ J.F.C. Fuller's comment is cited in Norman F. Dixon's chapter on military leadership in *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence*.
- ⁴⁹ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (14 February 1944, Mr. Cruickshank), p. 466;
- ⁵⁰ NAC, RG 24, Vol. 2466, Major-General E.L.M. Burns, Memorandum to Committee on Provision of Officers for the Canadian Army, "Recruiting and Training of Officers for Canadian Army Permanent Cadre."
- ⁵¹ Desmond Morton, "What to Tell the Minister," <http://www.dnd.ca/ENG/min/reports/Morton/MORTON2e.htm#leader>.
- ⁵² See for example, Martin Van Creveld, *The Training of Officers: From Military Professionalism to Irrelevance* (New York: The Free Press, 1990).

ORTONA: MAJOR VICTORY OR BLOODY MISTAKE?

Mark Zuehlke

On 25 November 1943 near Campobasso Royal Canadian Regiment Captain Strome Galloway read to his assembled company Eighth Army Commander General Bernard Law Montgomery's Order of the Day. In general terms the order, simultaneously read by every Eighth Army company commander, described a forthcoming offensive intended to shatter the facing German defences and bring about the fall of Rome. "WE WILL NOW HIT THE GERMANS A COLOSSAL CRACK," Montgomery wrote.¹ As Galloway finished, a faint voice from the ranks was heard to say, "Holy Christ."² The soldier's shocked reaction to Montgomery's bold plan was appropriate. For Montgomery's scheme was fatally flawed, doomed to inevitable failure by Italian weather and terrain and the defensive tactics of Germany's Tenth Army. Unfortunately for 1st Canadian Infantry Division and 1st Canadian Armoured Brigade, their bitter battle against the 90th Panzer Grenadier and 1st Parachute divisions in and around the Adriatic port of Ortona would constitute the climactic last phase of the offensive's collapse.

From the beginning of the assault against the Moro River Line on 6 December to the fall of Ortona on 28 December, Canadian casualties totalled 2,339. A further 3,956 were evacuated for battle exhaustion and 1,617 for sickness. All units, 1CID commander Major-General Chris Vokes wrote on 2 January 1944, were no longer "fighting fit."³ The number of battle exhaustion cases during this month eloquently illustrates the dreadful nature of the task given the Canadians and also the failures of command that extended from Eighth Army HQ down to divisional level. While the soldiers in the line fought well and in the end triumphed, the same cannot be said for the majority of their commanders.

The decision to launch an Adriatic front offensive in late November and early December 1943 evolved out of Allied Mediterranean command's failure to adjust its strategic goals in response to a fundamental shift in the German defensive strategy. Field Marshal Harold Alexander, Deputy Supreme Commander, Mediterranean, had issued his first Italian campaign directive on 21 September. Alexander envisioned a four-phase advance starting with consolidation of a front line extending from Salerno to Bari. Next the Allies would seize Naples for its port and Foggia on the Adriatic side of the Italian boot for its airport. The third phase would involve capturing Rome and its airfields. From Rome it was hoped a spring advance to the Pisa-Florence-Arezzo area would be possible. Once that phase was complete the new position would serve as a launch pad for cracking the Gothic Line, where the Germans were constructing a heavily fortified barrier intended to prevent the Allies breaking out of Italy into Europe's purportedly soft underbelly. To carry out this four-phase stratagem Fifth Army would operate to the west of the Apennines and Eighth Army to the east. Every opportunity would be exploited to outflank the Germans on either front by amphibious landing forces striking immediately to their rear.⁴

Alexander's strategy hinged on the premise that the Germans sought only to fight delaying actions sufficient to buy time to allow thorough preparation of the Gothic Line

defences.⁵ At first Alexander's assessment of German intentions was correct. Fear of more amphibious landings in his rear was crippling Generalfeldmarschall Albert Kesselring's defence of southern Italy. Initially his divisions watched their rear, fearful of encirclement. Within the first weeks of fighting, however, it became evident that the German strategic position in southern Italy was much stronger than initially realized.

The rugged terrain and deplorable condition of most roads in the region offered ideal conditions for defence. Aggressive road-mining operations, artillery harassment of advancing columns by highly mobile observation parties, and use of small, well-entrenched battle groups to force full deployment of divisions to root out the defenders slowed the Allied advance to a crawl. Adding to Allied frustration was the German ability to melt away once the balance of power shifted to favour the attacker.⁶

Recognizing the success of these strategies and that Allied resources in the Mediterranean were insufficient to harry the German rear with amphibious landing forces, German High Command authorized Kesselring to aggressively block the Allied advance in order to maintain Axis control of Rome. Work on the Gothic Line slowed as *Todt* labour battalions were shifted south to construct a winter line centred upon Cassino. By 24 October, Alexander recognized there would be no easy road to Rome.⁷

Such recognition did not translate into acknowledgement that the defensive strengths enjoyed by the Germans during the early autumn would only increase as the rains of winter reduced the theatre of operations to a muddy bog where forward movement would be difficult, if not impossible. Instead, on 8 November Alexander convened a command conference to hammer out a new strategy to take Rome before Christmas. Alexander proposed that key Eighth Army divisions be shifted to support Fifth Army in smashing through the Cassino defences on the western side of the Apennines. Montgomery rejected the idea of stripping his army to bolster that commanded by US General Mark Clark. Telling Alexander, "Sit down; I'll show you how to do it,"⁸ Montgomery set out a two-fold plan that would see Eighth Army drive hard up the eastern coastline to Pescara and then hook west via Route 5 to Avezzano, approximately fifty miles east of Rome. Threatened from the east, Kesselring would be forced to shift divisions away from Cassino to block Eighth Army's advance. This would open the way for Fifth Army to break through at Cassino and fight its way into Rome. Montgomery added that if Clark's army failed to reach Rome, Eighth Army would get the job done.⁹ Either way Rome would fall before December was out. Montgomery's plan was endorsed and approved. Both Clark and Montgomery were confident of success. Clark told Alexander, "Oh, don't worry. I'll get through the Winter Line all right and push the Germans out."¹⁰

Outwardly Montgomery exuded similar confidence. "Given fine weather, nothing can stop us," he wrote.¹¹ The enemy facing him on the Sangro River was reportedly negligible, merely three companies backed by the weary 65th Infantry Division with only fifteen tanks. "I have in all 400 tanks. I have a very powerful air effort. All I want is fine weather," Montgomery confided in his diary. Then he expressed a fundamental concern: "I *must* have fine weather. If it rains continuously I am done."¹²

Rain was what he got, but as the days washed by Montgomery merely delayed Operation Encroach. He did not consider its cancellation. Instead he tinkered with his plan, abandoning surprise for a light force assault across the Sangro under heavy artillery cover. Although several 78th Division companies successfully crossed the river, they were unable to hold. Montgomery was stunned to learn that V Corps Commander Lieutenant-General Charles Allfrey had neglected to ensure support by Forward Observation

Officers. Montgomery told Allfrey his officers were amateurish and there was a lack of “grip” and “bite” in his corps.¹³ The fighting in the Sangro Valley continued despite ever-worsening weather that swelled the river from its normal width of 80 feet to 300. Finally, the Germans were forced back, withdrawing to hastily prepared defences on the north side of the Moro River. Eighth Army casualties in the Sangro battle were 113 officers, 1,650 other ranks. On 5 December, leading elements of 1 CID moved into the line facing the Moro River. It was now the Canadians’ turn to try and carry out Montgomery’s continued plan to reach Pescara. Still there was no suggestion by Montgomery that reaching Avezzano before the end of December was impossible. Heartened by the German losses, Montgomery instead wrote, “We now had to smash our way forward to PESCARA before the enemy could recover.”¹⁴

The Germans were already well recovered. In fact the 90th Panzer Grenadier Division, which had relieved the badly mauled 65th, was well dug in on the northern ridge overlooking the Moro River. Organized into two infantry regiments of three battalions each, supported by a Panzer tank battalion, an artillery regiment, an antitank battalion, and an engineer battalion, the 90th was a formidable opponent. Each infantry battalion was generously equipped with greater than normal firepower in terms of light and heavy machine guns, giving them tremendous front-line firepower.¹⁵

Several side roads and two relatively poor highways provided the 90th with good lines of communication and supply back to the Ortona-Orsogna lateral road running along the entire length of their rear. This fact enabled the Germans to shift forces, particularly Panzer elements, relatively quickly to wherever they were required, despite the worsening road conditions caused by rain.

The Canadians faced an altogether different situation. On 4 December the Sangro River pontoon bridge washed out, stranding 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade and some divisional support units on the southern bank. This left 1 CID with only two brigades for the initial assault. Until the bridge was replaced five days later, all supplies had to be transported across the river by amphibious trucks (DUKWs), resulting in a significant logistical bottleneck.

Intelligence regarding the German strength and deployment was minimal to non-existent. The Hastings and Prince Edward, Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, and Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry regiments tasked with carrying out the initial three-pronged assault across the Moro River arrived in their positions scant hours before the attacks were to go in. A rush job, Lieutenant-Colonel J. Douglas Forin wrote in an after-action report, “and rush jobs have spelt to us unfavourable settings and advantage with the Germans.”¹⁶

The attack also typified the nature of the fighting the Canadians would face during their costly advance from the Moro River to the outskirts of Ortona and beyond to the Arielli River. Mud and a lack of bridges or adequate fords meant the infantry could be little supported by armour. They either advanced under the cover of darkness hoping stealth would allow them to surprise the Germans, or behind a covering screen of massed artillery fire aimed at neutralizing the defenders. Vokes initially favoured the latter tactic, but at the last minute he opted for surprise-attack. Somehow PPCLI commander Lieutenant-Colonel Cameron Ware was uninformed of the change in plan. At 2,350 hours he still awaited the barrage knowing if it were late his men might be caught in its heart. Nine minutes later he ordered the attack forward on schedule despite the risk.¹⁷

The PPCLI, tasked with capturing Villa Rogatti on the division's eastern flank, was the only regiment to reach its objective on 6 December. It dug in, was reinforced by a British tank squadron, and successfully repulsed repeated counterattacks. Vokes' original plan called for the major offensive thrust to cut the Ortona-Orsogna lateral at Cider Crossroads behind San Leonardo in the centre of the line. He quickly realized, however, that a golden opportunity existed to advance against the lateral road from Villa Rogatti. Orders were given to shift the rest of 2 CIB east to carry out such an attack.¹⁸

At Villa Rogatti the opportunity existed to launch a combined armour-infantry assault through Villa Jubatti to sever the Ortona-Orsogna lateral. Effectively the Canadians could reverse the route of attack taken in a failed counterattack by 7 Company, 26th Panzer Regiment on 7 December. The Loyal Edmonton Regiment was given the task of passing through the PPCLI and driving toward Villa Jubatti. All that was needed was for the Royal Canadian Engineers to construct a crossing over the Moro capable of enabling sufficient armour to get up to support the attack. Once 2 CIB reached the lateral road 1 CID and 1CAB could wheel through Villa Grande and drive up a road running through San Nicola and San Tomasso to join the coastal highway slightly north of the Torre Mucchia promontory. German forces at Ortona would have no option but to conduct a hasty withdrawal or be encircled. This is what Ware envisioned and this is what he successfully advocated to Vokes.¹⁹ The great advantage to this plan that would not present itself later in the battle was that, other than for a distance of at most three kilometres between Villa Jubatti and Villa Grande, the entire advance could take place on relatively good roads. And the ground between Villa Jubatti and Villa Grande was mostly level, covered with the usual small olive and grape farms.

Unfortunately, RCE Lieutenant-Colonel Geoff Walsh soon reported to Vokes that it was impossible to put a Bailey bridge over the Moro in front of Villa Rogatti. No bridge, no offensive. Instead of being able to outflank the fortified positions at San Leonardo and advance "along the grain of the country," the Canadians had to shift back to attack the village head on. Such attacks always meant greater numbers of killed and wounded as the "advantages of topography lay with the defenders."²⁰

Walsh was wrong. The bridge was possible. On the night of 8-9 December sappers of the 8th Indian Division, which had taken over the Villa Rogatti sector to allow the Canadians to concentrate their forces between San Leonardo and the coastline, got a bridge across. They did so by carrying the materials across the river and then building the bridge back from the northern shore. Over the structure they erected a sign reading: "The Impossible Bridge."²¹ An opportunity that could have avoided much needless bloodshed during the rest of the month had been irrevocably and unnecessarily lost.

Now began a series of head-on attacks that slowly succeeded in driving the 90th Panzer Grenadiers back from San Leonardo and across 2.5 kilometres of mud-soaked ground where tanks were rendered useless. Battalion after battalion was chewed up in the process, as Vokes persisted in ordering attacks that were carried out by only a single battalion or by several battalions too spread out to provide each other with support. Although the ground was slowly wrested from the German grasp, casualties were high and what successes were achieved, seldom could be exploited.

As the 90th was forced back from the Moro River Line, Vokes' intelligence staff predicted a German withdrawal to the Arielli or Foro rivers would shortly follow. There was no expectation that the Germans would seriously attempt to block the Canadians from severing the Ortona-Orsogna lateral or from occupying Ortona itself.²² They were

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wrong. The analysts had missed the unique defensive opportunity presented by what they would all soon respectfully address as The Gully. Running parallel to, and south of, the Ortona-Orsogna lateral at a distance varying from 200 to 300 yards was a deep, narrow gully. Three miles in length, the ravine was about 200 yards wide where it opened to the Adriatic shoreline and narrowed to about 80 yards' width where it levelled out just before meeting a secondary road linking San Leonardo to the Ortona-Orsogna road. The Gully averaged a depth of about 200 feet, and along its U-shaped bottom the local farmers had developed rough, often intersecting, tracks backing their vineyards. Essentially, The Gully was a natural trench. Into its steep southern slope the 90th dug deep gun pits and shelters that were impervious to artillery or mortar fire.

From December 10 to 19 December, when the RCR finally secured Cider Crossroads, The Gully thwarted 1 CID's attempts to cut the Ortona-Orsogna lateral. One after another, Vokes' battalions were sent forward with inadequate support to be mauled by the German defenders. When limited success was achieved Vokes was unable to exploit it further due to his retaining no battalions in reserve. As a result, breakthroughs by the Seaforth Highlanders and the West Nova Scotias were limited to the status of raids with no significant advantage gained. Even the successful flanking of The Gully by Royal 22^d Regiment and the capture of Casa Berardi by Captain Paul Triquet's company could not be sufficiently reinforced to force the Germans to abandon their defensive trench.

Finally V Corps commander Allfrey came up to Vokes' HQ because he was "rather worried with the way they tee up these small operations." While there, Vokes ordered an unsupported attack by the Carleton and York battalion of 3 CIB. To Allfrey it "was soon quite obvious that if this attack went in it would go in like so many of the others – half baked – so having first-hand evidence I returned to Vokes and had a heart to heart talk with him and told him that he was tiring out his Division and producing nothing because of the lack of coordination."²³

Allfrey advised a pause while he arranged the division's largest artillery barrage to date, dubbed Morning Glory. This was to be followed by Orange Blossom. The first would see the 48th Highlanders extend the R22R salient at Casa Berardi; the second would entail the RCR advancing to seize the crossroads. The first barrage provided an entirely successful screen of shrapnel and blast, behind which the 48th Highlanders advanced easily to their objective. But a lack of proper preparation resulted in the artillery for the RCR being lifted prematurely and the battalion was halted in its tracks by 1st Parachute Division troops who had replaced the 90th in the line. The following day, however, the remaining 19 officers and 159 other ranks of the RCR advanced again and won the crossroads. The Ortona-Orsogna lateral was now cleanly severed.

"Having lost control of the [crossroads], the enemy is likely to fall back under pressure in the Northern sector, abandoning Ortona, and making his next stand on the line of the Arielli," read the following day's 1 CID intelligence summary.²⁴ A British intelligence summary cited in the 48th Highlanders War Diary predicted, "Eighth Army is going to reach the line of the Arielli by 24 December."²⁵ There was no reason to foresee a major effort by the Germans to hold Ortona. Vokes reasonably expected that he could advance a couple battalions to Ortona's outskirts and establish a position inside the town. The Germans would then predictably break contact and withdraw. Even after reaching the outskirts Loyal Edmonton Regiment "D" Company commander Major Jim Stone thought he could drive from one end of the town to the other along the Corso Vittorio Emanuele easily in one day if his company was supported by a squadron of tanks.²⁶ His

superior Lieutenant-Colonel Jim Jefferson initially issued orders for the capture of the town in one day. The third day into the fighting the goal became a line midway through Ortona. And after that goal was not met, subsequent Order Groups saw him saying, "Well, we will see what we can do today."²⁷

With battle in Ortona joined, Vokes faced a tough decision. Once it became evident that the street fight would be costly, he either continued it or ordered the two regiments engaged to withdraw. Initial gains in Ortona had come fairly quickly. In the first two days of street fighting the Edmontons reached Piazza Municipali, which was Ortona's main square and lay slightly north of the town's centre. It was here that the attack bogged down, when the fighting entered the warren of the town's oldest housing and commercial districts. Disengaging would have been difficult at this stage of the battle. Vokes decided to press on while also launching an operation on his left front to outflank Ortona. If successful, the flanking attack would force the Germans to either surrender Ortona or allow themselves to be encircled.

By this time 1 CID was hovering on the edge of ceasing to be combat-effective. Most of the battalions were so reduced by casualties they fielded little more than company strength. A number of brigade and battalion commanders had been lost to wounds, illness, or battle exhaustion. Many company and platoon commanders had been similarly lost. Reinforcements were arriving at a rate insufficient to replenish unit strengths. Vokes' only truly effective battalions left were the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment (reinforced after earlier being withdrawn from the line) and the 48th Highlanders. These he committed to the flanking operation, which soon stalled because heavy rain rendered it impossible for the tank regiments to provide support. The flanking operation would remain deadlocked until slightly improving conditions enabled the tanks to come up to the 48th Highlanders' front and facilitate a breakout undertaken by the Highlanders, the R22R, and the Carleton and York battalions. That came on December 29.

The day before, however, the Battle of Ortona proper ended with the 1st Parachute Division slipping undetected from the ruins of the town. With perfect timing, the Germans in Ortona averted being encircled and withdrew to establish another defensive position dominating the coastal highway at Torre Muchia. It would take the Carleton and York regiment, largely forgotten by divisional command and so left to fight on its own, until January 4 to capture the promontory and force the German retreat to the northern shore of the Arielli River.

In the month-long battle 1 CID gave as good as it took. Vokes was correct when he wrote: "We smashed 90th Panzer Grenadier Division and we gave 1st German Parachute Division a mauling which it will long remember."²⁸ All three divisions – German and Canadian – finished the battle having lost their fighting edge due to casualties. The 90th had to be withdrawn and rebuilt, 1st Parachute Division also required major rebuilding. After Ortona, said one parachute veteran, it was clear to most of the men in the division that the war could not be won.²⁹

If battles are measured in terms of which opponent occupies the ground at the end of the day, then Ortona was undeniably a Canadian victory. But did the Canadian crossing of the Moro River and subsequent capture of Ortona achieve a worthwhile strategic result? Eighth Army did in consequence advance its eastern flank to the Arielli River while the western flank remained locked in front of Orsogna in the Upper Sangro area. As a consequence, elements of the Eighth Army, including the newly-formed 1 Canadian

Corps, spent a costly, bitter winter in what became known as the Ortona salient, where they were held in place by stiff German resistance and weather that was worse than experienced in November and December. There would be no further significant gain of ground on the Adriatic front until the fall of Rome on 4 June 1944 rendered this theatre of operation meaningless to the Germans.

Montgomery's scheme to capture Rome by advancing from Pescara through the mountains to Avezanno, however, had been in ruins well before the Canadians ever went into battle against the Moro River Line. In the spring, the majority of Eighth Army was ordered to shift to the Monte Cassino front and Alexander's original plan was largely implemented as originally conceived before Montgomery advocated its rejection in favour of his own.

Even at the 7 November conference that had sanctioned Montgomery's plan, the Eighth Army's Chief of Staff Major-General Sir Francis de Guingand had been sceptical about the odds for success. He felt that "there was no future" in an Adriatic drive.³⁰ Guingand was proven correct. The poor road network, easily defensible river lines, and the ever-worsening weather would render the entire offensive drive from the Sangro River to the Arielli River a hollow victory from which no strategic benefit would be gained.

In December 1943 1 CID and 1st Canadian Armoured Brigade did what was ordered of them. The soldiers fought bravely and consequently suffered in terms of casualties. Vokes and his staff performed poorly because of the insistence on launching repeated one-battalion attacks with seldom any reserves being held back to support or exploit a breakthrough. The biggest failure of command, however, came at the top.

Heavy autumn and winter rains are commonplace on the south-to-central Adriatic coast. Montgomery and his staff knew this. In 1943, these rains came early causing serious problems by the end of October.³¹ Eighth Army intelligence also knew that the few roads winding through the rugged terrain were entirely unsuited to heavy military traffic and that the rains would render them virtually impassable. All advantages of terrain rested with the defender.³² The stiffening resistance offered by the Germans at Biferno River during the previous month presaged their growing determination to hold ground despite incurring heavy casualties. Even if it were understandable that this strategic shift was overlooked prior to the Sangro River offensive, the ferocity of that battle should have sufficed to wake Montgomery to the reality that no easy road to Rome could be won on the Adriatic front. The most critical command mistake in November and December 1943 was to fight at all on the Adriatic front. That mistake was entirely Montgomery's brainchild.

NOTES

- ¹ Appendix 46 to War Diary, General Staff, Headquarters, 1 Canadian Infantry Division, November 1943, National Archives of Canada.
- ² Strome Galloway, *Bravely Into Battle* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1988), p. 160.
- ³ Major-General Chris Vokes, "Fighting State – 1 CDN DIV as of 2 Jan 44, Appendix A," University of Victoria Special Collections, p. 1.
- ⁴ W.G.F. Jackson, *Alexander of Tunis: As Military Commander* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1971), p. 241.
- ⁵ *Ibid*, p. 240.
- ⁶ *Ibid*, p. 242.
- ⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 243-244.
- ⁸ Nigel Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield: Monty's War Years, 1942-1944* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1983), p. 448.
- ⁹ *Ibid*, p. 448.
- ¹⁰ Eric Morris, *Circles of Hell: The War in Italy, 1943-1945* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1993), p. 222.
- ¹¹ Hamilton, p. 449.
- ¹² *Ibid*, p. 449.
- ¹³ *Ibid*, pp. 449-450.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 451.
- ¹⁵ James Lucas, *German Army Handbook: 1939-1945* (Phoenix Mill, UK: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1998), p. 100.
- ¹⁶ J.D. Forin, *Baranello to San Leonardo: The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, December 1943* (Directorate of History, Department of National Defence, n.d.), p. 3.
- ¹⁷ *Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry War Diary*, December 1943, sheet 36-N-4, National Archives of Canada.
- ¹⁸ *Seaforth Highlanders of Canada War Diary*, December 1943, n.p., National Archives of Canada.
- ¹⁹ Ware, Cameron. 1979. Interview by Reginald Roy. Victoria, BC, 23, 25 June; 10 July. University of Victoria Special Collections.
- ²⁰ G.W.L. Nicholson, *The Canadians in Italy: 1939-1945*, Vol. 2 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1956), p. 297.
- ²¹ *Ibid*, p. 302.
- ²² Reginald Roy, *The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, 1919-1965* (Vancouver: Evergreen Press, 1969), p. 250.
- ²³ Bill McAndrew, *Canadians and The Italian Campaign: 1943-1945* (Montréal: Éditions Art Global Inc., 1996), 76.
- ²⁴ Captain A.J. Porter, *Report No. 166 Historical Section Canadian Military Headquarters: Administrative Aspects of the Operations of 1 Canadian Infantry Division in Italy, December 1943*, 29 November 1946, Directorate of History, Department of National Defence, p. 78.
- ²⁵ *48th Highlanders of Canada War Diary*, December 1943, 32-N-9, National Archives of Canada.

- ²⁶ James Riley Stone. 1980. Interview by William S. Thackery, Victoria, BC, 13 May 20; 3, 10, 17 June. University of Victoria Special Collections.
- ²⁷ McAndrew, p. 79.
- ²⁸ Major-General Chris Vokes, "Crossing of the Moro and Capture of Ortona," Directorate of History, Department of National Defence, 14 March 1944, p. 6.
- ²⁹ Fritz Illi, 1999. Interview by Michael Boire. Zuffenhausen, Germany. February 20.
- ³⁰ Hamilton, p. 448.
- ³¹ Daniel G. Dancocks, *The D-Day Dodgers: The Canadians in Italy, 1943–1945* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991), p. 143.
- ³² Nicolson, p. 267.

CANADIAN GENERALS AND BRITISH TROOPS: COMMAND DIFFICULTIES IN 1944

Howard Hisdal

Three particular incidents from the fighting in Northwest Europe in 1944 are examined in this paper. In each of these situations Canadian generals (Crerar, Foulkes, and Simonds) were in command of British troops at the corps, division, and brigade level. In each case the British commanders demonstrated a reluctance or refusal to obey the Canadian orders. This behaviour in a subordinate was known as becoming “sticky” (the term in use then). These incidents tell us something about the methods of operation of the senior Canadian commanders during the Second World War. They demonstrate that the Canadian commanders were reluctant to trust the skills, experience or judgement of their junior commanders and preferred rigid central control and unquestioning obedience. The British commanders seem to be used to a more flexible command system that allowed more latitude for junior commanders to use their intelligence and experience. Overall the rigid Canadian style of command resulted in less initiative allowed to subordinates and higher casualties.

During the Second World War the Canadian army sent three infantry divisions (1st, 2nd, and 3rd), two armoured divisions (4th and 5th), and two armoured brigades (1st and 2nd) to Europe. Also sent were the headquarters units to control and supply them: I Corps, II Corps, and First Canadian Army Headquarters.¹

An army headquarters is a large unit. It is about twenty thousand soldiers strong and composed of the specialists needed to control, coordinate, support and supply two or more corps. Its composition can vary, in North-West Europe in 1944 the First Canadian Army Headquarters was made up of: tank delivery, artillery, engineer, signals, infantry, transport, medical, repair, police, postal, intelligence, planning, and public relations units. Somewhere in this roughly 20,000 plus organization were the Army Historical Section and the War Artists. An army headquarters is not a unit that can be readily broken up and fed into the line as infantry reinforcements.

When the 1st Infantry, 5th Armoured Division and the 1st Armoured Brigade were deployed in Italy under I Canadian Corps it left the Allies with the problem of how to make effective use of First Canadian Army Headquarters. It would be a waste of resources if this unit controlled only II Canadian Corps with its two infantry divisions (2nd and 3rd), one armoured division (4th), and one armoured brigade (2nd). The solution was to place a British corps, and other units such as Polish, Dutch, Belgian, Czech, and American divisions and brigades under its command. For much of the fighting in Northwest Europe more than half of the fighting forces in the First Canadian Army were not actually Canadian.

Lieutenant General J.T. Crocker’s 1st British Corps was the first formation placed under the First Canadian Army’s command when it became operational in the Normandy Beachhead on 23 July 1944 (the Canadian II Corps was not given to the First Canadian Army until 31 July 1944). Crocker had commanded an armoured brigade in France in

1940 and the 9th Corps during the Tunisian campaign of 1942-43.² He had also been a corps commander in the Normandy Beachhead since D-Day. General Harry Crerar, the Canadian commanding the First Canadian Army had commanded artillery in the First World War, and I Canadian Corps in Italy on a static front. Crerar had not covered himself with glory in Italy; he was principally known for his enforcing of dress regulations.³

On 22 July 1944, Crerar sent Crocker a letter of instruction detailing an operation to clear the high ground east of the Dives River. Crocker replied in person to Crerar on the morning of 24 July telling him that the operation was: "not on." In Crocker's opinion it would cost 500 to 600 casualties and achieve nothing of value.⁴ Crocker refused to carry out his orders. Crerar had him put his views in writing so that he could take them to General Montgomery, the 21st Army Group commander. Crerar forwarded Crocker's letter to Montgomery, and requested that Crocker be traded for another corps commander.

Montgomery spent two days handling this incident diplomatically. He told Crerar that Crocker was "the type of man who required to be induced to see [his] plan rather than ordered to carry it out." He gave Crerar the advice that "an Army Commander must stand back from the detailed tactical battle; that is the province of his corps commanders."⁵ He also called Crocker to his headquarters and clarified the chain of command to him. These efforts paid off, and although the operation was called off due to developments elsewhere in the beachhead, Crerar and Crocker appear to have worked out their differences, and developed a smooth working relationship.⁶ What is of particular note in this incident is the approach to command: overly detailed orders, no toleration of feedback from an experienced subordinate, and an immediate impulse to replace the obstinate officer.

The next two incidents involving Canadian generals and British subordinates center on the fighting to capture Walcheren Island during the Battle of the Scheldt in the fall of 1944. The Battle of the Scheldt was planned, coordinated and supervised by the staff and commander of the First Canadian Army. The battle involved the coordination of large sea, land and air forces, which was usually done at the army command level. Crerar was on medical leave in England during this period and was temporarily replaced by Lieutenant General Guy Simonds, a student and admirer of now Field Marshal Montgomery, and the one Canadian general with whom he was impressed. Major General Charles Foulkes, a student and admirer of Harry Crerar, temporarily took Simonds' place as II Corps Commander. Neither Foulkes nor Simonds had warm outgoing personalities, but Foulkes was more politically astute than Simonds. Foulkes was to become the Army Chief of Staff after the war, ahead of Simonds his senior during the war. As Granatstein said, "Charles Foulkes had a knack of impressing senior officers and politicians; Guy Simonds frightened them."⁷

The great port of Antwerp was captured with its docks intact on 3 September 1944. Antwerp was the solution to the supply problem that had been crippling the Allied advance since the Normandy breakout in August. The Germans had either destroyed or left determined garrisons behind in the Channel ports they had abandoned. This meant that Allied supplies had to be landed on the beaches of Normandy and trucked far inland; this was not a viable supply solution for the fall and winter of 1944.

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The problem with Antwerp was that it was inland and the Germans held Walcheren Island thereby blocking Allied shipping from its docks. The task of clearing the Scheldt Estuary and Walcheren Island was given to the First Canadian Army.

It was a very large task. Later in his memoirs Montgomery would say:

And here I must admit a bad error on my part – I underestimated the difficulties of opening up the approaches to Antwerp so that we could get the free use of that port. I reckoned that the Canadian Army could do it **while** we were going for the Ruhr. I was wrong.⁸

This is a rare admission of error from a man who prided himself on professional perfection.

At first Montgomery paid minimal attention to the task of the Scheldt. He was firmly focussed on crossing the Rhine and ending the war before Christmas 1944. It was only well after the failure of the Arnhem airborne operation, and after pressure from General Eisenhower and the British Combined Chiefs of Staff that Montgomery turned his attention to the problem. Until then he had tasked the First Canadian Army with clearing the Scheldt, but had tasked away I British Corps to support the left flank of his Arnhem operations. The supply priority that 21st Army Group had been given by SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) to secure Antwerp was used by Montgomery to continue operations of the Second British Army fighting to the east.⁹ This was a fraudulent use of precious Allied supplies.

Finally on 16 October 1944 Montgomery gave the operations to secure the approaches to Antwerp “... complete priority over all other offensive operations in 21st Army Group, without any qualification whatsoever.”¹⁰ The First Canadian Army was given additional resources in the form of two divisions: the British 52nd (Lowland) Division, and the American 104th (Timberwolf) Division.

It is with the British 52nd Lowland Division and Major-General Charles Foulkes the Acting II Corps Commander that we are next concerned. Walcheren was the key to winning the Battle of the Scheldt. It was connected to the South Beveland Peninsula to the east by a one kilometre long causeway containing a two lane paved road and a railway track. The Causeway was perfectly straight and devoid of any cover. There was a dike at the Walcheren end where the Germans had dug in machineguns to rake both sides of the Causeway; it was registered by artillery, cratered near the German end, and had either a tank or self-propelled gun positioned to fire high velocity shells straight down it. Simonds, as Acting Army Commander, did not plan to take Walcheren Island by this route. He intended to capture the Island with two carefully planned amphibious assaults. First the 155th Brigade of the 52nd Lowland Division with Number 4 Commando, as its leading wave would land and capture the fortified port of Flushing on the southern tip of Walcheren. Then 4th Special Service Brigade of Commandos would land at the western tip of Walcheren near the village of Westkapelle astride an artificial beach in a gap blown in the sea dike by Bomber Command.

However, the II Corps and its commander would be expected to attack the Causeway in coordination with the amphibious assaults. If nothing else it would be a diversion to the enemy. As commander of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division in Normandy Charles Foulkes had not flinched from high casualties. The two infantry divisions of the Canadian II Corps had sustained the heaviest casualties of all the divisions under Montgomery’s command in the Normandy Beachhead, casualties on par

with those of the trench fighting of 1917. The Canadian troops were very brave, statistically they were the English speaking troops least likely to surrender in the Second World War.¹¹ These soldiers would obey their orders or die trying, and their commanders would obey their orders or be relieved.

On 30 October the 5th Brigade of the 2nd Canadian Division was ordered to cross the Causeway. The brigade commander, W.J. Megill¹², sent three infantry battalions on to the Causeway, one at a time. The Black Watch was first on the 31st, then the Calgary Highlanders, and finally the Maisonneuves. After two days of fighting, with 28 dead and 84 wounded, a small band of Maisonneuves (of roughly platoon strength) was established at the western end of the Causeway.¹³ Given the strength of the German defence, the relatively low casualty rate is a testament to the battle skills of the soldiers and officers in the brigade.

On the morning of 1 November, while the Calgary Highlanders were fighting on the Causeway, Major General Foulkes paid a visit to Major General Sir Edmund Hakewell Smith at his headquarters in Breskens. During their meeting Foulkes insisted that Hakewell Smith send his 156th and 157th brigades down the Causeway. Hakewell Smith protested strongly against this order because he did not consider an attack down the Causeway to be a viable operation of war. His soldiers had been trained in mountain warfare in Scotland; they had only been on the continent since September and had little battle experience. Some senior officers of the division carried shepherds' crooks instead of swagger sticks.¹⁴ Hakewell Smith had no desire to slaughter his flock attempting an impossible task and replied to Foulkes' demand by saying: "Of course, I will obey your orders, but I must have them in writing." He then passed Foulkes a blank piece of paper. He advised Foulkes that he would protest to 21st Army Group that his division was to be used in an attack that would achieve nothing except serious casualties.

"What are you going to do then?" inquired Foulkes, somewhat taken aback.

Hakewell Smith said that he was already looking into the problem, he had ordered aerial photographs and his engineers were looking for another route. Foulkes threatened him with loss of command if his brigades were not on Walcheren within 48 hours.¹⁵

Shortly afterwards the large blow-ups of the aerial photographs arrived. When the British engineer officers examined them they immediately found a route along a tidal watershed leading across to Walchern about three kilometres south of the Causeway. An engineering reconnaissance patrol of a lieutenant and sergeant crossed the Sloe Channel that night. A company of the 6th Cameronians then made the crossing the night of 2 November and captured 25 prisoners at the cost of 2 wounded.¹⁶ Surprise is one of universally recognized principles of war.

What can we learn from this incident? One lesson is that inexperienced soldiers following a good plan after conducting a proper reconnaissance can achieve goals that ill used veteran troops cannot. Canadian military intelligence had a very clear idea of the Causeway defences.¹⁵ What is most disappointing about the situation is that the Canadian command could not come up with a better plan for the Causeway problem than a repeated frontal assault along the most obvious route.

Foulkes' method of handling Hakewell Smith (obey my order or I will relieve you of command) is remarkably similar to Crerar's approach to Crocker. Foulkes does appear slightly more diplomatic in that he gave the British general 48 hours to find another way to accomplish the mission. However, this happened only after Hakewell Smith offered to

protest not to First Canadian Army Headquarters, but to the British 21st Army Group, the headquarters that controlled the First Canadian Army. In effect, Hakewell Smith was threatening to withdraw his division from Canadian command. What is ironic about this is that the Canadian government had expended considerable diplomatic effort to give Canadian commanders the legal right to withdraw their troops from British command.¹⁷

The third and final incident of command friction between Canadian and British commanders concerns the 4th Special Service Brigade at the Walcheren landings. This commando brigade consisted of the 41st, 47th, and 48th Royal Marine Commandos as well as 4 (Army) Commando. The brigade had landed at Normandy on D+1, 7 June 1944, and had fought until September. It had been containing the Germans in Dunkirk in September when it was told to prepare for the Walcheren landings. The odd unit out in this Royal Marine brigade was 4 Commando, a veteran of the Vaagso Raid, Dieppe, and D-Day. Brigadier B.W. Leicester DSO commanded this brigade.

On 23 September Brigadier Leicester met with Lieutenant General Simonds to start planning the amphibious assaults on Walcheren.¹⁸ The commando brigade moved to the small port of Ostend to study and rehearse their role. Simonds thought that the specialized assault troops and naval forces should be allocated and allowed to train to avoid any last minute improvisations. He regarded a water-borne attack as "... a last resort and [a] most uninviting task."¹⁹ The assault would be executed under the codename INFATUATE.

Simonds had Bomber Command bomb several breaches in the sea dike of Walcheren to flood the island in order to pin the Germans to the high ground, and make their movement of supplies and reinforcements difficult. Despite initial opposition from the Canadian Army engineers and Bomber Command, the dikes were broken and Walcheren flooded by 7 October. The Royal Navy and the commandos were happy to have the artificial beaches created in the dike breaches for landing areas.

Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay commanded the Royal Navy in North-West Europe. He had been brought off the retired list to be Vice-Admiral of Dover and was knighted for the successful evacuation of Dunkirk. He went on to help plan and command landings in North Africa and Sicily. He was appointed the Allied Naval Commander, Expeditionary Force (ANCF) for NEPTUNE, the naval assault phase of OVERLORD. The Royal Marine Commandos were part of the navy and Admiral Ramsay took a direct interest in their operations. After the Operation Infatuate conference on 7 October, Captain A.F. Pugsley, the commander of Force T, (the naval forces assigned to INFATUATE) discussed points of concern with Brigadier Churchill Mann, the Chief of Staff of First Canadian Army. Speaking for Ramsay, Pugsley had raised two points: first, was it necessary to mount a seaborne operation; and second, was it an operation of war.²⁰

Admiral Ramsay was a strong supporter of opening up Antwerp as soon as possible. He had taken Montgomery on at General Eisenhower's conference of commanders at Versailles on 5 October, when Montgomery had remarked that the Ruhr could be taken without Antwerp. Ramsay demanded that Montgomery make Antwerp the immediate objective of the highest priority.²¹ He had a good idea of how difficult it would be to assault Walcheren, which was enclosed by an ancient dike hundreds of feet thick and studded with concrete gun battery emplacements. He wanted the commandos to go in with a good plan and the best fire support possible; in order to achieve this he wanted a joint plan drawn up and implemented at the army level. However it was Simonds' intent that the two commanders directly involved, Captain Pugsley and Brigadier Leicester,

prepare a joint plan which would then be verbally approved by Foulkes the corps commander, and then Simonds the army commander. He thought that the Royal Navy wanted far too detailed planning.²²

A joint plan was drawn up at the naval task force/brigade level, but First Canadian Army Headquarters drew up the critical Heavy Bomber target list. Only Bomber Command and 15 inch naval guns had the firepower necessary to destroy concrete gun emplacements. The fire plan compressed the bombing into a three day period, contained 33 targets, and the following instructions: "Targets are NOT listed in any rigid order of priority but are listed in a general sequence which may be taken as a guide to what is operationally desirable." The only vague hint of an assault landing was in the description of the page one targets as: "Certain batteries capable of firing onto SOUTH bank WEST SCHELDE and/or minesweepers and/or affecting deployment of naval bombardment ships."²³ The commandos would have preferred a much stronger priority given to the four batteries that could blow their fragile landing craft out of the water (two batteries – W13 and W15 caused about 500 casualties). One commando commander described it as "milk-and-water language."²⁴ When told of the concerns of the amphibious force commanders Simonds said that Bomber Harris could be relied upon to do the job his own way.²⁵

The compressing of the bombing campaign to the last few days with multiple targets and a weak priority list set the stage for failure. The weather was also a factor because good flying weather could not be guaranteed in November.

The Infatuate plan evolved into two landings, the first at the Port of Flushing and the second on a breach in the dike near the village of Westkapelle. The landing at Flushing was to be the first attempt to take a port from the sea since the Dieppe Raid. It had air support planned and it was within range of all the artillery of the First Canadian Army, which would be used to support it. The Westkapelle assault, which was to go in second, was out of range of most of the land-based guns. Admiral Ramsay assigned the heavy bombardment warships: HMS Warspite, Erebus, and Roberts to give direct gun support. Unfortunately their accuracy depended upon spotter aircraft, and these aircraft depended upon the weather. As a final failsafe Ramsay assigned the Support Squadron Eastern Flank (named from its task at Normandy) to the 182 vessels of Force T. This squadron consisted of 25 light vessels and modified landing craft manned by six hundred sailors and five hundred marines. The mission of this squadron was to close with the enemy batteries and fire at them in order to distract them from the troop landing craft. Two gunships were designated to beach themselves in front of enemy shore batteries to fire point-blank into their gun slits. Brigadier Leicester also insisted, over the objections of Foulkes and Simonds, on taking along a squadron of specialized armoured vehicles from the British 79th Armoured Division. He took armoured bulldozers, flail tanks (for mine fields), Armoured Vehicles Royal Engineers (for bunkers), and Sherman tanks: some twenty armoured vehicles in all.

At the Infatuate conference on 26 October Brigadier Leicester outlined his plan for the operation. Simonds presided and made his orders clear. The two landings, INFATUATE I at Flushing, and INFATUATE II at Westkapelle, were to go in even if air support was unavailable. They could only be cancelled if the weather did not permit a landing. Infatuate I was to go in regardless of the results of any reconnaissance.²⁶ Brigadier Leicester's emotions are not difficult to imagine. He would not be permitted to think or make a decision on the attack. He does not appear to have protested, but having

worked with Simonds for a month he probably decided that protest would be a futile effort. Leicester did, however, have a friend in Admiral Ramsay.

Five days later on 31 October there was a meeting aboard HMS Kingsmill in Ostend Harbour. Admiral Ramsay and Lieutenant General Simonds met in the presence of Captain Pugsley and Brigadier Leicester. They drew up an agreement to empower the naval and military force commanders "...to postpone the assault on Westkapelle and return to port if in their opinion on all available information (with particular reference to the probabilities of air support, air smoke and spotting aircraft for bombardment ships) at the time of taking such decision the assault is unlikely to succeed."²⁷

On the morning of 1 November the weather in England was poor, and the heavy bombers and spotting aircraft were unable to take off. The attack at Flushing went well because of the artillery support. The weather off Walcheren looked good to Captain Pugsley and Brigadier Leicester. At the critical moment they saw light aircraft in the form of Typhoons from 84 Group (based in Belgium). They then sent the signal NELSON, which was the codeword for the assault.

The enemy guns were virtually untouched. The Support Squadron Eastern Flank moved in to do its duty. It danced in front of the German guns. The enemy made the mistake of firing at the Support Squadron that was firing at them, instead of firing at the commando landing craft. The commandos scrambled ashore on the beach in the gap. They were only able to get four armoured vehicles off the beach, but these "...were worth their weight in gold" as Brigadier Leicester said later.²⁸

In less than two hours the Support Squadron Easter Flank ceased to be a fighting force. Nine vessels were sunk: including both boats that had been ordered to beach themselves either side of the gap to draw enemy fire. Only five craft were not disabled, and they towed the eleven disabled boats. The squadron suffered 172 fatal casualties and 286 wounded.²⁹ Although this casualty toll was much higher than the relatively lower cost defeat of 5 Brigade at the Causeway it was a victory, and so has not drawn the same attention from historians.

The fighting ashore was fierce. The total casualties in the Battle of the Scheldt were 703 officers and 12,170 other ranks. Slightly more than half of these were not Canadian even though they had all served under Canadian command. (Of the seven divisions and two brigades under the First Canadian Army's command only three divisions and one brigade were Canadian.)

Some common conclusions can be drawn from the three incidents involving Crerar, Foulkes, and Simonds in their dealings with their British subordinates. In all of these incidents there is a lack of trust in the judgement of the junior commanders; there is an unwillingness to discuss the issue; the subordinates' ideas and opinions are not asked for or desired; and the British subordinate commanders had to either go to a British officer outranking the Canadian general or threaten to do so. In two of these incidents the subordinate was threatened with removal; if Leicester had openly resisted Simonds he would probably have received the same threat.³⁰ Canadian subordinates would also be treated in the same manner, but a Canadian commander could not play the nationality card. Overall, the individual initiative of subordinate commanders was greatly reduced with a direct result being a higher casualty rate. This rigid style of command robbed the First Canadian Army of the flexibility that would have made it a more effective fighting force.

NOTES

- ¹ There were other, smaller units such as the 1st Parachute Battalion that served in the 6th British Airborne division; the 1st Canadian Special Service Battalion that served in the US First Special Service Force; and the 1st Armoured Personal Carrier Regiment under the command of the British 79th Armoured Division.
- ² CP Stacey, *The Victory Campaign* (Ottawa, 1960), p. 196.
- ³ Chris Vokes, *My Story* (Ottawa, 1985), pp. 152-156.
- ⁴ Stacey, *The Victory Campaign*, pp. 195-7.
- ⁵ Letter Montgomery to Crerar, 26 July 1944, JL Granatstein, *The Generals* (Toronto, 1993), p. 111.
- ⁶ Stacey, *The Victory Campaign*, p. 197.
- ⁷ Granatstein, *The Generals*, p. 175.
- ⁸ BL Montgomery, *The Memoirs of Field Marshal The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein*, KG (London, 1958), p. 297.
- ⁹ Richard Lamb, *Montgomery in Europe 1943-45* (London, 1983), p. 262.
- ¹⁰ Stacey, *The Victory Campaign*, p. 655. Taken from Field Marshal Montgomery's Directive, 16 October 1944.
- ¹¹ John Ellis, *The Sharp End of War: The Fighting Man in World War II* (London, 1980), pp. 161-162. Ellis determined that the Canadian Army had the lowest ratio of prisoners of war and missing to other battle casualties of all the English speaking armies. He concluded that this indicated "a remarkable reluctance to throw in the sponge."
- ¹² Brigadier WJ Megill was the only Canadian brigade commander in the Normandy Beachhead to retain command of his brigade to the end of the war.
- ¹³ Terry Copp, *The Brigade: The Fifth Canadian Infantry Brigade, 1930-1945* (Stoney Creek, 1992), pp. 159 and 162.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 155.
- ¹⁵ J.L. Moulton, *Battle for Antwerp* (New York, 1978) pages 214 and 215. R.W. Thompson, *The Eighty-Five Days; The Story of the Battle of the Scheldt* (New York, 1957) page 197. Denis and Shelagh Whitaker, *Tug of War: The Canadian Victory that Opened Antwerp* (Toronto, 1984), pp. 341-2.
- ¹⁶ Moulton, p. 216.
- ¹⁷ CP Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments* (Ottawa, 1970), pp. 210-213.
- ¹⁸ GOC's Activities, National Archives, Record Group 24, Vol. 10,798.
- ¹⁹ Simonds' comments on the First Canadian Army Appreciation of 19 Sep 44, 21 Sep 44, National Archives, RG 24, Vol. 10,799.
- ²⁰ Operation Infatuate – Notes of discussion, Comd Force T – Chief of Staff First Cdn Army, after the conference conducted by A/GOC 2 Cdn Corps at HQ Brit SS Bde, 1100 hrs, 7 Oct 44, NA, RG 24, Vol. 17,509.
- ²¹ Nigel Hamilton, *Monty: The Field-marshal 1944-1976* (London, 1986), pp. 103-105.
- ²² Dominick Graham, *The Price of Command: A Biography of General Guy Simonds* (Toronto, 1993), p. 190-191.
- ²³ First Cdn Army, Op Infatuate, Pre-planned Air Targets Prior to D-Day, signed by Brigadier CC Mann, Chief of Staff, 0930 hrs, 29 October 44, NA, RG 24, Vol 17,509. Brigadier H.O.N. Brownfield was the Brigadier, Royal Artillery, at First Canadian Army Headquarters.
- ²⁴ Moulton, p. 161.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Operation Infatuate – Conference Held at Main First Cdn Army on 26 Sep 44. NA, RG 24, Vol. 17,509.

²⁷ Memorandum Concerning First Canadian Army Operation Instruction Number 41 Dated 30 October 44 in so far as it relates to Operation Infatuate II. NA, RG 24, Vol. 17,509.

²⁸ RW Thompson, *The 85 Days* (New York, 1957), p. 210.

²⁹ Denis and Shelagh Whitaker, *Tug of War*, p. 362.

³⁰ Simonds was notorious for relieving subordinates of their commands. In Italy he relieved Brigadier Bradbrooke, MC, for disagreeing with him on a cloth model exercise. At Normandy he relieved a division commander and numerous other commanders. His standard procedure on taking over a new headquarters was to interview and fire people. John Morgan Gray wrote *Fun Tomorrow: Learning to be a Publisher and Much Else* (Toronto, 1978). Gray was a junior staff officer in II Corps Headquarters during Simonds' takeover of that headquarters, on page 269 he states that: "His [Simonds] arrival was awaited with some apprehension, for though he was known as a brilliant commander there were also rumours of his unsmiling toughness, which had earned him the nickname of 'Giggling Guy'."

LE MORAL DES TROUPES CANADIENNES OUTRE-MER ENTRE 1943 ET 1945 D'APRÈS LES « FIELD CENSORS (HOME)»¹

Pierre Grégoire*

En temps de guerre, la censure peut apparaître comme une contrainte inévitable parce que l'information, plus que jamais, représente un enjeu crucial dans l'élaboration des stratégies offensives et défensives. À tel point d'ailleurs, qu'une partie importante de la tâche de tout appareil militaire, consiste à recueillir des renseignements sur les forces adverses, tout en évitant lui-même le plus possible d'en livrer².

D'une manière très générale, on peut situer la censure à l'intersection de quatre grands paramètres qui régulent, en partie, nos sociétés modernes :

- a) les relations de pouvoir, religieux, politique ou autre, qui la rendent possible ;
 - b) un système de vérité (normes, croyances, valeurs) à partir duquel ce qui est censurable peut être identifié ;
 - c) un régime juridique qui assume souvent les tâches de clarification intellectuelles impliquées par le système de vérité, et ;
 - d) l'existence d'un appareil (individus, moyens financiers, de contrôle) qui est en mesure d'appliquer ou de faire appliquer les sanctions rattachées au censurable.
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Si, comme le proposait Clausewitz en 1813³, l'un des trois principaux objectifs de la guerre demeure de « gagner l'opinion publique », il n'est pas étonnant de constater l'importance que l'on accorde à la censure ou plus largement au contrôle de l'information.

Dans cette perspective, la censure peut être définie succinctement comme l'ensemble des moyens mis en place pour contrôler, limiter ou supprimer des renseignements jugés dangereux pour l'ordre civil ou militaire. Mais signalons aussi qu'en plus d'un rôle répressif (interdire, extraire, sanctionner), la censure vise à recueillir et à recouper des renseignements pouvant être utilisés dans l'élaboration des stratégies d'intervention. Bref, à *extorquer* du savoir⁴.

Dans le cas qui nous occupe, la censure postale fait partie des moyens dont dispose l'appareil militaire pour éviter, entre autres choses, que ses propres soldats ne deviennent, par inadvertance, des causes d'échec dans le déroulement des opérations en cours.

* J'aimerais remercier messieurs Claude Beauregard et Serge Bernier qui, chacun à sa manière, ont rendu possible la rédaction de ce texte.

Toutefois, durant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, le Quartier général militaire du Canada à Londres n'imposa la censure du courrier des militaires qu'à l'été 1941, et ce à l'instigation des Britanniques qui jugeaient cette absence de censure inquiétante au niveau de la sécurité. Même alors, seulement 15 % du courrier était examiné. Ce n'est que plus tard, sur un modèle qu'avait élaboré les Britanniques, que les rapports Field Censors (Home) (à l'avenir FCH) allaient effectuer un examen détaillé du courrier des militaires cantonnés en Europe⁵.

Comme on le verra plus loin, si le contrôle de l'information pour des raisons de sécurité reste essentiel dans les rapports, la grille de saisie adoptée par les censeurs, prend en compte deux centres d'intérêt qui l'encadrent. Il s'agit du moral des troupes, et de tous les facteurs qui peuvent agir sur lui, ainsi que la cueillette de commentaires variés concernant par exemple McKenzie King, les plans d'après-guerre ou encore le problème de la conscription.

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Parmi ces trois centres d'intérêt, la sécurité n'a semble-t-il pas posé de graves problèmes. Par ailleurs, la cueillette des opinions politiques des soldats, représente malgré son importance quantitative dans les rapports, une activité pour ainsi dire périphérique. Il nous reste donc l'examen du moral des troupes qui, par son ampleur, apparaît incontournable.

Le texte que voici voudrait, dans une perspective essentiellement descriptive, présenter la série des FCH disponibles et montrer en quoi elle témoigne de l'intention des censeurs. Il s'agira donc, dans un premier temps, de décrire les rapports d'un point de vue global, et de signaler leurs particularités formelles. Secondement, une petite zone de ce qui est dit sur le moral des troupes sera examinée. Cette zone jugée révélatrice, nous indique deux choses : que le moral des troupes était généralement interprété comme étant positif par les censeurs et que les fluctuations dans les pourcentages concernant le moral n'étaient pas expliquées, du moins dans les rapports. Cela conduit à un curieux paradoxe qui fait d'une opération de censure et d'*enquête*, un moyen d'affirmer le bon et le constant moral des troupes canadiennes.

Présentation des rapports

Pour la période qui va du début juillet 1943 jusqu'au début juin 1945, nous disposons de 38 rapports FCH numérotés de 70 à 114. Toutefois, les rapports 72 à 77 inclusivement sont manquants, ainsi que le rapport numéro 112. Il faut signaler par ailleurs que les rapports 93 à 99, qui couvrent la période du 16 juin au 30 septembre 1944, sont des rapports spéciaux émanant des hôpitaux militaires canadiens en France⁶. Cependant leur forme, bien que légèrement différente, ainsi que les plages temporelles couvertes par ces rapports, s'intègrent adéquatement à la série (consultez à ce propos le tableau 2).

Ces rapports, produits environ aux quinze jours, sont passablement longs et complexes : ils ont en moyenne 22 pages (avec les appendices) et font état de l'examen de milliers de lettres⁷ lues et réduites à l'état d'extraits regroupés dans des sections et sous-sections, jugés représentatives par les censeurs. On compte environ pour chaque rapport, 155 extraits dont l'ampleur va de 3 à une vingtaine de lignes.

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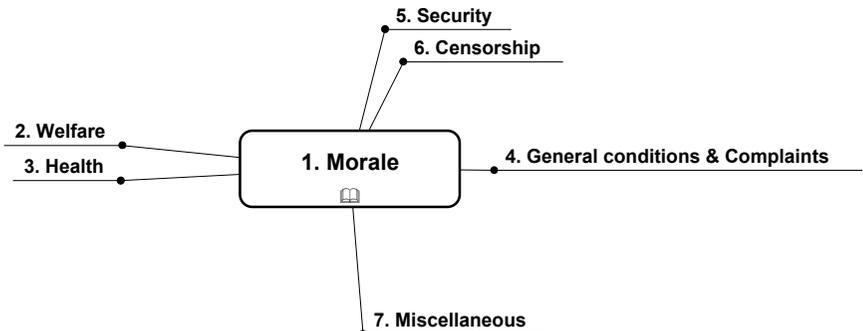
La grille de saisie, avec ses sections et ses sous-sections, (voir l'annexe I) fait l'objet d'un tableau qui compile en terme de pourcentage, les scores obtenus pour le rapport courant et le rapport précédent.

Ce qu'il faut noter ici, c'est que deux systèmes d'évaluation sont utilisés. Ainsi, dans le cas de la section Security, les pourcentages élevés signifient qu'un grand nombre de correspondants ont fait preuve de prudence dans leurs lettres. Autrement dit, lorsque le score est de 97,6 %, cela signifie que seulement 2,4 % des lettres examinées contenaient des indiscretions, le plus souvent mineures.

En ce qui concerne les autres sections des rapports, les pourcentages indiquent la fréquence des mentions sur tel ou tel sujet. Ainsi, par exemple, dans le rapport 87, on note que 3,9 % des lettres lues ont exprimées un point de vue positif en ce qui concerne le moral général.

SECTION	SUBJECT	ANALYSIS	CURRENT REPORT	PREVIOUS REPORT
1. Morale	a) General Moral	Contented	3.9%	3.6%

Tableau 1



Le tableau 1 présente d'une manière synthétique les niveaux qui ressortent de l'analyse des rapports. En effet, lorsque l'on examine les sections des rapports, il est possible d'y déceler trois niveaux (ou centres d'intérêt) distincts :

1. la sécurité ;
2. le moral des troupes sous ses multiples facettes et ;
3. le niveau Miscellaneous.

De manière à donner une idée de l'ensemble des FCH, chacun de ces niveaux sera succinctement décrit.

1. Sécurité. Ce niveau est constitué des sections Security et Censorship. Dans le cadre de la censure et du contrôle de l'information, ce niveau représente l'une des préoccupations fondamentales des censeurs, à savoir que des informations sensibles ne soient pas divulguées par les soldats dans leurs lettres. Ce que les rapports nous indiquent, c'est que seulement des indiscretions mineures ont eu lieu et qu'en général, la sécurité est restée bonne tout au long de la période couverte. En effet, si l'on examine les pourcentages donnés dans les rapports, la moyenne est de 97,5⁸. Il y a peu de variations et l'on peut en conclure que les hommes avaient bien intégrés les consignes de sécurité. Par ailleurs, dans le cas des indiscretions mineures, il s'agissait d'avoir par exemple :

- signalé un lieu,
- donné des renseignements sur des actions prévues,
- mentionné des formations,
- utilisé l'adresse de son unité dans les pays neutres,
- utilisé des moyens illicites d'acheminement du courrier, etc.

1.1 Censorship. Comme on le mentionne dans le rapport 83, « Good security is shown as a result of censorship » (p. 15). Mais on peut aussi considérer cette section comme une sorte de moyen de vérification, visant à tester le degré de conscience que les soldats avaient de la censure de leur courrier. Elle permet de vérifier aussi, si les hommes éprouvaient du ressentiment face à cette pratique que certains qualifiaient de « rotten ». Quoi qu'il en soit, relativement importante dans les premiers rapports, cette section s'amenuise au fur et à mesure que les hommes s'habituent à la censure qui leur était imposée.

2. Moral. Ce niveau est nettement le plus complexe et sans doute le plus important tant sur le plan stratégique que sur le plan quantitatif. Il est formé, de General Morale, des sections Health, Welfare, ainsi que General Conditions & Complaints. Toutes ces sections peuvent en effet être interprétées comme des moyens d'évaluer le moral des hommes⁹. Voici comment se présente, les sections et les sous-sections de ce niveau :

2.1 Morale.

- a) *General Morale* donne un aperçu global du moral des hommes et de leur état d'esprit ;
- b) *Progress of War* signale le sentiment optimiste ou non en regard des progrès de la guerre et de la performance canadienne durant celle-ci ;
- c) *Relations with* fait état du type de relations que les troupes canadiennes entretiennent avec les civils et les troupes britanniques, ainsi que les troupes américaines ;
- d) *Training* mentionne les opinions des hommes sur les manoeuvres, les cours, etc., reçus dans le cadre de leur séjour en Angleterre ;
- e) *Leave* remarques sur les permissions ;
- f) *Comments on Officers* fait état des jugements sur les officiers.

2.2 Welfare. Cette section se subdivise en trois sous-sections et prend en compte l'opinion des soldats sur les services offerts :

- a) *Work of Auxiliary Services* ;
- b) *Education* ;
- c) *Sport – Organized*.

2.3 Health. Cette section vise à connaître comment les hommes se sentaient au niveau physique.

2.4 General Conditions & Complaints. Cette section cherche, entre autre chose, à évaluer l'attitude des soldats face à deux éléments majeurs qui agissent sur le moral : la nourriture et le courrier.

- a) *Units conditions in Camps, etc.* ;
- b) *Food* ;
- c) *Mail* ;
- d) *Misc. General Complaints*.

3. Miscellaneous. On peut considérer ce dernier niveau comme une incursion des censeurs visant à glaner des informations qui n'étaient pas vraiment dans la ligne de tir « officielle » (i.e. sécurité et moral des troupes). Les principales thématiques relevées par les censeurs sont les suivantes :

- de nombreux commentaires sont recueillis sur les « autorités » en général (militaires ou politiques) et particulièrement sur McKenzie King, le premier ministre canadien de l'époque. La majorité de ces commentaires sont d'ailleurs négatifs;
- de nombreux commentaires concernent aussi les plans, les conditions, les politiques, etc., de l'après-guerre;
- finalement, une dernière thématique pourrait être identifiée en ce qui concerne les événements ponctuels comme la conscription au Canada, les commentaires des soldats sur le service en Extrême-Orient (guerre contre le Japon), etc. Lorsque les commentaires étaient suffisamment nombreux, ont ajoutaient des appendices aux rapports de censure sous ces rubriques¹⁰.

*
* *

De la présentation des FCH qui précède, retenons la complexité ainsi que l'étendue de la saisie des informations, qui ne laisse pratiquement dans l'ombre que la vie affective des correspondants.

Le moral des troupes : un optimisme constant

Cette seconde partie voudrait cerner deux choses : 1) ce que nous révèle l'analyse de la partie introductive des FCH (Section 1. Morale, a) General Morale, Contended ou Good); 2) essayer de montrer que les rapports, sous des apparences objectives et quantitatives, reposent sur un postulat, stipulant en quelque sorte que le moral des troupes était toujours bon.

Ces analyses s'appuient sur deux séries d'indices que sont l'utilisation dans les rapports de formules toutes faites, minimisant les éléments négatifs, et sur le constat que

les rédacteurs des rapports ne semblaient pas chercher à expliquer les fluctuations notables dans les pourcentages faisant état du moral des correspondants.

Bien que nous ne sachions pas comment lisaient les rapports ceux à qui ils étaient destinés, on ne court pas grand risque de se tromper en supposant qu'ils accordaient une attention particulière à la section I, a) General Morale, Contented. En effet, c'est par cette sous-section que débute les rapports et que le rédacteur fait ses premières appréciations sur l'ensemble des lettres examinées. On peut la considérer comme une sorte d'introduction générale aux FCH et c'est pourquoi une analyse en est ici proposée¹¹.

Les formules de la sous-section « General Morale, good ». Lorsque l'on s'y attarde, la lecture systématique de cette sous-section fait ressortir un certain nombre d'énoncés (jugements ou affirmations) récurrents :

1. Ainsi le moral est presque toujours décrit comme étant très bon, bon, à défaut de quoi on parle du « ton » de gaieté et de bonne humeur qui émane des lettres, comme en témoignent les deux extraits suivants. « The morale of the Canadian Army, always good, has reached even higher levels since the news of the long awaited invasion of France [...] » (Rapport 92, p. 2). Ou encore, « Although deep resentment or anxiety is manifested by numerous writers over the conscription issue, the general tone of the mail remains cheerful. » (Rapport 104, p. 2);

2. Un autre genre de remarque assez fréquente, signale l'esprit combatif des hommes : « Contentment and expectation of action, the desire for which is very keen, are seen in many letters » (Rapport 79, p. 2). Ou encore : « [...] and the men are now said to be like 'wild horses', all anxious to be on the move. » (Rapport 71, p. 2);

3. Les cas de moral bas, que les compilations statistiques présentent comme étant peu nombreux, qualifié de « browned off » (« fed up »), sont presque toujours justifiés ou expliqués par l'inaction ou la longue attente dans laquelle les soldats étaient plongés. « A reduction is noticed in the volume of references to being 'browned off' due to the long stay in this country without seeing action [...] » (Rapport 81, p. 2);

4. D'autres remarques récurrentes comme la fierté devant l'attitude et les actions des camarades, la qualité de l'équipement, jugés supérieurs à celui de l'ennemi ou encore face l'armée en générale, sont signalées.

5. Finalement, il reste à mentionner que dans cette évaluation globale des lettres, certains éléments contextuels sont évoqués pour illustrer en quelque sorte leur incidence sur le moral, telles les opérations en Sicile ou encore l'invasion de la France. Ces éléments servent d'indicateurs dans l'évaluation du moral.

Expliquer ou constater ? Or, à quelques reprises, durant la période impliquée par les FCH, des variations significatives se sont produites dans les pourcentages recueillis. Ces variations concernent les rapports numéros 95, 101, 103, 109 et 113 pour ne mentionner que ceux qui se démarquent le plus nettement (voir la zone ombrée du tableau 2). Dans le cas du rapport numéro 101 (période du 16-31 octobre 1944), le pourcentage de satisfaction passe de 24 % à 6,3 % ce qui représente une chute importante. À cela, le rédacteur du rapport remarque : « Although the percentage shows a decrease it is still apparent from the tone of the mail examined that the morale of the Canadian troops stationed in England remains very high. The men are fit and ready for action and appear to be generally contented with their conditions and environment » (Rapport 101, p. 2). Ce qui pose problème ici, n'est pas tellement de savoir si 6,3 %

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représente un mauvais score, mais de constater à la lecture du rapport que l'on n'a pas recherché une explication à cette chute marquée dans les pourcentages.

Bien entendu, en tenant compte de la période impliquée par le rapport, nous pourrions essayer de relier cette chute à un événement (militaire ou politique) et y voir une explication plausible, mais il faut plutôt constater que les censeurs n'ont pas jugé bon de le faire. En effet, le même constat est valable pour le rapport 95 (période du 16-31 juillet 1944) où le moral est en hausse (16.5 vs 9.5 %). On y note que le moral des blessés qui ont participé aux combats en Normandie, demeure extrêmement satisfaisant.

Rapport 95, p. 2 : « The morale of the wounded who have participated in the fighting in Normandy remains extremely satisfactory, as indicated by the percentage figures which, during the period under review, have soared to an unprecedented level. The men are bright and cheerful, and though many accept with reluctance their incapacity to continue fighting, the desire for a speedy recovery in order to return to active service is keenly expressed in some letters.

« The personnel of hospitals write enthusiastically of the wonderful spirit of the wounded men even in the most severe cases. »

Dans le cas du rapport 103 (16-30 novembre 1944), où l'on enregistre une baisse de 1,5 %, le commentaire va comme suit : Le moral des troupes demeure haut et le ton général des lettres est gai.

Rapport 103, p. 2 : « Morale of the troops remains high and the general tone of the mail is cheerful. The political crisis in Canada is the main topic, i.e. the question of sending draftees on overseas service, but morale does not appear to have been affected by this issue. »

Le rapport 109 (15-28 février 1945) qui voit une augmentation du pourcentage (12 vs 7,5 %), présente les choses comme suit : une perspective régulièrement et progressivement gaie, est la note dominante de ce courrier.

Rapport 109, p. 2 : « A consistent and increasingly cheerful outlook is the keynote of this mail. The Allied advance on all fronts is being followed with keen interest, and comments express optimism and enthusiasm for the part being played in the present operations by our own troops and those of our Allies. »

Finalement, les commentaires pour le rapport 113 (période du 1-15 mai 1945) qui enregistre une baisse (11 vs 6.2 %) se présentent comme suit : La principale caractéristique de ce courrier est sa gaité et son enthousiasme.

Rapport 113, p. 2 : « The chief characteristic of this mail was its cheerfulness and enthusiasm. The announcement of the end of hostilities in Europe caused great relief among troops and it is obvious that many would now welcome a quick return to Canada. »

« Topics such as service in the Far East or with the Army of Occupation in N. W. Germany continued to exercise the minds of various writers, and though frequent remarks indicate a sound fighting spirit, there is a minority who find the daily routine to be more irksome now that the war in Europe has been successfully concluded. »

Bref, on a l'impression qu'en hausse ou en baisse, le moral des troupes était évalué positivement. On peut présumer aussi par ces commentaires, que les rédacteurs des FCH

ne se donnaient pas pour tâche d'expliquer les variations positives ou négatives perçues dans le moral des troupes, mais de le constater. L'ensemble des commentaires nous fait savoir qu'ils faisaient ces constatations en retenant un postulat positif que l'on pourrait traduire comme suit : au fond, le moral des troupes était *toujours* bon et lorsque des indicateurs pouvaient faire croire le contraire, c'était en raison de certains irritants mineurs comme l'inaction, la rareté du courrier ou encore la mauvaise nourriture.

Ce postulat positif signale peut-être en définitive le besoin qu'on avait de croire que l'esprit de sacrifice et la disponibilité des hommes au combat, étaient inépuisables. Ce faisant, les censeurs et ceux à qui étaient destinés les rapports, pouvaient eux aussi espérer une issue favorable à la guerre en cours, le bon moral des troupes renforçant aussi le leur.

Conclusion

De juin 1943 à juillet 1945, les Field Censors (Home) qui font état de l'examen de milliers de lettres, peuvent être considérés sous deux angles principaux : celui de la sécurité et d'une tentative de sondage du moral des troupes.

Dans le premier cas, les rapports relèvent d'une opération de censure pour ainsi dire traditionnelle, puisqu'il s'agissait d'identifier les informations potentiellement utilisables par l'ennemi et de sanctionner le cas échéant, les fautifs. Il appert cependant, pour les rapports dont nous disposons, que très peu de fautes de cet ordre ont été commises.

Dans le second cas, les FCH relèvent d'une tentative de sondage, les lettres examinées servant alors à renseigner les autorités militaires sur l'état d'âme des soldats, non seulement au niveau de leur vie quotidienne et de leurs perceptions des combats vécus ou à venir, mais aussi à celui de leurs opinions « politiques ».

Dans cette perspective, le présent texte s'en est tenu à une description et à une analyse formelle des rapports. Ce choix, bien que simplificateur, était justifiable pour deux raisons : 1) faire connaître cette source complexe, tant au niveau de son contenu que de son traitement et 2) rendre compte du seul cadre de référence existant pour les extraits, puisque nous n'avons plus les lettres dans lesquels ils s'inséraient et prenaient véritablement leur sens. Faut-il rappeler par ailleurs que nous n'aurions pas pu atteindre l'opinion « pure » des soldats ? Le travail des censeurs nous a livré des informations impossibles à obtenir autrement, mais de telle manière qu'un certain nombre de problèmes se posent et qu'il faut signaler.

Soumis à la censure et forcés d'en être conscients sous peine de sanctions, les hommes ont progressivement intégrés les interdits, rendant de ce fait de moins en moins spontané (du point de vue de l'information) le courrier qu'ils écrivaient. Entre, par exemple, un jugement sincère sur tel aspect de la vie militaire et la possibilité de se mettre à dos un censeur zélé, beaucoup de soldats devaient choisir le silence. En favorisant l'autocensure les autorités militaires renforçaient la sécurité mais, simultanément, elles réduisaient la pertinence des sondages qu'elles cherchaient pourtant à effectuer.

Un autre problème doit être soulevé. Éloignés de leur famille, les soldats étaient nécessairement conscients de l'inquiétude qu'elles avaient à leur endroit, de sorte qu'ils pouvaient avoir tendance à présenter les choses positivement et à occulter les aspects négatifs pour les rassurer, donnant du même coup aux censeurs l'impression d'un moral plus élevé qu'il ne l'était peut-être. Cela pourrait peut-être expliquer pourquoi les

pourcentages concernant le bon moral provenant des hôpitaux militaires, sont plus élevés (12,66 %) que la moyenne globale (7,48 %).

*

* *

Quoi qu'il en soit, il n'en demeure pas moins possible d'utiliser les FCH dans le cadre de recherches thématiques comme la conscription, ou encore, dans celui des anticipations de l'après-guerre. Il serait possible, avec des limites évidentes bien entendu, de mettre en correspondance les extraits des rapports avec les sondages effectués par la Commission d'information en temps de guerre et de tenter de voir si les appréhensions des soldats concordaient avec celles des civils au Canada, durant la même période¹².

Une autre voie possible d'utilisation des extraits pourrait être de les reclasser complètement par grades (soldats, officiers, etc.), par thèmes, etc., le tout dans un cadre chronologique. Cependant, ce projet nécessiterait l'élaboration d'une méthodologie et d'une grille d'analyse sophistiquée de façon à ne pas faire dire à ces extraits ce que l'on voudrait bien qu'ils disent.

Tableau 2
Présentation des rapports FCH disponibles

N° d'id.	N° des rapports	Nombre de pages (avec les appendices)	General Morale Contented Current Report (%)	General Morale Contented Previous Report (%)	Périodes couvertes par les rapports
1	70	23	11	–	6 - 20 juil 1943
2	71	22	5,6	–	21 juil - 5 août 1943
3	78	30	3,5	5,9	6 - 21 nov 1943
4	79	43	2,6	3,5	25 nov - 6 déc 1943
5	80	29	3,6	2,6	7 - 22 déc 1943
6	81	25	3,5	3,6	23 déc - 6 janv 1944
7	82	32	4,1	3,5	7 - 21 janv 1944
8	83	30	4,8	4,1	22 janv - 5 fév 1944
9	84	32	4,2	4,8	6 - 20 fév. 1944
10	85	34	3,5	4,2	21 fév. - 5 mars 1944
11	86	24	3,6	3,5	6 - 20 mars 1944
12	87	26	3,9	3,6	21 mars - 5 avril 1944
13	88	25	3,5	3,9	6 - 20 avril 1944
14	89	20	3,4	3,5	21 avril - 5 mai 1944
15	90	19	3,6	3,4	6 - 21 mai 1944
16	91	21	3,5	3,6	22 mai - 5 juin 1944
17	92	16	4	3,5	16 - 20 juin 1944
18	93	13	10	–	16 - 28 juin 1944
19	94	15	9,5	10	29 juin - 15 juil 1944
20	95	13	16,5	9,5	16 - 31 juil 1944
21	96	15	14	16,5	1 - 15 août 1944
22	97	16	13,7	14	16 - 31 août 1944
23	98	17	13,5	13,7	1 - 15 sept 1944
24	99	15	12,1	13,5	16 - 30 sept 1944
25	100	26	24	–	1 - 15 oct 1944
26	101	32	6,3	24	16 - 31 oct 1944
27	102	26	8,8	6,3	1 - 15 nov 1944
28	103	19	4,8	8,8	16 - 30 nov 1944
29	104	22	5,3	4,8	1 - 16 déc 1944
30	105	16	6,5	5,3	16 - 31 déc 1944
31	106	14	7	6,5	1 - 16 janv 1945
32	107	17	6,4	7	16 - 31 janv 1945
33	108	17	7,5	6,4	1 - 15 fév 1945
34	109	15	12	(7,5)	15 - 28 fév 1945
35	110	15	12,1	12	1 - 12 mars 1945
36	111	15	11	12,1	3 - 14 avril 1945
37	113	19	11	6,2	1 - 15 mai 1945
38	114	13	12,1	11	16 mai - 6 juin 1945

N.B. Les numéros de rapports en caractère gras (**93 à 99**) désignent les rapports spéciaux sur le courrier provenant des hôpitaux militaires canadiens lors de l'invasion de la France. La zone ombrée suggère une "zone de turbulence" dans le moral des troupes, tel qu'en témoignent les variations dans les pourcentages. Les rapports 72 à 77, ainsi que 112 sont manquants.

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Annexe I

Grille de saisie des FCH

- 1 -

Field Censors (Home)

Canadian Army Overseas

Report Ref:No: FC(H) /C.R. /

Notes on mail examined during period

.....to.....

Free Surface Mail (ex F.P.O.)

Letters read

Ordinary Mail and Air Mail

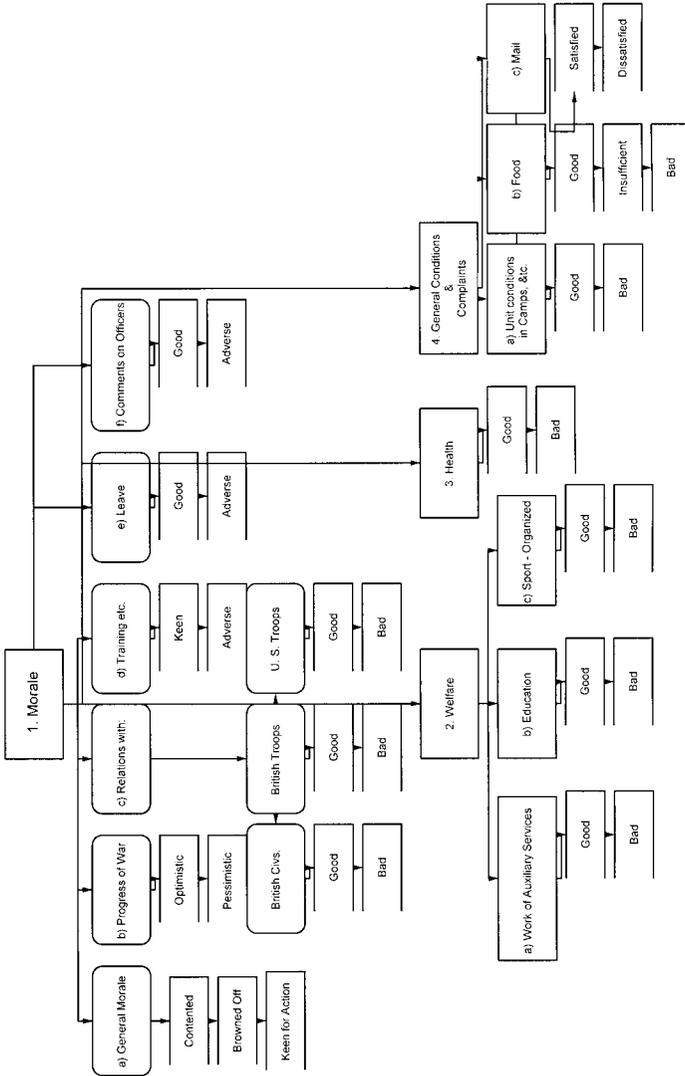
" "

TOTAL

I. SUMMARY – TREND OF TOPICS mentioned in Mail Based upon examination of xx,xxx letters (Free Surface Mail)					
SECTION	SUBJECT	ANALYSIS	CURRENT REPORT	PREVIOUS REPORT	
1. MORALE	a) General Morale	Contented	%	%	
		Browned off			
		Keen for action			
		Expectation of Action			
	b) Progress of war	Optimistic			
		Pessimistic			
	c) Relations with :	British Civs	Good		
			Bad		
		British Troops	Good		
			Bad		
		U.S. Troops	Good		
			Bad		
	d) Training (Schemes, Route, Marches, Courses, etc.)	Keen			
		Adverse			
e) Leave	Good				
	Adverse				
f) Comments on officers	Good				
	Adverse				
2. WELFARE	a) Work of Auxiliary Services	Good			
		Bad			
	b) Education	Good			
		Bad			
	c) Sport – Organized	Keen			
		Not keen			
3. HEALTH	Good				
	Bad				

I. SUMMARY – TREND OF TOPICS mentioned in Mail Based upon examination of xx,xxx letters (Free Surface Mail)				
SECTION	SUBJECT	ANALYSIS	CURRENT REPORT	PREVIOUS REPORT
4. GENERAL CONDITIONS & COMPLAINTS	a) Units conditions in camps, etc.	Good		
		Bad		
	b) Food	Insufficient		
		Bade		
	c) Mail	Good		
		Bad		
	d) Misc. General Complaints	Good		
		Bad		
5. SECURITY	a) General Security	Good		
		Bad		
	b) Security mindedness indicated			
	c) Minor indiscretions, locations, etc.			
	d) Inclusion of Formation in address			
e) Hints of overseas moves				
6. CENSORSHIP		Acceptance		
		Resentment (general)		
		Resentment (Unit Censors)		
7. MISCELLANEOUS	a) Current Operations	Good		
		Bare condition		
		Criticisms		
	b) Allied Air Bombing	Approval		
		Bare mention		

Annexe 2 Le niveau « moral » dans son ensemble et sa complexité



NOTES

- ¹ L'intitulé exact des rapports est le suivant : *Field Censors (Home)*, Canadian Army Overseas, Report Ref. No: FC(H)/C.R./suivi d'un numéro (de 70 à 114). La localisation est : ministère de la Défense nationale, Service historique, 312.023, Vol. I, II et III.
- ² On trouve une définition intéressante de la censure au site de l'Encyclopaedia Britannica (<http://www.britannica.com/>), ainsi que quelques idées utiles dans l'article « censure » de l'Encyclopédie Encarta 99 de Microsoft.
- ³ Carl Von Clausewitz, *Principles of War*, éd. de Hans W. Gatzke, The Military Service Publishing Company, 1942 [1812], p. 17. Ce texte est disponible sur Internet à l'adresse suivante : <<http://www1.monumental.com/cbassfrd/cwzhome/princwar/princwar1.htm>>.
- ⁴ Sur le contrôle de l'information voir Claude Beauregard, *Le contrôle et la manipulation de l'information au XX^e siècle*. Recherche post-doctorale, Université Laval, 1998, 112 p.
- ⁵ Pour une perspective d'ensemble sur la censure militaire voir Claude Beauregard, *Guerre et censure au Canada 1939-1945*, Sillery, Éditions du Septentrion, 1998, particulièrement le chapitre III, p. 111-144.
- ⁶ La cote reste identique (REPORT REF. NO: FC(H)/C.R.93 à 99) mais l'intitulé des rapports est le suivant : *Special Report on mail from Canadian Military Hospitals on the invasion of France*.
- ⁷ On compte pour les rapports disponibles 358 610 lettres examinées, soit une moyenne de 9 436 lettres par rapport.
- ⁸ Le plus bas pourcentage est de 92,4 et le plus élevé de 99,8.
- ⁹ Ces sections sont autonomes et rendent compte d'un niveau d'analyse spécifique, mais il ne me semble pas trop abusif de les regrouper et d'y voir des paramètres témoignant du moral en général.
- ¹⁰ De fait, il existe un autre niveau dans les rapports de censure, mais qui n'est pas autonome. Il s'agit des appendices qui sont ajoutées aux rapports dans le cas des « Unit Conditions » qui se rattachent à la section 4 (General Conditions & Complaints) ou encore à la section 5 (Security). À cela s'ajoute, comme je l'ai déjà signalé, des dossiers thématiques (conscription, service en Extrême-Orient).
- ¹¹ Il faut avouer qu'une analyse complète et relationnelle de toutes les sous-sections de la section Morale, excéderait par son ampleur les limites imposées à ce texte.
- ¹² Voir à ce propos Claude Beauregard, Pierre Grégoire et al., « Les sondages de la Commission d'information en temps de guerre (1943-1945) », *Bulletin d'histoire politique*, Vol. 8, n^{os} 2-3 (hiver-printemps 2000) : 220-233.

The Second World War 3: The Pacific

La Deuxième Guerre mondiale 3 : le Pacifique

“AN INVIDIOUS AND EVEN DANGEROUS POSITION”: CANADIAN REACTIONS TO THE 1934 UNITED STATES ARMY AIR CORPS MISSION TO ALASKA

Galen Roger Perras

On 15 May 1934 the adjutant general of the United States army air corps proposed despatching ten B-10 bomber aircraft from Washington, D.C. to Fairbanks, Alaska via north-west Canada. After years of conflict with the United States Navy (USN) over the control of coast defence and then its disastrous mishandling of air mail delivery in early 1934, the air corps sorely required an operational success to deflect concerns about its ability to conduct long-range operations. But while the adjutant general declared that the mission’s public rationale would be the “furthering [of] friendly diplomatic relations with Canada and conducting a good will flight to Alaska,” he added three confidential reasons: photographing certain strategic landings areas in Alaska; formulating plans to defend that distant territory; and testing “the practicality of dispatching an Air Force to Alaska, should the necessity therefor [sic] arise.”¹ The necessity in this case was a possible war with Japan, and the air corps intended to test a long-standing notion, promulgated by General Billy Mitchell in the early 1920s, that Canada would support the United States in a conflict with Japan. The American request to over- fly Canada, however, split Canadian authorities. A suspicious Department of National Defence (DND), convinced that the mission would commit Canada to America’s side against Japan in wartime, found itself pitted against a Department of External Affairs (DEA) that downplayed the fears of a precedent and had little time for military concerns. The flight occurred, but its successful conclusion did little to aid the air corps’ reputation and only encouraged the Canadians to continue formulating plans to assure their neutrality in any conflict between America and Japan.

By 1934 the army air corps confronted difficult circumstances. While the 1920 National Defense Act had established an army of 280,000 troops, congressional reluctance to vote the necessary fiscal appropriations had cut that to 159,000 by 1936. It could have been much worse for President Franklin Roosevelt had intended to chop \$144 million and 16,000 soldiers from the army in 1934, a move that was blocked only when army chief of staff General Douglas MacArthur confronted Roosevelt; still, the military budget fell to its lowest outlay since 1914.² Moreover, convinced that air power

alone could protect America against assault, the air corps had sought separate service status and confirmation of its security role against considerable hostility. In the early 1920s the army leadership had condemned air power prophet Brigadier General William Mitchell for “notoriously” overestimating bombing efficiency, labelled his many theories “unsound,” and dismissed his many lengthy reports as agencies “of propaganda for a unified Air Service and other pet lobbies.” Although Mitchell was forced from the service in 1926 for insubordination, his disciples carried on with his work. In 1931 they had acquired the strategic task of defending America’s coasts against a naval assault, but the USN had appealed that ruling and the matter was still very much in doubt in 1934.³

That naval challenge might not have seemed so threatening had the air corps not botched airmail delivery. Unhappy with the airmail contracts awarded by Herbert Hoover, in February 1934 Roosevelt had voided those deals and handed job to the air corps. But using craft ill-equipped to fly at night or in poor weather, employing inexperienced pilots, and subjected to the worst winter in years, the air corps performed miserably. By 1 June, when it relinquished the mail runs, the air corps had lost 66 planes and 12 pilots to crashes and amassed considerable public, congressional, and presidential criticism. Coming as it did in the wake of unspectacular performances in several highly publicized bombing exercises, the air mail fiasco left many wondering if army aviators could carry out long-distance operations in wartime.⁴

The air corps badly needed an operational success, and an Alaskan flight seemed opportune. With Japan’s ominous rise to power and with the potential demise after 1936 of the 1922 Washington agreements that had limited or frozen warship and base construction in the Pacific, some army officers were concerned about Alaska’s vulnerability to a pre-emptive Japanese strike. While this pessimistic view was not unanimously accepted within the army,⁵ sufficient concern existed to justify the bomber mission to Alaska. The rub, however, was geographic as the most expedient aerial route to Alaska from continental America crossed north-west Canada. The United States and Canada had signed a series of over-flight agreements since the 1920s (and on 2 June 1934 Canada extended those pacts for another year⁶), but those agreements applied only to local trans-border flights, not voyages across half the continent. Furthermore, those accords provided aerial convenience, not a military alliance directed against Japan.

The notion of Canada and America as natural allies against Japan was a new concept. Although Canadians and Americans often boast of their “undefended” border, historian Richard Preston has demonstrated that such claims were often more mythic than true well into the twentieth century.⁷ Both the American and Canadian militaries had drawn up war-fighting plans in case their relations broke down. One can make a case that those plans were simply bureaucratic exercises designed to sharpen officers’ skills – the commandant of the Army War College had admitted in 1928 that he could not “conceive the President agreeing to” invade Canada⁸ – but as late as 1932–33 the USN and the air corps had considered the possibility of a hostile Anglo-Japanese coalition using Canadian bases to attack the United States.⁹ Canadian and American forces had cooperated in World War One in such areas as training, intelligence gathering, transportation, and munitions production, but that had ended abruptly at war’s end though the Canadian military had agreed in 1926 “to make specific reply to any requests for information which “the War Department might make.”¹⁰

But the air corps wanted more than an information exchange. As early as 1919 William Mitchell had set out to construct a triangular defensive system of interconnected

flyways anchored on the Panama Canal, Alaska, and Canada. Seeking to capture American and Canadian public support, in 1920 Mitchell had sent four aircraft from New York to Alaska to establish a Canadian air route that would aid the despatch of air units to Asia and ensure that the airways to Europe and Asia would be controlled "by the two great English speaking races."¹¹ Although Canada had permitted that mission, the extensive logistical preparations required to ensure the flight's success demonstrated that while Mitchell's flyway notions were theoretically sound, in 1920 they were impossible given primitive aviation technology.¹² Not easily discouraged, after touring Asia in 1923-24 Mitchell had become convinced that Japan could build "the greatest military machine the world ever saw" and that armed conflict between the yellow and white races was inevitable. He therefore had proposed placing 300 bombers in Alaska, poised to conduct a "decisive" offensive against congested Japanese cities. Concerned that Japan might strike Alaska first, Mitchell had advised that only a speedy despatch of forces to Alaska through Canada would save the day. Would Canada help? Mitchell was certain that it would. In 1921-22 Canada had scuttled the Anglo-Japanese alliance's renewal because it would not be a "partner to an arrangement that could by any possibility be said to be directed against the United States." Furthermore, after visiting Canada in 1923 Mitchell had opined that "in their tastes, ideas, and manner of living," Canadians were more American than British. And because a Japanese invasion of Alaska would threaten Canada as well as America, Mitchell had been certain that "under these circumstances, a distinct understanding is a perfectly logical and sensible thing."¹³

Many of Mitchell's air power acolytes still were in place in 1934 and they now had an opportunity to test the great man's notion. The Canadian military had other ideas. General J.H. MacBrien had warned in 1920 that with Germany's defeat "the centre of interest has shifted from the North Atlantic to the North Pacific." While the Canadian army had argued that "it was not inconceivable" that warlike Japan might encroach upon Canadian shores,¹⁴ Canadians were more concerned about the possible threat to the south. Former militia officer C.F. Hamilton had put that concern best in 1921. He had averred that Japan, driven by "explosive and incalculable factors" such as overcrowding, economic distress, an inability to understand the West, and "an intense but insular pride" was on a collision course with an American nation in possession of "a curious and dangerous frame of mind." And while Canadians might wish to see America's "self-complacency rudely shaken" by a less than easy victory, their interests would be served best by an American triumph that reserved "our Pacific coast for white settlement." Concerned that America's initial military effort would be inept, Hamilton predicted that Japan's navy might establish secret bases in isolated British Columbian inlets or seek refuge in Canadian waters. And while he thought that Canada's principal concern would lay not in "what each power did, but what it would accuse the other of doing, and us of permitting," if Japan invaded Alaska then Hamilton feared that America, becoming "an uncommonly ugly neighbour," might occupy British Columbia. On the other hand, if American forces moving to Alaska used Canadian territories, then Japan might attack the Queen Charlotte Islands or the mainland port of Prince Rupert. Hamilton's solution to the conundrum was less than ideal; although Canada should become "a sufficiently powerful neutral, in appearance as well as reality, to impose respect upon both parties," it might better protect its neutrality by covertly relaying potentially vital military intelligence to the Americans to use against Japan.¹⁵

Subsequent military reports put the matter even more directly. A November 1928 joint staff committee (JSC) report judged that Canada's undefended West coast

constituted “a very serious weakness in the defence of the U.S.A.” Such weakness might compel American forces to occupy key Canadian points or to demands that Canada seek American assistance to expel Japanese invaders. Maintaining that “in either event the continuance of our independence would be seriously compromised,” the JSC declared that unless Canada made a greater effort to defend its neutrality, that neutrality “would be respected by the belligerents just as long as it was considered by them to be politic and no longer.”¹⁶ In January 1931 the general staff had noted that a United States-Japan clash was only a matter of time. When that war came both sides likely would seek British support and, due to its geography and connections to America, Canada “would be peculiarly susceptible to charges of non-neutrality by either of the combatants and liable to be manoeuvred into a position where armed defence of its frontiers would be the only alternative to active participation on one side or the other.” Additionally, “under the pressure of circumstances” America might ignore Canadian neutrality; the only remedy then “would be the evident intention and ability to fight, if necessary, in order to stay out.” But the army’s strategic predictions linked the preservation of neutrality directly to the ability to create an expeditionary force for Europe, arguing that “the requirements of either situation call for the rapid mobilization and concentration of a force...equipped and organized on thoroughly modern lines.”¹⁷

General A.G.L. McNaughton had pushed hard for this linkage. Having become CGS in 1929, McNaughton desired to transform the moribund militia into a modern army that could send an expeditionary force to Europe and make the army the government’s primary security adviser. He therefore sought to create seven divisions, but while defending Canadian neutrality was “a matter of increasing importance,” McNaughton was certain that it was not “the most serious” military issue facing Canada.¹⁸ Deteriorating relations between Japan and America, however, had forced McNaughton to pay more attention to the Pacific. On 28 February 1933, the same day that Japan withdrew from the League of Nations, McNaughton had advised Prime Minister R.B. Bennett that Japanese and American military exercises in the Pacific were designed to test war-fighting capabilities. As continuing skirmishing in China could “be the spark to cause a detonation” in the Pacific, the CGS had made clear that Canada’s duty as a neutral would demand considerable military forces as a lack of preparedness would place the nation “in an invidious and even dangerous position.”¹⁹

But when a JCS subcommittee, charged with designing a neutrality plan in a north Pacific conflict not involving Britain, had offered its findings in March (the Beeman Report), its analysis was discomfiting. While neither Japan nor America was expected to invade British Columbia, Japanese vessels and ship-borne aircraft likely would violate Canadian waters and air space to attack targets in Alaska or Washington State. As it would take three months for Canada to concentrate just nine flying boats and four destroyers on the West coast (assuming no threat in the Atlantic), the report had stated that Canada could do little but protest repeated territorial violations by the belligerents. Certain that the United States would create new bases in the Aleutian Islands, the subcommittee had predicted that American warplanes presumably would find it convenient to use Canadian air space. Recommending against shooting at those aircraft “until every resource of diplomatic protest had been exhausted,” the subcommittee instead had advised exercising “great forbearance to the United States in this matter as long as it could convince Japan that it was not deliberately conniving at unneutral service.” As to fears that American forces might occupy bases in Canada, the report had averred that was unlikely as long as America was reassured that Canada was doing its

best to ward off Japan. However, providing such assurances would require over twenty RCN vessels, thirty-five new aircraft, and two militia divisions and sixty-four special coast watching teams to be mobilized immediately upon the onset of a crisis.²⁰

But as the great depression had hit Canada particularly hard, Bennett had little interest in or money for greater defence spending. Moreover, External Affairs was no friend of the defence department, largely thanks to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs O.D. Skelton. Recruited personally by W.L.M. King from a Queen's University sinecure in 1925, the workaholic Skelton had been described by King as "the ablest man in the public service of Canada."²¹ At Imperial Conferences in 1923 and 1926 Skelton had helped King to resist British blandishments regarding greater imperial defence cooperation, and he consistently had opposed attempts by MacBrien and McNaughton to construct close ties with the British military. Asking "how many hypotheses make a commitment," Skelton also had blocked a Canadian equivalent to Britain's interdepartmental committee on imperial defence.²² So when DND had asked the DEA to comment on the Beeman Report, including what should be done if Japanese warships operated just beyond Canada's three-mile territorial limit, External Affairs had consented to meet with DND officials on 9 May but declined to rule definitively on those issues until 1936.²³

Although he would tell a visiting British official in late 1934 that "any estrangement from the United States plays into" the hands of those Canadians who were "opposed to cooperation with the Empire in time of war,"²⁴ McNaughton had been concerned about American military over-flights since at least 1923. Therefore, in June 1934 when the United States asked for Canada's permission to send ten bombers and two reconnaissance planes on "a good will flight" through north-west Canada to Alaska,²⁵ the CGS objected. Contending that it constituted nothing less than "a military reconnaissance" which would induce "similar requests from any other foreign power that could not well be refused," McNaughton feared the setting of a precedent that "might make it very difficult to maintain our neutrality or to terminate the custom" in a crisis.²⁶

Skelton did not agree with those concerns. Described by an American diplomat "as a man who has always been a friend of the United States and an advocate of more confident relations with us," Skelton believed that Canada's security lay "in her own reasonableness, the decency of her neighbour, and the steady development of friendly intercourse, common standards of conduct, and common points of view."²⁷ Reasonableness thus dominated Skelton's response to the American request. Allowing American warplanes to over-fly British Columbia once would not "necessarily commit" Canada to a more permanent arrangement, while Skelton lectured McNaughton that America's position was quite unique "as it alone possesses territory on this continent between which a route through Canada is a natural one." But offering a sop to the CGS, the Under-Secretary suggested that the American should use a central British Columbia flyway rather than the more sensitive, and more commercially promising, Mackenzie Valley route.²⁸

However, American Legation officer Pierre de la Boal pointed out to Skelton that as American aircraft already had twice employed the Mackenzie Valley course, Canada's refusal to allow the bombers "to transit to Alaska was likely to be looked upon as a measure prompted by military considerations quite unusual in the existing relationship between Canada and the United States and reminiscent of the inhibitions which exist in other parts of the world." Skelton then took the matter directly to Bennett. Explaining

DND's objections, the Under-Secretary made clear that he did not see the flight as constituting a precedent during wartime, nor did he envisage Japan asking for or getting similar privileges. Still, if Bennett rejected the American request, then Skelton advised "it would be preferable to refuse it on the ground that the route is not available rather than bringing in any military defence issues." McNaughton reiterated that the mission "was nothing more than a military reconnaissance designed to open an air route from the United States to Alaska which would facilitate reinforcing that territory in the event of trouble between the United States and Japan." As allowing such a route "would involve the broad issues of the maintenance of Canadian neutrality," McNaughton petitioned Bennett to resist the American pressure. That advice was not taken. Bennett informed the American Legation on 18 June that the planes could use the Mackenzie Valley flyway despite Canadian concerns "as to the present feasibility and safety of this route."²⁹

Skelton very nearly regretted his decision to allow the mission. On 21 June the Washington Herald stated that the flight was designed to test the Canadian route's value for reinforcing Alaska speedily in a crisis. Despite State Department protestations that the article was sensationalist, a livid Skelton maintained that the newspaper's claim, regardless of veracity, would render it "impossible for us to permit any more passages of military planes from the United States to Alaska." Moreover, the Japanese, "very suspicious anyway," would be further stirred up. While Skelton did not demand the mission's cancellation, America's Minister to Canada warned that the disclosure had offended Canadian sensibilities and had damaged American interests by strengthening the hand of those in DND inclined "to view our military operations with some suspicions." Indeed, Warren Robbins was certain that "part of the work of the National Defence Department consists of envisaging measures to be taken to render any incursions from the United States in time of work as difficult as possible."³⁰

The mission began in Washington, D.C. on 19 July before terminating in Alaska five long days later. Stops were made in Winnipeg, Regina, Edmonton, Prince George, and Whitehorse, with large and enthusiastic crowds – 2,500 in Regina, 3,000 at Edmonton³¹ – in attendance at every stop. Flight commander Colonel H.H. Arnold praised the Canadian route for its excellent weather and hoped that Canada's "military element have gained a very favourable impression of our Air Corps and its personnel." Edmonton's American Consul had no doubt that Arnold's desire would be met. While the local press had played up the mission's military rationale, Canadian military personnel in Edmonton had expressed great pleasure "over what they regard as a symbol of identity between the interests of Canada and the United States in the matter of Alaskan defense."³²

The Alaskan mission, however, failed to meet most of its objectives. When the army-navy Joint Board promulgated a new air power doctrine in late 1934, the air corps lost primary responsibility for coastal defence to the USN. But the major blow to the air corps had come even before Arnold's planes had begun winging their way to Alaska. The Baker Board, charged with studying air corps operational capabilities after the air mail fiasco, had concluded that air power, while obviously important, was not a decisive war-winning weapon and predicted that the United States need not fear an aerial assault.³³ Moreover, the flight did not alter opinions in Ottawa; indeed, as Robbins feared, it strengthened the hands of those Canadians who opposed strategic cooperation with the United States. McNaughton told Britain's War Office in late July that he continued to

fear that “the gradual establishment of a practice of despatching aircraft to Alaska over Canadian territory might give rise to a rather awkward situation on some future occasion.”

Additionally, the Canadian Legation in Washington noted with considerable concern that the USN, having sent an aerial survey team to the Aleutians in May 1934 and planning a major fleet exercise for the north Pacific in 1935, was preparing to turn the Aleutians into a base of operations once the Washington agreements’ ban on new Pacific bases lapsed after 1936.³⁴ By late 1935, after congressional transcripts regarding air corps concerns about potential enemy bomber bases in Canada were released accidentally to the public, Canadian military and foreign policy personnel sat down together to complete the work begun by the Beeman Report. Concerned further by Franklin Roosevelt’s attempts after 1936 to convince Canadian leaders that their nation’s strategic destiny was intertwined with that of the United States, by April 1938 they had completed Defence Scheme No. Two, the “Plan for the maintenance of Canadian neutrality in the event of a war between the United States and Japan.”³⁵

In the end, the army air corps had anticipated the future. Once Germany conquered France in June 1940, a desperate Canada accepted Roosevelt’s proposal for a North American defensive alliance. When Japan precipitated America’s formal entry into World War Two in December 1941 and then invaded the western portion of the Aleutian archipelago in June 1942, Canada and the United States cooperated to defend the continent and expel the invader. Canada allowed the construction of a highway to Alaska through north-west Canada plus the North-West Staging Route, a series of air bases that delivered aircraft to the Soviet Union via Alaska, and then contributed air, sea, and ground forces to the Aleutian campaign. Mitchell’s vision was completed in 1957 when Canada and the United States signed the North American Air Defence Agreement, initiating a continental air defence agreement that persists to this day.

NOTES

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- ⁵ Alaskan defence prior to World War Two is discussed in Galen Roger Perras, “Stepping Stones to Nowhere? The United States, Canada, and the Aleutian Islands Campaign, 1942-43,” PhD University of Waterloo, 1995.

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JAPANESE NON-MEMORIES OF COMBAT WITH CANADA DURING THE PACIFIC WAR

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Canada fought against Japan in the Pacific theatre of the Second World War. It sent about ten thousand officers and soldiers to the region spreading between the Aleutian Islands and the Indian Ocean. More than five hundred died in battle or in captivity and never returned home.

The Battle of Hong Kong in December 1941 is the most famous example of Canadians in combat in the Pacific region. In October 1941, 1975 Canadians of the 1st Battalion, Royal Rifles of Canada and of the 1st Battalion, Winnipeg Grenadiers were sent to Hong Kong, in spite of their lack of preparation for combat. Almost all the Canadian casualties in action during the war against Japan resulted from the fight to defend this British colony. Here the author will show you an anecdote of the Battle of Hong Kong. On attacking the pillbox on the top of 160-Meter Hill in the Stanley Peninsula in the southern part of Hong Kong island, two Japanese soldiers heard a Canadian, speaking in fluent Japanese, shout: “We are the British Imperial Guards, and we are proud of our age-long tradition and history. Hey, Jap! Come up here!”¹

Hong Kong was not the only place where Canadian troops were employed in order to fight against the Japanese. The US-Canadian joint operation to regain Kiska Island in the Aleutians from July to August 1943 was another case of deployment, though Kiska was not a Canadian territory either. About 4800 Canadians were mobilized for this amphibious operation. This was the largest expedition that Canada threw into the Pacific theatre. Fortunately, there was no rematch of the Battle of Hong Kong: Canada versus Japan. Before the arrival of the US-Canadian joint forces, all of the Japanese officers and soldiers had already left the island. Originally the Japanese operation to occupy Kiska and Attu Islands in the same archipelago was a feint, as part of the operations for the Imperial Navy’s combat planning, called the Midway Operation, in the central part of the Pacific. In May 1943, the Japanese garrison on Attu was wiped out, or YOKUSAI in Japanese, by the US. The next target of the Allies was supposed to be Kiska. So the Japanese Imperial Headquarters ordered the garrison on Kiska to retreat.²

Three squadrons of the Royal Canadian Air Force were employed in Southeast Asia. Two transport squadrons supported the British Army in Burma. Seven aircraft were lost and many of the crews were killed. The mission of the multi-role reconnaissance squadron was to fly over the Indian Ocean. This reconnaissance flight squadron discovered the Japanese Admiral Nagumo’s fleet to the south of Ceylon on 4 April 1942 and succeeded in transmitting this reconnaissance information by radio communication to their operations center in India. However Nagumo’s fleet also picked up their signals. The fleet’s fighter aircraft detected and caught up with the Canadian squadron and shot them down. Six of the Canadian crews were rescued by the Japanese, sent to prison camps, and they survived the war.³

The cruiser HMCS *Uganda* took part in the Naval campaign of Okinawa. And at the end of the war, a volunteer Canadian brigade was being trained to join an assault on the Japanese mainland.

However, Canadian contributions to the Allied victory against Japan were relatively small, which is why it is unfortunately called a “sideshow” in comparison with the war against German and Italy in the Atlantic and in Europe.

“The Combat Report of the Assault on Hong Kong from the 230th Infantry Regiment of the Japanese 38th Division” and the history of its 5th Company show that the Japanese Army in Hong Kong perceived that there were about two thousand Canadians among their enemies and that they were generally excellent.”⁴ But it is not certain that many other Japanese recognized the fact that Canada and Japan were hostile to each other in the Second World War. And the number of Canadian casualties in the Pacific region was not so huge as in the European and the Atlantic theatres. The author would like to say that this is one of the basic factors behind today’s good relationships between Canada and Japan. It means that, generally speaking, we do not have any deep-seated grudge against each other stemming from the Pacific War and that memories of warfare have not prevented the two nations from being good neighbours.

This might be a rare case in world history: Canadians and the Japanese, enemies in the last war, have not held much hostile feelings against each other, in general. At least, it is true for the Japanese side. Non-memories of combat with the Canadians positively contribute to the Japanese image of Canada. Needless to say, the tragedies experienced by Canadian POWs in Japan and Japanese immigrants in North America should not be forgotten.

Let us turn to Canadian history of the Pacific War. On this issue, especially concerning the battle of Hong Kong, several academic analyses have been made, as you know, and there have been no new major findings nor ideas based on Japanese documents since Professor Hisashi TAKAHASHI of Sophia University in Tokyo, wrote his article about the battle of Hong Kong almost ten years ago.⁵

Now the author would like to focus on the decisions or wartime leadership of the Mackenzie King government.

As mentioned before, some two thousand Canadians were sent to Hong Kong in order to reinforce the British colony to help deter the Japanese from attacking the Royal territories in Southeast Asia. This was the proposal of the former Commander of Hong Kong, General Grasett, first shown to his old classmate from the Royal Military College, then Canada’s Chief of the General Staff, General Crerar and, later, accepted officially by the Mackenzie King government.⁶

It has been frequently mentioned that they did not believe a Japanese attack against Hong Kong was imminent, but it seems to me that this explanation is not persuasive enough. The Canadian government was clearly conscious that a war against Japan would be inevitable, so it was promoting their common defense system with the US. And the Canadian Defense Ministry had already begun studying the question of how to treat Japanese immigrants in wartime. The author has no idea why there were some people who thought that the British colony was so safe that there had been enough time to train two under-prepared battalions.

How about the case of Kiska? Canadians sent there were drafted soldiers. They were conscripted only for their home defense, especially to prepare for a possibility of

Japanese attack against the coast of British Columbia. But they were dispatched to Kiska Island because the Aleutians were joined with the continental shelf.⁷ It was very fortunate that the Canadian government sent its troops to Kiska, not to Attu. In the latter case, there would have been many casualties, and that might have become a political issue. However, the author does not say that it could have been another Dieppe.

It can be said there was a moral issue regarding Canadian expeditions to the Asian continent. Canadians were sent to help Britain defend her colonies: Hong Kong, Burma and Ceylon. One of Winston S. Churchill's purposes of pursuing the war in Asia and the Pacific was to keep or regain the British overseas territories from Japan or even from the native peoples, or First Nations. Canada had just become independent of Great Britain in 1931. But, in retrospect, it acted as a tool for imperialism in the Pacific theatre as a result, even though the degree of its engagement was low. Canada should not have been a British partner in the sideshow. It is said that there were some members within the government, perhaps including the Prime Minister, who did not completely favour the overseas deployments for that reason. Then, why did the Canadian government accept, in the end, those British demands to send troops to the Royal Colonies in the Far East?

The US and Canada intended to remove the Japanese troops from the Aleutian Islands and to reinforce their defence posture along the west coast of the North American continent, because they feared a possible Japanese assault from the Pacific. But Japan did not have any plans for such grandiose operations. It is said that a Canadian fisherman saw a surfaced Japanese submarine attack Vancouver Island. Vice-Admiral Yamazaki, then commanding the Second Submarine Squadron of the Imperial Navy, writes in his memoirs that he ordered I-26 to fire at a radio facility on the island on June 20, 1942.⁸ To the best of my knowledge, however, no Japanese official documents to prove that this operation was actually carried out have been preserved in the Archives of Military History Department, the National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan.

During the winter of 1944-1945, at the beginning of the closing phase of the war, as a desperate act of the Japanese, over two hundred handmade paper balloon bombs reached North America, over an area from the island of Attu to the state of Michigan, and from Alaska to northern Mexico.⁹ Due to malicious winds, over seventy balloon bombs fell on Canadian territory, from British Columbia to as far as Manitoba. These were the only large-scale organized direct attacks by the Japanese on Canadian territory, though it was never intentional as far as Canada was concerned.

The Japanese balloon bombs were the first intercontinental and overseas weapons invented by humans. Research on such balloon attacks began in 1933. Its target at first was the Soviet Union. But the project was soon stopped.

In May 1942, the American General Jimmy Doolittle's planes bombed Tokyo. This resulted in the restarting of the balloons attack project. This time, its target was the US. Pre-war research revealed the existence of a jet stream capable of carrying an unmanned explosives-laden balloon the 6200 miles from Japan to the Pacific coast of North America in two or three days during the winter period from November to March. So, balloon bombs were launched from three sites along the lower half of Honshu's eastern seaboard from 3 November 1944 to 20 April 1945, the peak period of the jet stream.

The official document shows that the number of the balloon bombs launched for this operation was nine thousand.¹⁰ On the other hand, according to an officer concerned, Commander Yoshinaga, the number was about four thousand. He writes that he

deliberately gave the wrong number, nine thousand, to a correspondent of the Associated Press service who came up to ask him about the balloon bombs. Commander Yoshinaga adds that the rest of the balloon envelopes had been burnt after the end of the war.¹¹

The material of the balloons' envelope consisted of three or four layers of thin, long-fiber paper, called *ashi*, cemented together with a hydrocellulose adhesive made from *konnyaku*, a common potato-like vegetable. When made into a paste, it is called *konnyaku-nori*.

After it had dried, the material was dipped in a cleaning solution of soda-ash, washed in water, and dried and dipped in a glycerine solution to increase its pliability. The entire surface of the balloon was then coated with a waterproof lacquer. Great numbers of Japanese high-school girls were mobilized in this hard and delicate work of pasting and stitching the balloon's envelope. These girls were instructed not to wear hairpins, to have closely trimmed fingernails, to wear socks even in the midsummer heat, and to use gloves despite the fact that their work required manual dexterity. It is said that thousands of Japanese had a part in making these balloons, and they were never officially told of the purpose. About ten thousand balloons were produced under the cover of secrecy.

The balloons' destination would have been the forests of the Pacific Northwest in the US, to cause forest fires. So, the balloons carried several incendiary shells. The problem was that the peak period of the jet stream and the dry season in the Pacific coast of North America did not coincide. To cause the maximum number of fires, the balloons should have been launched in the dry season, that is, in summer. But the Imperial Army Headquarters considered it more important that the balloons reach North America and decided to order that the launching operation would be carried out from November to next spring. It is quite natural that the prime motive could not be realized. There was no evidence that fires were started by the balloons.

But it can be said that the Japanese balloon attacks had a psychological effect on Americans and Canadians. In the US, forest-fire countermeasures, called the Firefly Project, were actively conducted in the Pacific Northwest. It consisted of a special task force of aircraft and soldiers, coordinated by the military, the FBI, and the forest agencies. Besides, at the same time, biological warfare and germ attacks were equally feared. The Japanese, however, had no plans for resorting to these types of warfare in this balloon campaign, because they felt that the results might get out of control. Balloon interception measures were also taken by Air Forces. But it was very difficult to locate their targets, that is, the balloons. It was recorded that only two balloons were shot by US planes and three by Canadian. The Canadians also examined the sand in the ballast carried with the balloons in order to specify the launch sites. The US and Canada closely coordinated with each other to analyze the balloons. But the Japanese did not realize at all that their balloon attacks had caused reactions such as these across the Pacific.

So, the most effective countermeasure was the media blackout that gave no news of the balloons' accomplishments to Japan. The Imperial Army Headquarters wanted to but could not find out anything about the effectiveness of the balloon bombs. There were no reports concerning their effects upon the North American Continent except one.¹² The effectiveness of the balloon attacks seemed uncertain. And the hydrogen production was being disrupted by B-29 raids. When spring came, meteorological conditions made it

more difficult to continue the balloon attacks across the Pacific. Finally, in March 1945, the Imperial Army Headquarters ordered that further balloon missions be terminated.

In fact, US officials had requested the news media not to give the balloons any publicity. That was one reason why six people were killed by an explosion from a balloon bomb in Bly, Oregon, in May 1945. The other damage caused by a balloon bomb was the hitting and cutting of the power lines leading to the nuclear facility in Washington state, which was processing plutonium for atomic bombs that would be used against Japan.

During the Second World War, Canadians continued to be afraid of the possibility of Japanese assaults across the Pacific, and so reinforced her defence and warning system along the coast in cooperation with the Americans. But the Japanese handmade, paper balloon bombs turned out to be the true nature and the extent of the Japanese threat.

NOTES

- ¹ Hohei Dai 230 Rentai, Dai 5 Chutai, ed., *Hohei Dai 230 Rentai, Dai 5 Chutai Shi: Michishirube* (private publication, 1990), pp. 143-44.
- ² On the Japanese operations against the US in the Aleutian Islands, see Boeicho Boeikenshujo Senshishitsu, Hokuto Homen Rikugun Sakusen, Vol. 1, *Attu no Gyokusai (Senshisosho)* (Tokyo: Asagumo Shinbunsha, 1968).
- ³ For example, David J. Bercuson, *Maple Leaf against the Axis: Canada's Second World War* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1995), pp. 57-58.
- ⁴ "Dai 38 Shidan, Hong Kong Koryakusen Sento Keii" (The National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan).
- ⁵ Hisashi Takahashi, "The Canadian Expeditionary Force and the Fall of Hong Kong" in John Schultz and Kimitada Miwa, eds., *Canada and Japan: In the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 102-9.
- ⁶ Carl Vincent, "No Reason Why: The Hong Kong Tragedy" in Schultz and Miwa, eds., *Canada and Japan*, p. 89.
- ⁷ A. Hamish Ion, "Canada and the Pacific War" (The National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan, July 11, 1995).
- ⁸ Yamazaki Shigeaki, *Kaiso no Teikokukaigun* (Tokyo: Tosho-shuppansha, 1952), p. 187.
- ⁹ "Daitoasenso Tairikushi Tsuduri" Kan 11 (The National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan). On Japanese Army's balloon bombs, Shunpei Suzuki, *Fusenbakudan* (Tokyo: Shincho-sha, 1980) is the only book published in Japan. Several articles have appeared both in Japan and in North America: Yasushi Hidaki, "Fusenbakudan niyoru Beikoku Hondo Kogeki" in Kaikosha, ed., *Hohei Enkakushi, Dai 5 kan* (Chu) (Tokyo: Kaikosha, 1971); Ikuhiko Hata, "Fusenbakudan" in Ikuhiko Hata, *Jitsuroku Taiheiyosenso* (Tokyo: Kofusha-shuppan, 1995); W. H. Wilbur, "Those Japanese Balloons" in *The Readers Digest* (August 1950); Robert C. Mikesch, "Japan's World War II Balloon Bomb Attacks on North America," *Smithonian Annals of Flight*, No. 9 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1973); Michael E. Unsworth, "Floating Vengeance: The World War II Japanese Balloon Attack on Colorado" in *Colorado Heritage* (Autumn 1993). The author owes many English expressions regarding the balloon bomb campaign to the latter three articles.
- ¹⁰ "Kikyū Rentai no Fukuin to ni kansuru Shijitsu" (The National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan).
- ¹¹ Yoshitaka Yoshinaga, "Beihondo Kogeki Kessenheiki, Fusenbakudan no Himitsu" in *Sunday Nippon*, No. 31 (May 1957), p. 16.
- ¹² A Chinese newspaper *Takungpao*, 16 December 1944, reported a story of discovering a balloon bomb in the mountain district of Montana, US.

Part IV

THE RCN

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Partie IV

LA MRC

RCN, a Polyvalent Navy? La MRC, une marine polyvalente ?

A CENTURY OF CANADIAN NAVAL FORCE DEVELOPMENT: A REINTERPRETATION

Richard H. Gimblett

When standard histories of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) and its successors address the issue of fleet planning, they invariably proceed from the assertion that it was driven by senior officers schooled in the big ships of the Royal Navy (RN). The implication is that these men were single-mindedly determined to acquire a fleet in that likeness. Historians point to four critical junctures (1909, 1919, 1943, and 1961) to make their case.

Reviewed quickly, this approach appears to have some merit. The RCN generally is accepted to have been created in the wake of the Dreadnought Crisis of 1909, when First Sea Lord Admiral Sir John Fisher recommended that the Dominions develop battlecruiser fleet units to assist the RN in meeting the threat posed by the German High Seas Fleet. The obsolete cruisers *Niobe* and *Rainbow* were accepted as training vessels for the fledgling service, but partisan politics conspired against further development of the scheme. After the Great War, the Dominion prime ministers invited Admiral Sir John Jellicoe to advise them on their postwar fleet structures. He too recommended the fleet unit model, with the battlecruisers eventually to be supplemented by aircraft carriers. Postwar economies resulted instead in severe retrenchment, and through the interwar period, the RCN barely managed to maintain a small destroyer force. It was relegated the task of training reservists. Expansion during the Second World War finally presented navalists with the opportunity to realize their ambitions, but planning for a postwar “balanced” fleet of a carrier task force on each coast is seen as having been undertaken at the expense of the Corvette Navy fighting the Battle of the Atlantic. With the continuation of a (now Soviet) submarine threat in the Cold War period, the RCN was forced to accept the legitimacy of an anti-submarine fleet posture. Nonetheless, in the early 1960s, The Brock Report recommended the acquisition of six nuclear-powered submarines, a dozen “heliporters,” and a clutch of General Purpose Frigates. It was a decidedly ambitious scheme and, coming as it did so soon after the cancellation of the Avro Arrow programme, predictably came to nought.

Close inspection of each of these junctures, however, points to problems with the standard interpretation, and demands a re-assessment of the pro-British model of Canadian fleet development. This paper presents an alternative hypothesis: that Canadian naval planners consistently have favoured a uniquely Canadian model, the product of

their years of experience as to what they understood the country to need, what they felt confident as a service to provide, and what they knew politicians would sanction. Moreover, their prognoses have been right more often than they have been wrong.

Before examining them in detail, it first is necessary to understand the general context within which fleet development proceeded. In a country such as Canada, where the need for direct defence of the homeland is not self-evident, the foreign policy context has tended to be the paramount defence consideration. Through the twentieth century, external affairs evolved as the strict purview of the prime minister and latterly his secretary of state for external affairs. (They were one and the same person until William Lyon Mackenzie King appointed Louis St. Laurent in 1946; ever since, the foreign ministry has been bestowed upon a very senior cabinet member.) For the first four decades of the naval service's existence, Prime Ministers Wilfrid Laurier and Mackenzie King set the political scene, and they were concerned with establishing the autonomy of the Dominion. They perceived the armed forces as just one other (and certainly not the most important) means of asserting Canada's growing independence within the imperial framework; indeed, in their view, military forces had to be limited so as to avoid imperial entanglements. When St. Laurent became prime minister in 1948, this imperative changed. He appointed his former under-secretary to the external portfolio, and the vision which Lester Pearson and his fellow mandarins had developed during the Second World War held sway until well into the last decade of the century. Bolstered by Canada's growing stature as a wartime ally and founding member of the United Nations, they were enamoured of the "functional principle." Their newly interventionist foreign policy was contingent upon credible armed forces to assure a seat at the table of the various allied councils to which Canada belonged. Thereafter, no matter how badly those armed forces conceivably deteriorated, they inevitably were salvaged from oblivion by that simple dictum. In the order of the post-Cold War world, however, the essential war fighting capabilities of traditional armed forces once again have been rendered less self-evident. Peacemaking, peacekeeping, and humanitarian assistance to failing states are critical elements of the human security agenda which is leading the present government into the 21st century. "Crisis management" implies use of force and the practitioners of these operations accept professional management of violence as a pre-condition to their efforts. However, its critical relation to "soft power" is easily overlooked.

A clear progression can be discerned from this review of the past century. Having begun by addressing the basic needs of statehood, and thence having built a reputation for participation in collective security, our nation now is developing a growing altruism in its foreign policy. Underlying all of this, however, runs a constant but potent element which speaks to our unique Canadian definition of sovereignty. One author has encapsulated it as "the 49th paradox."¹ The combination of our geographic and political position on the North Atlantic triangle means that Canada, fundamentally, must see to its own defence so that the United States does not feel compelled to do it for us. At the same time, even as we seek to define ourselves as different from our closest ally, our forces must be functionally inter-operable with them.

Enough of the foreign policy background. There is one other prerequisite to a study of the evolution of Canadian naval development. This paper assumes a familiarity with the accepted history of the Canadian Naval Service (as described in the opening paragraphs above),² but it is premised on the fact that, for all the narrowness of the

subject, the primary archival sources must be re-visited. In consequence, the following discussion comprises much new research, and, as a re-interpretation, must be treated with all consequent caution.³

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The real impetus for an indigenous naval service sprang from what has been described as “the sense of power” that developed amongst Canadian nationalists in the post-Boer War years. In 1904, Prime Minister Laurier’s response to calls for general militia reform included a draft bill for the creation of a naval militia.⁴ It was never tabled, as the military budget that year unexpectedly was hit with the costs of the Militia assuming responsibility for the garrisons at Halifax and Esquimalt. The idea remained popular, however, and at the Imperial Conference of 1907 the Admiralty agreed to the concept of local colonial navies. The Marine Department was re-organized in the spring of 1908, with Rear-Admiral C.E. Kingsmill returning to Canada from the Royal Navy to head the service. He presented a preliminary report in February 1909 on how “...we should commence our work of assisting in the defence of our coasts.” It envisioned using the existing Fisheries Protection Service to begin training at Halifax, from which:

The men trained in the first year would be available to man a destroyer or a Scout [small cruiser] next year, and so on until we had sufficient officers and men well trained to man our proposed defence which should, in my opinion, be confined to Destroyers and Scouts for many a long day.⁵

This proposal was being readied for presentation to Parliament when the Dreadnought Crisis erupted in mid-March 1909. That served initially to focus Canadian efforts and, in the Parliamentary debate on 29 March, Laurier obtained unanimous consent for the speedy organization of a Canadian naval service. When Kingsmill and the naval minister-designate proceeded to London to negotiate the details, however, they were confronted with Admiral Fisher’s new fleet unit scheme.⁶ The discussions devolved into a rearguard attempt by the Canadians to keep their contribution to imperial defence within manageable proportions. The plan prepared by Laurier and Kingsmill had been a delicate balance of imperialist and nationalist aspirations, but the final fleet of cruisers and destroyers (epitomized by the “gift” of *Niobe* and *Rainbow*) was a compromise which satisfied no one. The national consensus evaporated, the nascent fleet came to nought, and on the outbreak of the Great War the RCN was unable to muster any effective forces. When a German U-boat threat arose in 1916, the core of the East Coast Patrol was formed by commissioning the vessels and crews of the Fisheries Protection Service into the RCN.

After the Great War, a number of proposals were put forward for the revitalisation of the RCN, of which The Jellicoe Report was only one.⁷ With no permanent policy evolving, the fisheries vessels were paid off and the RCN accepted the loan of a British cruiser and two destroyers. When the Washington Naval Conference of 1922 placed strict limitations on the fleets of the Great Powers, the Canadian government used that as the excuse to severely reduce their own naval budget. Commodore Walter Hose was by then the Director of the Naval Service, and his response was revolutionary. He paid off the cruiser, closed the naval college, cut the permanent force establishment to 500 officers and men, and kept only the destroyers and a handful of trawlers in commission as training vessels. The bulk of his resources went into the establishment of a baker’s dozen

companies of the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (the RCNVR), spread amongst major cities throughout the Dominion. The most incisive analysis of Hose's reorganization concludes that he "made the difficult but necessary choice between what we might now call institutional viability and operational capability."⁸ In a world in which power was determined by numbers of battleships and cruisers, destroyers were not the natural basis for a naval force. However, Hose's wartime experience as Captain of the East Coast Patrols had shown that "destroyers were the smallest true fighting ships that would give the Canadian service independent striking power should a future war bring further surprises."⁹

As Roger Sarty has further observed, "Mackenzie King's Liberals ... were delighted to have [in Hose] a professional sailor who did not toe the Admiralty line."¹⁰ His gamble paid off. When finances improved later in the 1920s, a grateful government authorized replacement of the older destroyers, plus an additional pair. This pattern continued through the 1930s, as the growing threat of war between the United States and Japan, and the consequent need for the RCN to mount neutrality patrols on the west coast, made the fleet a focus for rearmament. When war broke out instead in Europe in 1939, the small destroyer force hastily deployed to the east coast and bore the brunt of the Canadian war effort for the next two years. Augmented by the RCNVR (and the RCNR), the Royal Canadian Navy struggled to manage – albeit with debatable success – a fifty-fold expansion. As the threat to the convoy lifeline to Europe evolved in the early months of 1941 (from German surface raiders to U-boats), the Corvette Navy became the priority of the Naval Staff. The pre-war destroyers continued to figure prominently in the Battle of the Atlantic, busily employed as "leaders" of the escort groups.¹¹

By the summer of 1943, the strategic situation had brightened considerably. An assault on Northwest Europe in 1944 was a certainty, leaving only the defeat of Japan to be undertaken. The First Quebec Conference was convened in August 1943 precisely to discuss these issues. It brought a new dynamic to Canadian postwar naval planning, as the Naval Staff prepared an "Appreciation of RCN Ship Requirements for the War Against Japan and for the Post-War Navy."¹²

That paper usually is cited as proof of the Naval Staff's abandonment of the Corvette Navy in favour of its over-reaching "fleet unit" ambitions. The contrary position can be taken, for a number of reasons. Although most are beyond the scope of this paper,¹³ two are germane. First, the proposal was put forward in frank recognition of Canadian naval capabilities. It specifically precluded acquisition of capital ships (they being "beyond the resources of the RCN") and, while leaving the door open to procurement of aircraft carriers ("It may supersede the battleship as queen of the seas"), the paper "suggested that it is in the provision of cruisers that the RCN can render most valuable assistance."¹⁴ Second, and most critical, after mid-1943 the RCN was gaining unprecedented political support. Through the last two years of the war, the Canadian Government constituted its first-ever strategic planning cell, in the form of the Post-Hostilities Planning Committee, chaired by the formidable Hume Wrong from the Department of External Affairs and comprising representatives from each of the three services. Where the army and the air force sometimes presented less than coherent recommendations, Wrong invariably was impressed by the naval submissions.¹⁵ Influential diplomats such as Wrong and Lester Pearson recognized the limits of the pre-war policy of isolationism, and were developing a policy of commitment to collective security as the basis for the postwar international order. Preaching to the new mantra of

the “functional principle,” they accepted that Canadian intervention in postwar crises implied military force with global reach, which in those days only a navy could provide. The naval appreciation appealed to this, being built in part upon the evidence of Canada’s increasing expectation of “recognition as a growing power in world affairs ... To obtain the prestige and recognition of status which it thus seeks, it is essential that Canada should have as strong a Navy as possible.”¹⁶

Over the course of 1944 and 1945, the Canadian Government debated the size of its commitment to the war against Japan, and by extension that of its postwar forces. The only major change to the Quebec Conference proposal was the evolution of the cruiser squadrons into two full carrier task forces.¹⁷ In July 1945, with the war in Europe finally over, the Naval Staff was envisioning the “Continuing Royal Canadian Navy” as a force of two light fleet carriers, four light cruisers and 18 fleet destroyers, split equally between the east and west coasts, and some 20,000 men, which would allow for a 50:50 sea-shore ratio.¹⁸

When the atomic bombing of Japan brought the war to an unexpected end, RCN planning for an orderly transition to a postwar structure was thrown into disarray. As it struggled to maintain a large, balanced and capable fleet, the RCN endured near physical collapse from over-extension.¹⁹ The pain of the effort soon paid off, however. Only one carrier was ever to be in service at a time, and the cruisers were soon relegated to training status; but the powerful *Tribal* class destroyers added potency to the fleet, and a new class of anti-submarine escort (the eventual *St. Laurent* class) soon was on the way. Significantly, the turning point came in the fall of 1948, just as there came also a changing of the guard in the Canadian government, with the retirement of Mackenzie King. The new prime minister, Louis St. Laurent, and his internationalist Secretary of State for External Affairs, Lester Pearson, soon received confirmation that they had in the postwar RCN precisely the type of naval force which they desired. The creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in April 1949 demanded a military commitment and, with no army or air force units ready for deployment to Europe, the aircraft carrier *Magnificent* was earmarked for EASTLANT. Only a year later, in June 1950, when North Korea attacked the South, within days Canada despatched three destroyers. The government again chose that form of representation for the simple reason that, “... of the three services, only the RCN was in a position to provide an active service force for immediate use.”²⁰

As a result, the RCN enjoyed government support at the highest levels. In consequence, the 1950s was the only decade when Canada truly exercised a national maritime strategy as a cornerstone of government policy.²¹ It unravelled due to a combination of institutional (naval as well as departmental), political and alliance pressures.²² At the same time, the RCN witnessed an increasing specialization in anti-submarine warfare (ASW), and a consequent gradual erosion of its all-round capabilities. By the end of the decade, naval planners recognized the need for a new fleet plan. The Brock Report²³ undertook a wide-ranging examination of the Canadian strategic situation, and described the fleet required by the RCN to meet the myriad predicted tasks. Not the least of the problems with the report was that it was constructed in an atmosphere of uncertain political direction. Furthermore, even while acknowledging spiralling defence spending, it failed to appreciate fully the implications of that fact. The Diefenbaker government authorized the General Purpose Frigate programme, but when Lester Pearson formed a Liberal government in the fall of 1963, the first act of his

defence minister, Paul Hellyer, was to cancel the GPF.²⁴ Instead, he provided instruction to all three services for the re-examination of their 1964-65 estimates.

The response of the RCN was the Burchell Report.²⁵ Starting from the premise that “the aim of the Navy is to be primarily effective for ASW and also have a capability for UN Peacekeeping Operations and limited war,” it proposed a novel fleet model that was flexibly structured to cover both anti-submarine and amphibious contingencies. However, the report also concluded that “The absence of both air defence and surface capability ... places ... the viability of either an ASW or Mobile Force in jeopardy.” Its procurement programme was as simple as it was cost-effective: new fighters for *Bonaventure* (the A4E Skyhawk was recommended as the best compromise in terms of air superiority, strike and ground attack capabilities, while being operable from a light fleet carrier); two LPHs (Landing Platforms Helicopter) of the new *Iwo Jima* type under construction for the USN, to act as the main platform of additional ASW Groups, while also providing troop lift and logistic support capabilities; and three guided missile destroyers (DDGs) for firepower support. The proposed fleet not only was faithful to Hellyer’s budget limitations, but also fit nicely with his declared intent to develop an independent defence policy for Canada. Neatly tailored to the demands of a medium power navy,²⁶ it could hardly be described as being modelled on the Royal Navy (nor, for that matter, on the United States Navy). The defence minister appears not to have had the strength of his convictions, however, retreating instead to a stereotypical view of the RCN as a bastion of British ways.²⁷ As if in prelude to the battle over unification, the navy’s plans were categorically ignored, even before the budget crisis of the late 1960s threw defence planning generally into turmoil. The DDGs eventually appeared as the *Iroquois* (DDH-280) class, but neither the LPHs nor the new fighters were procured (in fact, *Bonaventure* was taken out of service), and Canada’s navy was set to be reduced to an ASW force of diminishing capacity.

It took three decades, but Canadian naval planners yet again were to be proven right. The capabilities described in the Burchell Report gradually were realized and reside in the fleet of today, albeit in different forms than originally envisaged. The fleet replenishment ships *Protecteur* and *Preserver* were constructed with a basic sealift capacity,²⁸ while the Canadian Patrol Frigate (CPF) and the Tribal Update and Modernization Program (TRUMP) addressed the ASW, air defence and anti-surface requirements. The flexibility inherent in these general purpose capabilities has been born out over the past decade, as Canada’s navy has become involved (with her allies) in wars in the Persian Gulf and the Adriatic Sea, and has assisted United Nations operations from Somalia to East Timor.

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At critical junctures in the past, Canadian naval planners found it necessary to change the course of development along which the fleet had been progressing. Contrary to popular belief, never was the proposed structure undertaken without regard for national political or strategic realities, and never did it truly resemble the British model. Rather, invariably the prescription was a most reasoned analysis of what the country needed at that particular time, what the service felt confident of providing, and what politicians would sanction. Always it was undertaken with a keen (even if sometimes only intuitive) sense of what naval strategy meant for a middle power.

Canadian naval staffs have been aware of the potential of the latest developments in war fighting being pursued by their major allies (the RN and USN), and quite naturally have been keen to integrate these capabilities into their own force structure. The final plans presented to the government have been grounded, nonetheless, in a rational appreciation of foreign policy and fiscal realities. The challenge for 2020 is to determine the changing direction of the human security environment, and to tailor the structure of the “fleet-after-next” to those imperatives, while retaining the war fighting capacity which will remain fundamental to the naval profession.

The Canadian Naval Service has a good record of getting it right. The weight of history is on their side. They have a proud tradition to maintain.

NOTES

- ¹ Richard Gwyn, *The 49th Paradox: Canada in North America* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1985).
- ² The best general survey is Marc Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century* (University of Toronto Press, 1999). Another often overlooked but concisely useful source is Lieutenant-Colonel D.J. Goodspeed (ed.), *The Armed Forces of Canada, 1867-1967: A Century of Achievement* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967).
- ³ This paper is developed from a theme begun in the author's, “Gunboat Diplomacy, Mutiny and National Identity in the Postwar Royal Canadian Navy: The Cruise of HMCS *Crescent* to China, 1949” (unpublished PhD dissertation, Université Laval, 2000). Readers are requested to recognize that the format of this paper is necessarily concise. It is intended eventually to publish a longer version, complete with copies of the supporting original documents. The author wishes to acknowledge the new scholarship by others in this field, which solidifies the theme of this paper. Except on the matter of postwar planning during the Second World War, the views herein are consistent with the general thrust of Milner's *Canada's Navy*. An indispensable source on the pre-WW II RCN is a collection of essays by Roger Sarty, *The Maritime Defence of Canada* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1996). I am grateful to Michael Whitby and Peter Haydon for sharing their expert knowledge, respectively of the pre- and post-WW II navies; examples of their groundbreaking work are cited where appropriate in the text.
- ⁴ Richard Gimblett, “Reassessing the Dreadnought Crisis of 1909 and the Origins of the Royal Canadian Navy,” in *The Northern Mariner / Le marin du nord*, Vol. IV, No. 1 (January 1994), pp. 35-53.
- ⁵ NAC, MG 27, II, C4, L.P. Brodeur Papers, Docket No. 5, “Memorandum on Coast Defence,” 1 February 1909.
- ⁶ Brodeur Papers, “Admiralty Memorandum on Naval Defence,” *Confidential Papers Laid Before the Imperial Conference 1909*.
- ⁷ *Report of Admiral of the Fleet Viscount Jellicoe of Scapa on Naval Mission to the Dominion of Canada (November - December, 1919)* (His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1919) [cited as *The Jellicoe Report*]. Neither was it the one preferred by the RCN. See the longer version of this paper for a discussion of “Occasional Paper No. 2: Proposals for Canadian Naval Expansion,” 3 July 1919 (NAC, RG 24, Vol. 5696, NSS 1017-31-2).
- ⁸ Robert (Bill) McKillip, “Staying on the Sleigh: Commodore Walter Hose and a Permanent Naval Policy for Canada,” in *Maritime Warfare Bulletin / Bulletin de guerre maritime: Special Historical Edition* (Proceedings of the Maritime Command Historical Conference, 1990, “Canada's Navy: Continuity or Change”), p. 74.

- ⁹ Roger Sarty, *Canada and the Battle of the Atlantic* (Montréal: Art Global, 1998), p. 28.
- ¹⁰ Sarty, *Canada and the Battle of the Atlantic*, p. 28.
- ¹¹ This was consistent with the concept of operations developed by the RCN in the pre-war period. See Michael Whitby, "In Defence of Home Waters: Doctrine and Training in the Canadian Navy During the 1930s," *The Mariner's Mirror*, Vol. 77, No. 2 (May 1991), pp. 167-177.
- ¹² NAC, RG 24, Vol. 3844, NSS 1017-10-34, Director of Plans [DoP] to ACNS, 29 July 1943.
- ¹³ The longer version of this paper will explore the dynamics of Canadian naval planning in the last two years of the war. See also Gimblett, "Gunboat Diplomacy, Mutiny and National Identity in the Postwar Royal Canadian Navy ...," pp. 87-95.
- ¹⁴ DoP to ACNS, 29 July 1943, pp. 4-5.
- ¹⁵ R.H. Caldwell, "The Government's Planning Dilemma and the Canadian Naval Service in 1943-44" (unpublished DHH Naval History Narrative, 18 March 1997), *passim*, especially Part I, pp. 18-21, 36-37, 45 n. 84, and Part II, pp. 2-3.
- ¹⁶ DoP to ACNS, 29 July 1943, p. 11.
- ¹⁷ DHH, NHS 1650-1, "Creation of RCN Task Forces," 14 January 1944. Mackenzie King became wary of the Naval Staff's "big ship" plans after the First Quebec Conference (where the RCN engaged in backroom planning with the RN). The Post-Hostilities Planning Committee was charged in part to keep an eye on the services, but King did not stand in the way of acquisition of the carriers. See Roger Sarty, "The Ghosts of Fisher and Jellicoe: The Royal Canadian Navy and the Quebec Conferences" (unpublished DHH Naval History Narrative [undated]).
- ¹⁸ NAC, RG 24, Acc 83-84/167, box 610, NSS 1818-3, Vol. 1, DoP to CNS, 23 July 1945.
- ¹⁹ For analysis of the morale problems of 1947 and a new interpretation of the subsequent incidents of 1949 (investigated by the Mainguy Commission), see Gimblett, "Gunboat Diplomacy, Mutiny and National Identity in the Postwar Royal Canadian Navy...," *passim*.
- ²⁰ Thor Thorgrimsson and E.C. Russell, *Canadian Naval Operations in Korean Waters, 1950-1955* (Ottawa: King's printer, 1965), p. 3. See also Peter Haydon, "Canada's Naval Commitment to the Korean War: Prudent Employment or Opportunism?," in Peter T. Haydon and Ann L. Griffiths (eds.), *Canada's Pacific Naval Presence: Purposeful or Peripheral* (Halifax, NS: Dalhousie University Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, 1999), pp. 110-131.
- ²¹ Michael A. Hennessy, "The Rise and Fall of a Canadian Maritime Policy, 1939-1965: A Study of Industry, Navalism and the State" (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of New Brunswick, 1995).
- ²² Readers again are invited to refer to the longer version of this paper for a fuller examination of the various factors.
- ²³ DHH 120.003 (D32), *Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Naval Objectives* (Chairman – Rear-Admiral J.V. Brock, VCNS) [cited as *The Brock Report*], July 1961.
- ²⁴ See Peter Haydon, *When Military Plans and Politics Conflict: The Case of Canada's General Purpose Frigate Program* (Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, McNaughton Paper No. 2/91). Earlier in this paper, the GPF and the Avro Arrow were referred to in the same sentence. There was no direct link between their respective demise, other than each was a programme of questionable operational utility, subject to spiralling development costs.
- ²⁵ DHH 121.013 (D), *Ad Hoc Working Group on Naval Programmes* (Chairman – Commodore H.G. Burchell) [cited as *The Burchell Report*], 6 January 1964.
- ²⁶ Peter T. Haydon, *Sea Power and Maritime Strategy in the 21st Century: A "Medium" Power Perspective* (Halifax: Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, forthcoming April-May 2000), defines a medium power as "a description of behaviour for a state that invariably participates with responsibility and effectiveness in world events within a partnership of like-minded states."
- ²⁷ Milner, *Canada's Navy*, p. 244, concludes that Hellyer already had decided that "the navy had to be broken and restructured to fit an organizational concept."

- ²⁸ With the navy's pigeon-holing as a blue water ASW force, this capability was never properly exercised during the Cold War years, except for the expedition to Haiti in 1988, known as Operation BANDIT.

HOW THE RCN BECAME A BLUE WATER NAVY¹

W.A.B. Douglas

Canada's naval service began the Second World War as a coastal defence force and ended it as a blue water navy. Critics have suggested that the naval staff had a hidden agenda during the war, taking advantage of circumstances to acquire a "big ship navy," largely for post war purposes, to the detriment of convoy operations and anti-submarine warfare.² Undoubtedly, a balanced fleet, the essential prerequisite for independent blue water operations, was one of the navy's principal objectives, something that did result in conflicting priorities. It also happened to satisfy some of the most cherished sentiments shared by professional naval officers. The congratulations received by the Canadian Cabinet in 1944, for success in building up what the British Admiralty called a "big ship navy," encouraged a perception that this had in fact been the real intent of the naval establishment all along.³ That perception, however, was wrong. The RCN's blue water operations were carried out for the most part by small ships. Fleet destroyers, cruisers and auxiliary aircraft carriers formed a very small proportion of the fleet. Moreover it was British and, initially, American naval weakness, not the sentiment of Canada's senior sailors, that gave the RCN an unprecedented variety of blue water roles between 1939 and 1945.

A blue water navy adheres to the doctrine, based on the theory given expression in the nineteenth century, that a naval power's frontier is the coast line of her foe.⁴ Canadian naval planners were wedded to the concept both by inclination (any naval sailor worth his salt wanted to place himself in harm's way) and by their training, which had exposed them to what was being said and done by the world's principal naval powers. It is worth observing that key RCN decision-makers at one time or another during the war, men like L.W. Murray, G.C. Jones, Harold Grant, Harry DeWolf, Jimmy Hibbard and H.N. Lay, had served with the RN in the First World War, and with the Mediterranean and Home Fleets during the inter-war period, some of them serving during the Chanak Crisis and the Spanish Civil War, and in several cases had undergone senior staff training and held RN staff appointments in the U.K., all of which gave them first-hand experience of blue water doctrine.⁵

The First World War experience of Canadian naval officers, and the training they had subsequently received, gave the protection of shipping high priority, and the only motivation to play down that role would have been hidebound traditionalism. That possibility is ruled out by a careful reading of staff papers and policy decisions.⁶ During the Second World War Canadian sailors (informed by their training and experience), and politicians (working from first principles), appreciated the strategic value of convoy escorts working from Halifax, Sydney and St. John's, ports situated so near to great circle routes between North America and Europe. The professional sailors also advised their political masters that the operational efficiency of the navy, and even its survival as a Canadian national institution, demanded participation in fleet operations, and operational experience with other navies.⁷ Since individual Canadians serving with the RN tended to

have their services lumped in with those of their shipmates, the response to British pleas for help was to offer recognisably Canadian units.

It was in May, 1940, that time and circumstance brought together theory, doctrine and policy. When Vincent Massey, Canada's High Commissioner in London, reported that "Recent developments ... have left the United Kingdom sadly lacking in available destroyers in home waters ...,"⁸ Prime Minister Mackenzie King persuaded Cabinet to approve sending four of Canada's six River Class destroyers.⁹ " ... We may find our own coasts left bare in giving our last possible aid to the Mother country," King wrote in his diary. "That, however, to my mind, is right. We owe to her such freedom as we have. It is right we should strike with her the last blow for the preservation of freedom."¹⁰ Rear Admiral Percy Nelles, Chief of the Naval Staff, had had no hesitation in recommending the overseas deployment, and Cabinet members needed little persuasion. It was the correct strategy and a useful precedent. It was not a ploy to get a "big ship navy."

The Royal Navy had a chronic manpower problem,¹¹ so in the fall of 1940 the RCN took over six among the fifty old American four-stacker Town class destroyers that President Roosevelt was exchanging for the use of bases in the West Indies and Newfoundland.¹² Three Canadian Towns went to British Home Waters in December 1940. Another nearly foundered in a winter gale and had to return to Halifax, so the Commanding Officer Atlantic Coast sent HMCS *Assiniboine* and *Restigouche*, just completing refit, instead.¹³ When the First Sea Lord asked for more help "during this lean period"¹⁴ Nelles replied that two more Towns would accompany *Assiniboine* and *Restigouche*.¹⁵ All the most capable Canadian ships, six Rivers and five Towns,¹⁶ would then be in or on the way to UK waters. "Am deeply grateful," replied Admiral Pound on 25 December 1940, "Most acceptable Christmas gift."¹⁷ Between December 1940 and March 1941 the first ten corvettes built in Canada to Admiralty account also sailed for the United Kingdom with temporary Canadian crews. New RCN corvettes, icebound in the St. Lawrence, left the RCN with little more than untrained sailors, and too few ships on which to train them.¹⁸ The Towns had unexpectedly drained Canadian manpower reserves,¹⁹ so NSHQ left the RCN crews to gain their sea legs in the Admiralty corvettes until the spring of 1941,²⁰ then arranged, with strong Admiralty approval, to man the ships permanently with Canadian personnel, on condition that the vessels be commissioned as His Majesty's Canadian Ships.²¹ That put a substantial Canadian corvette force in British waters. In other words, fully aware of the consequences for Canadian coastal defence, the Canadian government had unhesitatingly committed nearly all the operational ships of the RCN to the blue water strategy governing British naval operations.²²

In June 1941, when the Admiralty gave command of the Newfoundland Escort Force to the RCN, Canadian ships returned to the western Atlantic. The Prime Minister noted their achievements and sacrifices in his diary: "One feels Canada growing into a nation with the navy coming to take the part it is."²³ (At the time he meant it. Later on he had reservations.) The RCN was now left with only a few staff officers remaining in London with the Commander Canadian Ships and Establishments, and those personnel serving on loan to the RN in British ships and establishments. Until Canadian Tribal class destroyers were ready, the RCN would have no opportunity for experience, let alone distinction, in fleet operations. It was perhaps not surprising, therefore, that when the ACNS, Commodore H.E. "Rastus" Reid, visited the United Kingdom in the summer of 1941, he was receptive to a suggestion by Admiral Sir Roger Keyes, then Director of

Combined Operations, for the loan of Canadian naval personnel to his organisation.²⁴ It would provide Keyes with a resource he would not have to negotiate for with the Admiralty or the Chiefs of Staff, in the face of scepticism in those circles about his intentions,²⁵ it would raise the RCN's overseas profile, and it allowed Canada once more to demonstrate its generosity to Britain. The naval minister, Angus L. Macdonald, approved a commitment of fifty officers and three hundred ratings as a Canadian unit to Combined Operations.²⁶

The naval staff had second thoughts about this after Pearl Harbor, when seagoing requirements expanded more rapidly than expected, but the commitment proved impossible to give up and offensive operations on the enemy's doorstep, (Dieppe in 1942, North Africa and Sicily in 1942 and 1943, Normandy and the South of France in 1944), gave more prominence to the RCN effort in this field of activity than at first intended. For the Normandy landings the RCN provided two Landing Ships, Infantry, (Medium), HMCS *Prince David* and *Prince Henry*, each complete with an LCA (Landing Craft Assault) flotilla, and three Landing Craft Infantry (Large) flotillas Thirty LCI(L)s and sixteen LCA's on loan from the Americans and British were manned by Canadians. Canada also contributed the personnel for a Beach Commando.²⁷

Percy Nelles and Angus L. Macdonald had not fully understood, in October 1941, that the Anglo-American agreements for participation in convoy operations were not what they seemed. The Newfoundland Escort Force had to do far more than expected by the British Chiefs of Staff, and even by the US Chief of Naval Operations, let alone by Canadian planners. C-in-C US Atlantic Fleet, Admiral King, who only had thirty USN destroyers – even less after Pearl Harbor – to provide escort in the North Atlantic, insisted that Canada fill the gap.²⁸ Expansion of the conflict therefore had a paradoxical effect. On 11 December, four days after Pearl Harbor, and now ensured of support from Japan's powerful navy, Hitler declared war on the United States, just as he had said he would, and had been planning to do. The German navy could now lift all the restrictions Hitler had previously imposed on U-boat activities in the western Atlantic.²⁹ Thus rather than the Pacific, where a Japanese threat had arisen, it was the Atlantic that demanded increased Canadian naval forces. The USN was escorting far fewer convoys than expected. In December Admiral Sir Charles Little, commanding the British Admiralty Delegation in Washington, wrote to Pound, "... It is very disappointing that it has been necessary to retain R.N. Destroyers and Corvettes to strengthen up the Canadian escorts with the S.C. convoys ..."³⁰ The 1st Sea Lord had already, in September 1941, asked Nelles to strip local Canadian defence forces of destroyers and corvettes for service on the transatlantic run, "... if possible in sufficient numbers to release all RN ships at present in Newfoundland Force"³¹ Given Ottawa's reluctance to expand the combined operations commitment in 1942, it is unlikely that Nelles and Macdonald would even have made such a commitment had they foreseen how little USN support there would be for the Newfoundland Escort Force.

The RCN's role in escorting convoys across the ocean was essential to Allied victory because American supply was indispensable to Allied war aims. Defence of transatlantic shipping continued to take precedence over coastal defence. Tanker losses were so serious that Canadian east coast oil reserves, on which RCN oceanic operations depended, nearly disappeared in the spring and summer of 1942, and in the absence of an Allied shipping policy that would solve this problem, the RCN set up its own convoy system with escorts normally assigned to coastal convoys, to the source of supply in

Trinidad.³² When the Admiralty asked for escorts to meet the needs of the North African landings in the fall of 1942, Canada again, and in the face of shipping losses in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, stripped coastal escort forces to lend seventeen corvettes to the RN.³³ Several changes of command and key personnel ensured that the most qualified available officers and men went in those vessels. Blue water doctrine prevailed.

The Admiralty, after Pound's early expressions of gratitude, tended to take the contribution for granted. Admiral Sir Percy Noble acknowledged very handsomely that Canada had solved the convoy problem,³⁴ and Churchill echoed Admiral Cunningham's praise for Canadian corvettes in the Mediterranean,³⁵ but Noble's staff, and his successor as Commander-in-Chief Western Approaches, Admiral Max Horton, became increasingly critical in 1942 of Canadian escort groups when several convoy disasters of major proportions occurred. Canadian sailors, especially the few seagoing professionals around whom the wartime service had been developed, knew and admitted that Canadian groups, even though some of them were very successful in 1942, were for the most part not up to scratch. They did not accept the "strong [British] suspicion that" the Canadians and Americans "were not working their escorts as hard as we were"³⁶ British groups, it must be said, had less bad luck. "By God's mercy," wrote the convoy Commodore of ON-153, just before the Canadian-escorted ON-154 suffered the worst convoy disaster of the war, "... heavy weather undoubtedly saved more losses"³⁷ And as Captain Harry DeWolf told his RN and USN counterparts in January 1943, in order to provide the number of RCN vessels necessary to meet Allied demands, it had been necessary to skimp on training and refits.³⁸

By mid-1942, although the British model continued to govern RCN policy, anglophiles in the RCN were beginning to give way, if not to anglophobes (although there were some of those), to increasingly nationalist personnel.³⁹ Naval Service Headquarters in Ottawa, as it has been amply documented, was largely responsible for the failure to keep up with British improvements, but it should still be noted that when alterations and additions were authorised, most of them had to be done in British dockyards,⁴⁰ where RCN requisitions took second place to RN requisitions, except when Canadian ships were attached to British naval forces.⁴¹ And there was some tension between Canadian sailors and British shore authorities. Captain H.C. Fitz, commanding the USN base at Londonderry, visited Western Approaches Command Headquarters late in 1942 and found that "... British naval officers as a class think the Canadians very ineffective. In all the time I was there I did not hear one single word in their favor. When I pointed out the expansion in their Navy and that they always seemed to be giving their best efforts and were quite keen, they usually said that one of their main objections was that they would not take advice nor would benefit from British experience ... Possibly" he commented, "... Canadians do not desire that the British should run their Navy."⁴²

In the terrible winter of 1942-3 Canadian naval staff officers with recent operational experience advanced three lines of development that could be said to have reflected such a point of view: first, modernisation of the escort force through alterations and additions to existing vessels, and construction of new types such as frigates; second, the long hoped for commissioning of heavily armed destroyers, capable of operating with the main fleets of the RN; third, the creation of a naval aviation capability, recognised by the RN and USN as the best means available of closing the so-called Greenland air gap. This would be the basis of a balanced fleet, one also capable of taking part in expected operations against Japan on an equal basis with the RN and USN.⁴³ The staff advised Percy Nelles

and his Vice Chief of Naval Staff, Rear Admiral G.C. Jones, to swallow their pride for the time being and, as proposed by the Admiralty, shift Canadian groups of the Mid Ocean Escort Force to the eastern Atlantic where they could receive better training opportunities and have better air support, leaving the crucial North Atlantic convoys to more competent British groups. In fact, not all the 'C' groups did leave the Mid Ocean Escort Force, and British groups did not in general achieve notably better results than the Canadians until May 1943, when there was a temporary withdrawal of U-boats from the North Atlantic.

Convoy escort on the northern routes then became an almost totally Canadian responsibility. The RN still needed Canadian help elsewhere, however, and the navy sent its 'first team' to do so. Thus the historical officer describing Canadian participation in Operation NEPTUNE wrote that "the RCN's invasion operations marked the culmination of the wartime growth of Canada's navy ... representing the cream of the R.C.N. ..."⁴⁴.

When the first Canadian Tribal commissioned in November 1942 the Prime Minister's naval advisers hastened to disabuse him of the notion that the navy's first priority was to defend Canada's coastline. Captain Harry DeWolf, Director of Plans, prepared a paper on "Employment of Tribal Destroyers"⁴⁵ which explained that Tribals would be wasted in convoy escort, and would "constitute the RCN's contribution to offence." The RN would like to have kept the Tribals and let the RCN man escort destroyers instead, but the British naval staff reluctantly accepted Canadian naval preferences. The RN's manpower problem, after all, was worse than it had been in 1940.⁴⁶

Like Combined Operations, once the RCN had entered into this commitment it was impossible to stop. By the end of hostilities not only had the navy commissioned the first four of seven Tribal class destroyers, but added two 'V' Class destroyers to the fleet, all of which operated for the most part under British operational control in the eastern Atlantic and on the Murmansk run. In September 1943, after the QUADRANT conference held in Quebec City, the Cabinet War Committee responded to a personal appeal from Winston Churchill by committing the RCN to the acceptance of two light cruisers and a significant expansion of the Combined Operations contribution. Mackenzie King was no longer an enthusiastic ally – his approval was made with great reservations about the way in which the naval establishment had brought the proposals to Cabinet – but he continued to support a blue water policy.⁴⁷

The third line of development, naval aviation, had a rough ride. In the first place, officers at the Admiralty tried to discourage the Canadians from trying to create their own Fleet Air Arm, but without Canadian help it would be impossible to find enough personnel to commission the escort carriers under modification in Vancouver. Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham, now First Sea Lord, thought the RCN could draft men to bring British ships' companies up to strength, providing Engine Room Artificers for all seven escort carriers, and as many men as possible to combine with RN ratings in other ships being constructed in the United States. Nelles proposed instead to provide the ships' companies for two RN escort carriers, and "release RN personnel to man other essential craft"⁴⁸ The Assistant Chief of Naval Staff, Captain W.B. Creery, went to England and persuaded the Admiralty to accept the Canadian solution.⁴⁹ Nelles tried to persuade the Prime Minister that the aviation scheme was essential to the prosecution of the war, but could not deny it was also for a post war navy. King accused Macdonald of demanding a commitment "related directly to the postwar period and future naval policy,"⁵⁰ but despite

vigorous opposition in Cabinet, because evidence of shortages in the RN was persuasive, and because his nephew, H.N. Lay, was commanding officer designate of one carrier, he abstained from voting and did not prevent Cabinet approval.⁵¹ HMS *Nabob* and *Puncher*, with mixed Canadian, New Zealand and British ships' companies, and British Fleet Air Arm squadrons embarked, participated in operations off Norway during the final months of the war.⁵²

In 1944 theory, doctrine and policy did not come together as they had done in 1940. British planning for the Pacific war was confused,⁵³ Nelles had alienated Macdonald by his handling of the equipment crisis, and both of them had pushed the Prime Minister to the edge in their quest for cruisers and aircraft carriers. Cabinet slashed proposals for the Pacific war in half. The blue water concept, however, survived. Only one Canadian ship, the light cruiser *Uganda*, took part in the Pacific war, but the basis of a "good workable little fleet" was in place.⁵⁴ This was no aberration, as critics suggest, and no passing phenomenon. It was, in fact, a turning point in Canadian history. Despite post war retrenchment, as the Korean War and the Cold War would reveal, the relationship between national policy and naval doctrine was secure. In the words of an Australian naval officer and historian, "It might be ... that what has been viewed, often unfavourably, as 'blue water navalism' is in fact the ethos of the armed forces of the future."⁵⁵

NOTES

- ¹ Much of this paper is based on research by the team preparing the RCN official history.
- ² G.F.G. Stanley, review of *The Far Distant Ships, Canadian Historical Review*, etc.; James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada*, Vol. II, *Peacemaking and Deterrence* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 82-3; Tony German, *The Sea is at Our Gates: The History of the Canadian Navy* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), 156.
- ³ NAC MG26, J4, 366/2676 f. C-253528.
- ⁴ As Vice Admiral Philip Colomb argued, "nothing can be done in the way of territorial attack with a disputed command of the sea," Donald M. Schurman *The Education of a Navy: The Development of British Naval Strategic Thought, 1967-1914* (London: Cassell, 1965).
- ⁵ Brooke Claxton had the amusing but somewhat unfair and oversimplified opinion that senior officers had "English accents and fixed ideas," James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada*, Vol. III *Peacemaking and Deterrence*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 56. See as an example of their thinking the "Halifax Paper" of November 1941 by Captain W.B. Creery, Commander H.G. DeWolf and Mr F. Alport: "Canada's position as the course of this war has demonstrated is one of some eminence. Within the Empire and within the concept of Hemisphere Defence and the Eight Point Programme [a reference to the Atlantic Charter] her naval policy must be in recognition of this position," cited in W.A.B. Douglas, "Conflict and Innovation in the Royal Canadian Navy, 1939-1945" in G. Jordan (ed) *Naval Warfare in the Twentieth Century* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 216.
- ⁶ See for example Nelles to minister, "Review of the Naval Requirements of Canada and the Existing Situation, 29th September, 1939," DHH, NHS 1650-1 (Policy) pt. 1.
- ⁷ Memorandum of 24 December, 1942, DHH, NHS 1650-1 (Policy) pt. 1.
- ⁸ High Commissioner in Great Britain to Secretary of State for External Affairs, telegram 673, 23 May 1940, DCER, VII, 845-6.
- ⁹ King diary, 23 May 1940; also Cabinet War Committee minutes, 23 May 1940.
- ¹⁰ King diary, 24 May 1940; see also entry for 4 June 1940.

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- ¹¹ See the reports of the Binney Committee, PRO, ADM1/12513.
- ¹² Admiralty to CNS Ottawa, 1142/13 Jul 1940, staff minutes 6 Jul 40, 7 Jul 40, 8 Jul 40, ‘C.L.,’ ‘American Destroyers,’ 14 Aug. 40, minutes 19 Sep 40, Tait, 20 Sep 40, 21 Sep 40; [Dominions Office] to UK High Commissioner in Canada, telegram 1874, 28 Aug 40, UK High Commissioner in Canada to [Dominions Office], telegram 1948, ADM 116/4410; CNS to PM, 26 Aug 40, file 56, NAC, MG 2614/396, p. C278991; K.R. Macpherson and John Burgess, *The Ships of Canada’s Naval Forces, 1910-1981* (Toronto: Collins, 1981).
- ¹³ Rear Admiral Third Battle Squadron, then the senior RN officer present in Halifax, in fact recommended no further attempts at winter crossings by Towns. FOC 3BS to CinC AWI, 1526/10 Dec. 1940, NSS 8375-354, NAC, Vol. 6797.
- ¹⁴ Admiralty (personal from First Sea Lord) to CNS Canada, 2156/22 Dec. 1940, NSS 8375-4, NA, Vol. 6796.
- ¹⁵ CNS Canada to Admiralty (for First Sea Lord), 1257/24 Dec, 1940, file 1177C pt 1, NA, RG 25 G-1, Vol. 1994.
- ¹⁶ Of the original four Rivers, *Fraser* had been sunk and *Saguenay* was in refit with severe torpedo damage, leaving *Ottawa*, *St. Laurent*, *Margaree* (replacing *Fraser* and soon to be sunk herself), *Assiniboine* and *Restigouche* operational in British home waters.
- ¹⁷ Admiralty (personal from First Sea Lord) to CNS Canada, 2225/25 Dec. 1940, *ibid*.
- ¹⁸ Alan Easton, *50 North: An Atlantic Battleground*, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1963, Paperjacks edition 1980), 15.
- ¹⁹ The Towns had taken all the merchant navy officers joining the RCNR, together with experienced RCNVR officers, Reid to Commander in Charge, Halifax, et al, 20 July 1940, file DH 3-2-1, RG 24/11657; Reid to Naval Secretary, 16 Aug. 1940, NS 1-24-1 pt 3, RG 24 5586.
- ²⁰ Naval Staff minutes, 36th Meeting, 28 October 1940, DHH; High Commission London to NSHQ, 2001/14 Nov 1940, NS 30-26-3.
- ²¹ Admiralty to NSHQ, 1630/4 April 1941, COAC to NSHQ (For Macdonald from Maclachlan), 1443/5 April 1941, Admiralty to NSHQ, 1700/27 April 1941, NSS 8375-4, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6796.
- ²² ‘‘Memorandum of Conference on Manning and Training held at Naval Service Headquarters, August 30th 1940,’’ NSS 1078-3-5, NAC RG 24 Vol. 4045.
- ²³ King diary, 19 Oct., 4 Nov. 1940.
- ²⁴ G.N. Tucker, *The Naval Service of Canada, II: Activities on Shore During the Second World War* (Ottawa 1952), 442.
- ²⁵ Paul G. Halpern, *The Keyes Papers: Selections from the Private and Official Correspondence of Admiral of the Fleet Baron Keyes of Zeebrugge*, Vol. III, 1939-1945 (London: Navy Records Society, 1981), 85.
- ²⁶ NSHQ to Admiralty, 10 Oct. 1941, untitled file, DHH 81/520, 1250(1); Secretary Naval Board to CCS, 31 Dec. 1941, 09-1-12, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 11,702.
- ²⁷ D. Lewis, L. Birkenes, and K. Lewis, eds., *St. Nazaire to Singapore: The Canadian Amphibious War, 1941 – 1945* (np 1997); G.N. Tucker, *The Naval Service of Canada: II, Activities on Shore During the Second World War* (Ottawa 1952), 86-96; Naval Board minutes, 20 April 1942, 28 May, 4 and 11 June 1942, DHH; NSHQ to CCCS, 11 June 1942, 33-1-6, DHH 81/520, 1250 (1); Maclachlan to CCCS, 18 Jan. 1943, miscellaneous file, DHH 81/520, 1250(1); ‘‘Canadian Naval Participation in Combined Operations,’’ 28 Aug. 1943, DHH NHS 1650-1(1); Naval Board minutes, 11 Nov. 1943, DHH; Report to minister, 11 March 1944, Macdonald Papers, DHH 80/218, folder 10.
- ²⁸ The USN was as hard-pressed as the Royal Navy for destroyers, 1st Sea Lord to CNS Ottawa, signal 0005/13 June 1940, file 30-1-5 pt 1, NAC RG 24/11056; CNS Canada to 1st Sea Lord, 1735/14, *ibid*; CWC Minutes, 7 Aug 1940; *DCER* VIII, 112-3, Doc. 71, 114, Doc.74, 117-8 King, memorandum, 17 July 1941, ‘WPL 51,’ NARA, RG 38, ‘Plans,’ Series IX, box 147K; Waldo H. Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Roosevelt and American Entry into World War II*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 113-5.

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- ³² Robert Fisher "'We'll get our Own': Canada and the Oil Shipping Crisis of 1942," *The Northern Mariner* Vol. III, No. 2, April, 1993, 33-37; Interviews with Vice-Admiral H.G. DeWolf, RCN, 10 December 1987, and 25 July 1991, DHist, BIOG files; Eastern Sea Frontier, War Diary, April 1942, Chapter VII, "Merchantmen and Tankers," 349.
- ³³ Roger Sarty, *Canada and the Battle of the Atlantic*, (Montreal: Art Global, 1998), 101-142.
- ³⁴ Joseph Schull, *The Far Distant Ships: An Official Account of Canadian Naval Operations in the Second World War*, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1961), 122.
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- ³⁷ Commodore's Report, ON-153, ADM 237/94.
- ³⁸ "... I agree that six well trained escorts are better than 12 untrained. But when you have only 6 untrained ones, then you hesitate to take one away ... We have even kept them at sea against our better judgement, Conference Minutes, "Fuel Supplies to U.K. and Africa; related escort problems" Day Two, 1 January 1943, NAC RG 24, Vol. 11968, 222-1, 5.
- ³⁹ As Captain R.E.S. "Fanny" Bidwell scribbled in a well known minute to a complaint by Max Horton about Canadian efficiency, "How about giving us a few decent destroyers in the 'C' groups, Maxie, instead of the discarded sweepings you're giving us now?" COS to Flag Officer Newfoundland Force, 7 Jan 43, NAC, RG 24 Vol. 11335, file NSS 8280- SC-107.
- ⁴⁰ Canadian dockyards and shipyards had neither the material nor the manpower to carry out more than part of the work. Michael Hennesy, "The Expansion, Modernisation and Maintenance of the RCN's Principal ASW Forces, 1943" unpublished narrative, DHH, 1995.
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- ⁴⁶ Churchill to King, 23 Feb. 1943; Director of personnel services, "Canadian Naval Personnel," 1 Aug. 1943, ADM 205/31; Admiralty to BAD, 6 Nov. 1943, ADM 1/13009; A.V. Alexander

- to Stark, 10 Dec. 1943, ADM 1/17025; John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy, V: August 1943 – September 1944* (London 1956), 41-4.
- ⁴⁷ King diary and CWC minutes, 8 Sept. 1943.
- ⁴⁸ “RCN policy is definitely to maintain its own ships company identity,” although possibly a “policy of infiltration with the intention of completing the whole RCN crew in time is acceptable.” CNS to Admiralty, 11 Nov. 1943 PRO, Adm 205/31.
- ⁴⁹ Admiralty to NSHQ, 6 Nov. 1943, PRO, Adm 116/4915; CNS to Admiralty, 11 Nov. 1943 PRO, Adm 205/31; Nelles to Minister, 13 Nov. 1943, NAC, RG 24, 1700-913(2); CNS to Admiralty, 19 Nov. 1943, NSS 4300-9(1), NAC, RG 24, Acc 83-84/167; Admiralty to NSHQ 30 Nov 43, ADM 1/16045.
- ⁵⁰ CWC Minutes, 16 Dec 43, NAC MG 26, J4, Vol. 425.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵² The RCN had hoped the carriers would be attached to Canadian support groups, but the Admiralty had other plans. ADM 199/167, War Diary (Naval) 1-15 July 1944, p. 248.
- ⁵³ H.P. Willmott, *Grave of a Dozen Schemes: British Naval Planning and the War Against Japan, 1943-1945*, (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1996).
- ⁵⁴ Jan Drent “‘A good workable little Fleet’, Canadian Naval Policy, 1945-1950,” Michael L. Hadley, Rob Huebert and Fred W. Crickard, *A Nation's Navy: In Quest of a Canadian Naval Identity* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1996), 205.
- ⁵⁵ James Goldrick, “Strangers in their own Seas? A comparison of the Australian and Canadian Naval Experience, 1910-1982,” *A Nation's Navy*, 338.

The Battle of the Atlantic

La Bataille de l'Atlantique

REAR-ADMIRAL LEONARD WARREN MURRAY, CB, CBE, RCN: A STUDY OF COMMAND AND LEADERSHIP IN THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

Wilfred G.D. Lund

The establishment of the Canadian Northwest Atlantic Command with Rear-Admiral Leonard Warren Murray as Commander-in-Chief was as significant for the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) in World War II as the formation of the Canadian Corps was to the Canadian Army in the First War. As Desmond Morton observed, "In a world divided into operational sectors, Murray became the sole Canadian to bear such responsibilities."¹ But, the RCN could not boast a striking victory like Vimy Ridge. Marc Milner opined, "owing to the relatively disappointing results of the RCN in the Battle of the Atlantic, the post-war professional navy shunned the bitter experience of the escort fleet."² Also, the navy may have wanted to forget Murray who shouldered the responsibility for the VE-Day Halifax riots and quietly went into self-imposed exile in England. For their part, scholars of the Battle of the Atlantic have found the analysis of policy, tactics, radar, corvettes, and even U-boats more engaging than biographical studies of those who fought it. The literature contains only brief sketches of Canadian wartime admirals, often dismissing them as "competent but uninspired." For various reasons, the story of Murray, Canada's only commander-in-chief in a theatre, has been obscured.

I would argue that Rear-Admiral Murray presents an intriguing story of challenge, battle, success, and, ultimately, pathos. It is an epic tale of a Canadian who had greatness thrust upon him but fame was snatched away through a twist of fate. Murray is strongly representative of the Canadian navy coming of age. As a key operational commander, he was instrumental in guiding the navy from infancy to maturity under fire and fought tenaciously for Canadian autonomy in the North Atlantic theatre. He is also an important transitional figure and one of the architects of Canadian maritime strategy who began to move the RCN from the pervasive influence of the Royal Navy toward the strategic and tactical culture of the USN. His experience within the complex command and evolving structure in the Canada-United Kingdom-United States tripartite alliance was prototypical and serves as a useful model for study. Murray's experience reflects how the RCN's command and control organization evolved jointly with the RCAF and other navies.

Murray's command was the foundation for the navy's role and place in the command structure of NATO. Parallels also exist in the Canadian navy's role the Gulf War.

Murray's command role was administrative but his particular tasks to establish the Newfoundland Escort Force (NEF) and operational base were unique. On the operational level, Murray's span of control was broad, encompassing every activity required to maintain the base as well as his escort forces. There was a significant leadership challenge and, because mainly reservists manned his escorts, his leadership style had to be both sensitive and prudent. He had to be sensitive in knowing the capabilities and limitations of his ships and prudent in assigning their employment. But, he had to be decisive when circumstances left no choice but to commit inexperienced and exhausted ships to battle. On the strategic level, Murray's command was a component of a larger alliance convoy and Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) organization. The command structures under two alliance agreements discussed later, were also unique, requiring elaborate coordination procedures and special understandings. Personal contact and cooperation between commanders of other navies and services were essential to maximize use of assets available. On the national level, Murray was an "end-user" and, because of the unique circumstances, completely dependent on a support system organized by Naval Service Headquarters. NSHQ's responsibility was to provide fully trained personnel and well equipped escorts to fulfil the convoy protection and ASW role that Canada had assumed. This paper will examine Murray in his command and leadership role and some of the crucial challenges he faced and how he met them.

Murray was catapulted into the position as Commodore Commanding the Newfoundland Escort Force in 1941 by fortune and necessity. Some background is required. After the fall of France, the Battle of the Atlantic emerged as a separate theatre. From Biscay bases, the U-boats were able sweep far out into the mid-North Atlantic to find and attack undefended shipping. The Royal Navy decided in May 1941, to extend the convoy system across the North Atlantic and to establish an escort base at St. John's Newfoundland. At the time, Murray was in England as the Commodore Commanding Canadian Ships and Establishments. In March 1941, he had acted as the Canadian naval representative under Vincent Massey and Lester Pearson who successfully negotiated inclusion of a protocol recognizing Canada's special interest in the defence of Newfoundland in the United States-British Commonwealth Joint Basic War Plan, ABC-1.³ Murray acted concurrently as the consulting naval authority for the Newfoundland delegation. He already carried credentials as a charter member of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence (PJBD).

ABC-1 established the terms for British-American "collaboration" should the United States enter the war. It divided the Atlantic Ocean into eastern and western zones of strategic responsibility with the CHOP (change of operational command) line approximately at the longitude of Iceland. Critical to Canada was that the United States would take responsibility for the strategic direction of "British forces" that included the Royal Canadian Navy in the Western Atlantic. This was contrary to national policy but dictated by necessity. The exception negotiated in the protocol was that command relationships in waters and territories where Canada assumed strategic responsibility, which included Newfoundland and Labrador, would be defined by United States-Canada joint agreements. In July 1941, these relationships were forged in Joint Canadian-United States Defence Plan No. 2, ABC-22, for the defence of North America.⁴ In the ABC-22 agreement, Canada refused to relinquish strategic control of its forces and command

relationships with the United States would be on the basis of “cooperation.” That notwithstanding, ABC-1 governed RCN forces in the Western Atlantic when strategic command was assumed by the United States in September 1941.

From the beginning, the RCN’s Atlantic forces were committed to a command structure with conflicting imperatives. Operationally, to paraphrase Stephen Roskill the RN’s official historian, the RCN and RN acted as one navy to keep the Atlantic routes open until September 1941.⁵ This unity of command and purpose was broken when strategic direction of the RCN’s escort forces passed to the USN under the terms of ABC-1. The new structure was rigid and would prove not to have the flexibility needed in the wide-ranging theatre of operations. Then under ABC-22 there were no less than five separate commands involved in Newfoundland with surface and air assets committed to convoy protection and anti-submarine operations. Ongoing within the ABC-22 structure were national service conflicts between the USN and US Army Air Force, and the RCN and RCAF over control of land-based air support. Further complexities were added by the Free French, Free Norwegian and Free Polish units operating with the NEF. Newfoundland was sovereign but bankrupt and a target for Canadian expansionism and American opportunism. Therefore, in the NEF, along with the normal elements of administration and operational control that attend high command, were important diplomatic and coordination components. It was within this challenging framework that flexed and strained with the ebb and flow of the Battle of the Atlantic that Murray exercised command.⁶

Murray was the personal choice of Admiral Sir Dudley Pound, Britain’s First Sea Lord, to command the NEF. Vice-Admiral Percy Nelles, the Chief of the Naval Staff, had directed him to press Pound to accept the RCN’s offer to establish and maintain the NEF. Murray said he was just in the right place at the right time.⁷ Indeed, the war was a bonanza of opportunity for the RCN’s small officer corps. Languishing careers were revitalized and mediocrity was often overlooked in the press to expand, but not in Murray’s case. He had a solid reputation as a competent fleet officer within the RN and his own service, and was well liked and connected in both. He was a navigation specialist with experience in the RN directing all facets of fleet activities and operations. His staff training and experience were also extensive. Arguably, Murray was the best candidate in a small field. Fortunately, he was a good one. The critical point is had there been no Canadian officer that the RN thought competent to do the job, Pound would probably have suggested or insisted that Nelles take one of his own on loan. Experience would prove that Pound’s confidence in Murray was well placed.

Leonard Murray had the character and stamina, along with professional competence, for the task. His two great loves were the Royal Canadian Navy and hockey. Unarguably he had great respect for the RN and was imbued with its traditions, but as national commander he would promote the autonomy of the RCN. The Canadian navy and personnel meant everything to him and he was totally dedicated to the service and preserving its reputation. Murray was respected universally in the RCN for his professionalism and exceptional integrity.⁸ Quiet and reserved, Murray was described as “a square-jawed man, physically sturdy and robust who spoke in a cultured voice with no accent,” a benevolent “father-figure” who was very approachable.⁹ Concerned for the welfare of the officers, sailors and their families, Murray epitomized the pre-war RCN as “the family navy.”¹⁰ There has been some conjecture that Murray’s concern for “his

boys” may have rendered him less determined in his prosecution of the Battle of the Atlantic.¹¹ Evidence discussed later refutes this.

Rear-Admiral Murray’s mandate was to establish an escort organization and to work under the supervision of the Commander-in-Chief Western Approaches, Admiral Percy Noble, based in Liverpool, England. Murray established his command on 13 June 1941 at St. John’s Newfoundland, which was not a naval base and lacked facilities required to support an operational escort force. The nucleus of the NEF was RCN destroyers returned by the RN and new corvettes from Halifax, manned by scratch crews. The RN dispatched a depot ship for running repairs, a stores ship, and two tankers for fuel. Murray brought with him a close comrade, Commander Roger Bidwell, as his Chief of Staff. Bidwell would act in that capacity for three years. The RN loaned Captain E.K. Stevens to act temporarily as Captain (D), directly responsible for the supervision and training of the escorts. Captain Rollo Mainguy was Murray’s choice to relieve Stevens but was awaiting relief in Halifax.¹² The indomitable Commander J.D. “Chummy” Prentice, RCNR, called out of retirement, joined the NEF as senior officer afloat in command of HMCS *Chambly*. A retired RN officer, Prentice became Murray’s tactical and training advisor, a productive association that would last throughout the war.

It was left to Murray, with precious few resources, to create an effective fighting escort force out of the NEF while simultaneously coordinating the construction and establishment of facilities of every sort to support it. St. John’s, 500 miles from the RCN’s main port of Halifax, became a distant outpost on Canada’s sea frontier. Gilbert Tucker has described the total inadequacy of St. John’s as a naval base in the beginning and the convoluted system in which four governments, Newfoundland, Great Britain, Canada, and the United States shared responsibility for building and maintaining various facilities.¹³ The terse entries in Murray’s own diary reflect the burden of creating the NEF organization with a battle raging outside St. John’s harbour. Like the huge expansion the RCN had undertaken, his task was overwhelming. Nevertheless, a temporary operational headquarters based on the Western Approaches model was established and by January 1942, Murray was controlling operations of 16 destroyers and 52 corvettes.

In June 1941, there was little to compare between the NEF and the established Western Approaches Command. The RN’s command boasted a simple and traditional structure, a large trained and experienced staff of ASW experts, a pool of escorts and personnel, and operational control over coastal command’s air assets. Moreover, it had two years of hard experience and its share of disasters behind it. It was all ahead of the NEF and often forgotten by the British when criticism was levelled at Murray and his staff experiencing growing pains. Murray would never have at his disposal the experience, assets, and simple command and control structure enjoyed by the Commander-in-Chief Western Approaches. Murray’s command was quite unique from its inception and he would never have complete control of his assets, even later as commander-in-chief.

The challenges Murray faced at the operational level were monumental. His success in meeting these depended on support from Canada. Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) had not been a priority in the pre-war RCN. While Murray was well skilled in fleet and convoy organization and control, he had to learn ASW on-the-job, as did those under his command. Captain “Chummy” Prentice compared the NEF in those early days to a hockey team that did not know how to skate.¹⁴ NSHQ was hard pressed to give Murray adequate and consistent support in personnel and ships owing to competing demands and

commitments. Moreover, in the beginning, headquarters was not well organized for the operational mission. No division to coordinate and promote fighting efficiency existed until 1943. Murray wanted ships that were efficient and well equipped when they joined his force. However, circumstances were such that NSHQ sent raw ships and then stripped them of trained personnel at the first opportunity. Milner and Sarty have written definitively about the inadequately manned, trained, and equipped stream of corvettes that poured out of Halifax to join a few professionally manned destroyers recalled from England to build up Murray's force.¹⁵ But, regardless of its deficiencies, at the prompting of the Admiralty, NSHQ hastened to designate the NEF as its primary operational force and focus of Canadian naval effort. Corvettes were manned by scratch crews as fast as they could be rolled off the construction slips in eastern Canada. The crews lacked basic knowledge of seamanship let alone war-fighting capability. The result was an instant navy but without professional content. The NEF became a shop window operation with no pool of replacements and no depth. Murray would complain with some justification that NSHQ had lost sight of the main objective.

The NEF suffered its first defeat in September 1941, "an appalling tale of disaster" according to Captain Stevens, when a wolf pack of seventeen U-boats savaged convoy SC 42 under protection of four NEF escorts.¹⁶ While the escorts were exonerated, the battle of SC 42 began an unfortunate pattern for the RCN that had a learning curve in ASW that was almost vertical. Moreover, nothing remained static. The Battle of the Atlantic itself was constantly changing through rapid advances in technology and new tactics, on both sides, and shifting and growing U-boat concentrations. Additionally, the sea and the weather in the North Atlantic wrought havoc indiscriminately on friend and foe alike and crushed the weak. More escorts were disabled by weather damage, to both men and ships, than by enemy action. Just mustering sufficient escorts, regardless of training or equipment, to meet minimum group numerical requirements during the winter months severely tested the NEF staff until mid-1943.

Murray's task as an operational commander was to make the most effective use of his assets to ensure "the safe and timely arrival of shipping" in the convoy system. This was primarily an administrative function with an important leadership component that worked at three levels. At the operational level, Murray supervised the briefing, deployment, training, maintenance, repair, and logistic support of the NEF. According to Bidwell, the admiral attended all pre-sailing briefings and debriefings on return of every group, providing suggestions, listening to problems, and giving encouragement.¹⁷ The evidence shows that Murray knew intimately the professional capabilities of all his escort Captains, even those of foreign navies.¹⁸ He understood the limitations of reservists but appreciated their potential and bore with them patiently as they learned. Thirty years later, Murray recalled minutely the problems experienced by his escorts and the tremendous trials of weather and privations from cold and lack of food and sleep that "his boys" suffered.¹⁹ He took an equal interest in the operations and welfare of captains of merchant ships and their sailors.²⁰

Murray bore well the burden of command through the difficult and most critical phase of the Battle of the Atlantic and cannot be found lacking. He was keenly aware of the inefficiency of his escorts. Citing reports from escorts, Murray identified deficiencies and badgered both Halifax and NSHQ to improve manning, training and equipment. He described the perilous circumstances in the corvettes with exhausted commanding officers driving them almost single-handedly.²¹ He spoke of the necessity to place ships

unfit for battle “in the firing line” in order to save lives of merchant seamen even if it meant sacrificing his own. He warned NSHQ that the reputation of the RCN would be won or lost in the battles for the convoys. His warnings would be prophetic. To feed expansion, NSHQ maintained its policy to remove experienced personnel from ships throughout 1942. Murray attempted to set up a training group under Prentice. This failed owing to insufficient escorts. As Sarty observed, “Murray complained bitterly that his was a forgotten fleet, a creature of mid-Atlantic with adequate support at neither end.”²²

Rear-Admiral Murray was a proud professional and Canadian who stridently defended the NEF against criticism. The RN and USN were happy to receive loan by NSHQ of trained escorts from Murray’s force. But the British, in particular, were quick to criticize inefficiency of the NEF resulting from the RCN’s generosity. The RN, for its part, was slow to provide Murray with additional destroyers he needed desperately. Strategically, both the Americans and British were negligent in the late provision of sufficient Very Long Range (VLR) patrol aircraft to suppress the U-boats and relieve pressure on the hard pressed escort groups.²³ Some early criticism pertaining to poor staff work of the NEF was warranted. Precise staff work was fundamental to building an effective ASW organization. This developed as staff officers learned on the job and more trained officers were brought in. Slowly but unevenly escorts gained efficiency and results improved. A “basic soundness” was evident in the corvettes loaned by the RCN for the Torch operations in early 1943.²⁴ By the Fall of 1943, Murray’s staff exhibited the high degree of sophistication required of an effective ASW command headquarters.²⁵

At the strategic level, the command relationships in the North Atlantic evolved under tension driven by the competing objectives of the three major stakeholders.²⁶ Great Britain was trying to retain power in the face of America’s ascendancy. Also, the sealanes were crucial to national survival therefore the RN wanted control of the escorts and the convoy system. After Pearl Harbour, the USN had a “Two Ocean War” to fight. While it withdrew most of its escorts from northern convoy routes, the USN was determined to retain strategic direction. Canada built up its large escort force to support the allies but retained only local control and wanted more autonomy. To the British, the Atlantic was the lifeline, to the Canadians and Americans it was a front-line. The RN promoted a defensive strategy against the U-boats and both the RCN and USN favoured the offensive. Given Britain’s perilous situation, the RN viewed the RCN escort force as enthusiastic but ineffective, and the USN as being primarily concerned with the Pacific. By late 1942, the RCN was providing 48% of the ships, the RN 50%, and the USN 2%. At that time, the Battle of the Atlantic was also moving towards its crisis.

Murray’s NEF began operations under the control of CinC WA. Given the established connection with the RN, there was a good working relationship and the NEF adopted Western Approaches Convoy Instructions (WACIS) as its operational doctrine. The NEF escorted eastbound convoys originating in Halifax and Sydney to a Mid-Ocean Meeting Point south of Iceland and took over westbound convoys from RN escorts. In September 1941, this unity of command ended when ABC-1 came into effect and the NEF was transferred to the strategic direction of Commander-in-Chief US Fleet (COMINCH), Admiral Ernest J. King. The anomaly was that the United States was a non-belligerent and the RCN came under the control of an admiral who was not at war. King, an Anglophobe, was quite unenthusiastic about the new relationship and wanted to keep Murray at arm length and not mix USN with RCN and RN escorts. His one-page letter of instruction to Murray was terse.²⁷ King delegated control of the NEF to Rear-

Admiral A.L. Bristol, Commander Task Force 4 (CTF 4 later CTF 24), who was stationed at the United States base in Argentia. King's instructions to Bristol were that he was to exercise "coordinating supervision" over Murray's forces.²⁸

Rear-Admiral Bristol was sensitive to Murray's situation and experience and relied on Murray to teach him the convoy system and escort procedures.²⁹ To give him more leverage, NSHQ promoted Murray Rear-Admiral in December 1941, becoming Flag Officer Newfoundland Force (FONF). C.P. Stacey observed that coordination was such that Canadian units did not realize that they were under American control.³⁰ During Bristol's tenure, the PJBD came to grips with the service rivalries that hindered coordination of anti-submarine forces in Newfoundland. In January 1942, unified operational control of RCAF, USN, and Army Air Force ASW squadrons was achieved under CTF 24.³¹ This began the evolution of formal unified coordination of armed forces between the United States and Canada and close cooperation between the RCN and USN, and later facilitated the establishment of the unified Canadian Northwest Atlantic Command.

When the USN withdrew its escorts after Pearl Harbour, the RN and RCN resumed the full burden of convoy escort. An escort shortage prompted a reorganization of the convoy system, pulling the routes further south thereby shortening the distance and speeding up movement of shipping which reduced the total number of escort groups required. Also, this enabled one escort group to transit the Atlantic between St. John's and Londonderry, Northern Ireland. The ABC designation for American, British, and Canadian groups emerged. In February 1942, the NEF was combined with the few USN escorts remaining to form the Mid-Ocean Escort Force (MOEF). Murray had to provide escorts for a new Western Local Escort Force (WLEF) based on Halifax under the Commanding Officer Atlantic Coast (COAC). He protested that this was not necessary given COAC had adequate escorts and air support available, but to no avail.³² And the U-boat campaign continued to expand necessitating an extension of the convoy system south to the Caribbean. A new route for oil tanker convoys from Aruba via the Azores was established to which the RCN again committed escorts. The consequence was that while the RCN's contribution in escorts was steadily increasing, it had no control over its strategy commensurate with this effort.

When Murray was appointed to Halifax in September 1942 as COAC, he strongly supported an initiative by NSHQ for a change in the command structure. His was acutely aware that the withdrawal of USN escorts had made CTF 24 redundant and resented having to report to an authority that had yet to distinguish itself in ASW.³³ He believed that the RCN should replace the USN as the convoy and escort operational authority but leave the broader naval strategy in the West Atlantic to the USN given the "potential force of the U.S. Battle fleet."³⁴ NSHQ was chagrined because both the RN and USN would shift RCN escorts around without consultation and also had demeaned activities such as the independent and efficient RCN HF/DF U-boat tracking and reporting system. Moreover, the Canadian navy's large contribution had not been acknowledged by invitations to important naval discussions. The RN conveniently included the RCN assets in with their own for weight and the USN, in the person of Admiral King, was disinclined to promote small colonial allies. The RCN also wanted to retrieve its loaned escorts to bolster Murray's assets.

A campaign to achieve recognition and autonomy within the North Atlantic command structure was launched by NSHQ. Murray's command was enlarged to include

FONF, now Commodore Reid, and the RCAF agreed to place all its ASW aircraft of Eastern Air Command (EAC) under COAC's operational control. Concurrently, Rear-Admiral Brodeur, the RCN's representative on the Canadian Joint Staff in Washington, both the RN and USN aware that Canada was not happy with prevailing command relationships. Vice-Admiral Nelles, the CNS, went so far as to threaten to withdraw RCN escorts unless the Canadians got a hearing. However, this was mere posturing for effect. The RN also wanted to effect changes in the command structure, ideally establishing a British admiral as the supreme commander in the Battle of the Atlantic. This would have been entirely unacceptable to the USN. Their alternative scheme complemented the RCN plan to replace CTF 24, but would also extend control of CinC WA, now Admiral Max Horton, further west.

Pressure from both the RN and RCN persuaded Admiral King to hold the Atlantic Convoy Conference (ACC) in March 1943 to negotiate new command relationships. The ACC established the new position of Commander-in-Chief Canadian Northwest Atlantic (CinC CNA) to be occupied by Murray. Admiral Horton's control was extended to 47EW, the eastern boundary of Murray's new area. CTF 24's authority was withdrawn although Argentia remained a base for USN Support Groups. CinC CNA also was given operational control of United States ASW aircraft based in Newfoundland which the American official history notes, "Thus materialised the only instance of unified command under ABC-22."³⁵ That history is also profuse in its praise of Murray and, "the excellent spirit of cooperation and goodwill that existed between the Canadian and U.S. Navies." The new Canadian Northwest Atlantic (CNA) area was only slightly larger than the previous Canadian Coastal Zone but represented an important victory for the RCN. Murray was most pleased but maintained that he was only resuming the role passed temporarily to CTF 24 and that he had always carried the burden of providing the majority of the escorts.

During the interval before the ACC, convoys escorted by the RCN's escort groups sustained heavy losses as the battle intensified. CinC WA, with the reluctant agreement of NSHQ, had reassigned all except one Canadian group to the quieter UK-Gibraltar route for rest and intensive training. Horton's plan was to fight the U-boats with eight escort and five support groups, all RN. Murray believed that Horton could not manage with so few escort groups but let him try.³⁶ He had warned NSHQ that their manning policies would eventually discredit the RCN and was condemnatory on the withdrawal of his escort groups. Murray was correct that Horton could not manage without the RCN escorts and they were all back on the convoy routes within six weeks. In fact, in March 1943, while the Canadian groups were withdrawn, shipping losses were so high as to cause the Admiralty to question, "the convoy as an effective system of defence."³⁷ Roskill wrote that the stunning victory of April-May 1943, should not obscure the fact that the British nearly lost it through tardiness in providing sufficient long-range patrol aircraft.

Murray enjoyed a respite in which to set up his expanded command headquarters. The evolution of command and control arrangements in Halifax for the specialized requirements of both the RCN and RCAF was not without controversy and is a study in itself.³⁸ Sufficient to say that it was now necessary to combine them under one roof and add more communications links including those for "Ultra" intelligence (SIGINT). There was controversy between CinC CNA and AOC EAC over where to establish the joint headquarters. Murray had also previously resisted pressure from NSHQ to move his

operational headquarters from the Halifax dockyard into a new RCAF headquarters on South Street.³⁹ He argued reduced contact with his naval and merchant captains and dug in his heels against centralization. The old CTF 24 organization was based on the concept of unity of command in accordance with USN doctrine and Murray wanted to maintain that model. At issue also was whether the air force was in a primary or support role. NSHQ's had embraced the RCAF concept based on the centralization. Envisioned was an Area Combined Headquarters (ACHQ) on a larger scale than Horton's command although with similar command relationships. In the end, the Chiefs of Staff Committee in Ottawa made the decision, and in March 1943 Murray was directed by NSHQ to move into the EAC Headquarters.⁴⁰ Faced with an unsatisfactory report by the Allied Anti-Submarine Warfare Survey Board of his headquarters' control of ASW patrol aircraft and convinced that resistance was no longer profitable, Murray gave in to the centralization scheme.⁴¹ However, as commander-in-chief, he continued to exercise full command regardless of suggestions to the contrary.

After May 1943, the U-boats were contained in the eastern Atlantic and pressure was relieved from the convoy routes. Except for sporadic activity, the North Atlantic became a "milk run" and weather was the worst enemy.⁴² The new command structure was flexible and Murray was given increasing responsibility. By 1944, he provided all close escorts and controlled and routed all convoys. The USN retained control of its carrier and support groups but transferred the latter to Murray as needed. This was necessary to respond to incursions by independent schnorkel-fitted U-boats into the CNA area. Murray was also responsible for the manning and training escorts and support groups for the eastern Atlantic. He dispatched these when operationally efficient for the build-up for the invasion of Europe but this left him without dedicated formations for local operations. A Directorate of Warfare and Training (DWT) was established in NSHQ to coordinate all aspects of ASW and training and work-ups for new construction and refitted ships. The latter responsibility was separated from Murray's command and placed under a new DWT activity, HMCS *Somers Isles*, in Bermuda.

As a consequence of the inconsistent availability of escorts, Murray could only muster ad hoc groups to prosecute U-boat contacts. Water conditions off Nova Scotia and Newfoundland provided perfect conditions for submarines to avoid detection. A few U-boats managed to run the gauntlet of USN support and carrier groups and used these conditions to cause some havoc. These independent sorties were designed by Dönitz to pin down ASW resources. Murray borrowed USN Support groups to bolster his scratch groups. Only a few U-boats were successfully hunted to destruction in the CNA area. However, this cooperation with the USN led to the adoption of American tactical doctrine and a permanent exchange of oceanographic information.⁴³ There was continuous liaison with COMINCH's staff on ASW and matters of higher strategy.⁴⁴ This built up mutual understanding but there was no question that Admiral King commanded in the Western Atlantic. The balance of influence was clearly shifting to the USN.

The war ended on 5 May 1945 and this should have been an important milestone in what Roger Sarty called Murray's "brilliant career."⁴⁵ While Murray was busy overseeing the surrender of U-boats in his area, VE-Day celebrations in Halifax turned into a riot where sailors took part. The local population, incited by the press, blamed the navy. That event has been examined elsewhere.⁴⁶ The important consequence here is that Murray shouldered the blame for the navy and went quietly into self-imposed exile in England. Within a few months, the war in the Pacific was over and the Canadian navy

demobilized in unbridled haste and with this most of the pre-war “family navy” disappeared. The remnants were content to let Murray fade along with memories of the convoy battles lost by the RCN. Rear-Admiral Murray died in 1971. His last wish was to be returned to Canada.⁴⁷ His ashes were interred in the “naval vault” in St. Paul’s Church, Halifax the following year.⁴⁸

Rear-Admiral Leonard Warren Murray may not stand out as one of the “Great Captains” of history. But, he was a competent and dedicated Canadian naval officer who rose to meet exceptional challenges thrust upon him. As an RCN commander, he had nothing like the RN’s or USN’s large organizations and depth of resources to support him. Asked to do the impossible, Murray improvised and made do in the face of adversity and inadequate support from naval headquarters. He and his escorts endured setbacks, losses, criticism, and neglect but eventually prevailed. There was a different kind of victory, the RCN’s coming of age. While honours were showered on Rear-Admiral Murray by foreign powers, he was not destined to receive accolades from his own country. His reward was obscurity, a pathetic tribute to a warrior and Canada’s only commander-in-chief in World War II.

NOTES

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- ⁴ ABC-22 is reproduced in *Pearl Harbour Attack*, pp. 1584-1591.
- ⁵ S.W. Roskill, *The War At Sea*, I (London, 1954), p. 472.
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- ²⁰ Murray, “Notes for Broadcast by C.B.C.,” Murray Papers.
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- ²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 130.
- ²⁵ Marc Milner, *The U-boat Hunters*, (Toronto, 1994), p. 73.

- ²⁶ For details of the evolving command relationships see W.G.D. Lund, "Command Relationships in the North West Atlantic, 1939-45: the Royal Canadian Navy's Perspective," MA Thesis, Queen's University, 1972.
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- ³³ DOD to CNS, 28 December 1942, in Lund, "Command Relationships," p. 45.
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“NUMBERS ARE ESSENTIAL”: VICTORY IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC RECONSIDERED MARCH-MAY 1943

Robert C. Fisher

The Germans conceded defeat in the North Atlantic at the end of May 1943 after sustaining heavy losses. Allied forces destroyed forty U-boats during May, after averaging only fourteen per month from January to April 1943.¹ The U-boat men called it “Black May;” others have called it the “Stalingrad at Sea.” The magnitude of the German defeat was all the more surprising because February and March had witnessed several major victories for the wolf packs against elite British and American escort groups.

What happened between March and May to cause this dramatic turnaround? This period has been the most closely studied of the Battle of the Atlantic. Naval historians have attributed the Allied victory of May 1943 to a number of different factors: the development of sophisticated electronic equipment such as 10 cm radar and ship-borne High Frequency/Direction-Finding; improved tactics and training of escorts; special intelligence derived from breaking the Enigma codes; and greater numbers of surface escorts and very-long-range or VLR aircraft. Undoubtedly all of these factors played an important role in the defeat of the U-boats. Most historians have been reluctant to point to a single factor that was decisive. Recent historians have stressed that the victory of May was qualitative: obsolete U-boats were outclassed by the quality-technological and tactical-of Allied surface and air escorts, rather than the quantity.²

I do not doubt the tremendous importance of Allied improvements in intelligence, technology, training, and tactics. Significant developments, however, did not occur at sea in these areas between March – the month of defeat – and May – the month of victory. These qualitative improvements took effect gradually and contributed to Allied victory *over the long haul* in the Atlantic campaign. None of them adequately explain the *sudden* change of fortunes that took place in April and May.

Decryption intelligence had played an important role since late December 1942 but although there were temporary blackouts no major shift had occurred since that time. Indeed, to some extent, the Germans had the intelligence advantage at this stage. The tremendous technological advantage of centimetric radar and High Frequency/Direction-Finding is also inadequate as an explanation for the sudden-ness of Allied victory. The British and American escort groups involved in the convoy disasters of February and March had carried this electronic equipment. It had been standard equipment on British escorts since early 1942. The impact of advances in anti-submarine training and tactics is more difficult to assess but the refinements since late 1942 seem to have been subtle rather than significant. Admiral Max Horton brought a renewed emphasis of training to Western Approaches Command in late 1942 which resulted in the removal of the Canadian escort groups from the North Atlantic run in January.³ Still, the prime

beneficiaries of this training – the Canadians – did not play a leading role in the May victory and the slow rotation of British escorts through the training establishments cannot explain the sudden change of fortunes.

Why did the balance between convoys and wolf packs change? Numbers. Between late March and early May, the Allies reinforced the North Atlantic dramatically with large numbers of surface escorts, VLR aircraft, and escort carriers. Decisions made in March freed up surface escorts for the North Atlantic by suspending the dangerous Arctic convoys to Russia and scaling back the escort commitments for Operation Torch in North Africa. Western Approaches used this new-found wealth to enlarge the Mid-Ocean Escort Force and create six new support groups. In addition, two new VLR squadrons joined the lone VLR squadron operating in the North Atlantic. This reinforcement crushed the wolf packs in a convincing fashion.

Convoy Battles of Late 1942 and Early 1943

Space only permits a brief review of the major convoy battles of this period to show the impact of this reinforcement. In late 1942, two Canadian-escorted convoys suffered heavy attack. SC 107 lost fifteen merchant ships to a pack of sixteen submarines – Siegfried von Forstner in *U-402* sank five ships alone. The close escort consisted of six escorts: one destroyer and five corvettes, all without 10 cm radar or HF/DF. They had to defend the convoy for several nights in the Greenland air cover gap without air or surface support. Canadian aircraft destroyed two U-boats at the outset of the battle but did not change the outcome. Next month, the westbound convoy ONS 154 lost fourteen ships to a group of eighteen submarines. Its close escort consisted of six warships: one destroyer and five corvettes, newly-equipped with centimetric radar and HF/DF. HMCS *St. Laurent* destroyed one U-boat. British authorities blamed the losses in both battles on the poor training of the Canadian escorts.⁴

Allied code breakers cracked the four-rotor Enigma in mid-December 1942. From then until the climax of the battle in May 1943, both sides would have good signals intelligence. In early February, the Allies fared slightly better with convoy SC 118. It had an abnormally large British escort of nine warships: four destroyers, four corvettes, and one US Coast Guard cutter. This powerful escort destroyed two U-boats but still lost eleven merchant ships. Again, von Forstner in *U-402* sank six ships in two attacks. Air cover destroyed one more sub and ended the pursuit.

The Germans intercepted two convoys escorted by the American escort group A3 in February and March. ON 166 lost fourteen merchant ships to a pack of nineteen U-boats over four nights. The close escort had the latest equipment and consisted of seven warships: two large veteran US Coast Guard Cutters and five RCN corvettes. It destroyed one U-boat and VLR aircraft destroyed another. On its return voyage with SC 121, the same group was hit hard again. This time it had only five escorts. In hurricane force weather, it lost twelve ships to a group of twenty-plus submarines. The arrival of aircraft and warships from Iceland put an end to the battle after three nights. Surface and air escorts did not sink a single U-boat.⁵

This Allied defeat set the stage in mid-March for two of the best known convoy battles of the war – SC 122 and HX 229. The British escort of SC 122 consisted of eight escorts: two destroyers, one frigate, and five corvettes. It was well-equipped with centimetric radar and HF/DF and, being British, was presumably well-trained. SC 122 lost nine merchant ships to a pack of about twenty submarines over three nights.

Simultaneously, HX 229 was under attack by another fifteen to twenty U-boats. Its British escort consisted of only five escorts: two destroyers and three corvettes, similarly well-equipped. The pack sank thirteen ships. The arrival of air cover and three warships from Iceland put an end to the slaughter. Aircraft destroyed one sub—the only German loss.⁶

The surface escorts had lost twenty-three ships without sinking a U-boat. It was a disaster of the magnitude of SC 107 and ONS 154. The much vaunted British escort groups – fitted with the latest electronic equipment and weapons systems – fared little better in the air cover gap than the American and Canadian escort groups had before them against slightly-better odds. The result proved that even a well-equipped and highly-trained close screen of six or seven escorts could not prevent heavy losses to a large wolf pack in the air cover gap. The defeat, understandably, caused dismay in the Admiralty.

Reinforcing the North Atlantic

We should consider the size of the Allied forces in the North Atlantic in March 1943. The Mid-Ocean Escort Force consisted of ten escort groups which normally sailed with two destroyers and four corvettes. The average for this period was 6.8 escorts per convoy.⁷ In terms of air cover, Coastal Command had nine VLR Liberators in Iceland and nine more in Northern Ireland for a total of eighteen – none with 10 cm radar or Leigh Lights. In addition, there were about fifty long-range aircraft based in Newfoundland, Iceland and Britain.⁸

Decisions made in early 1943 led to a transfer of resources to the North Atlantic in late March and April. The Casablanca Conference had decided that “the defeat of the U-boat must remain a first charge on the resources of the United Nations.” Among the measures recommended to bring this about were the provision of escort aircraft carriers for Atlantic convoys and additional long-range aircraft.⁹ Resources did not come available until March. The suspension of the Arctic convoys to Murmansk freed up fifteen fleet destroyers and one escort carrier – HMS *Dasher* – for transfer to Western Approaches. These destroyers formed the basis of three new support groups in April. Furthermore, adjustments to the convoy cycles allowed the release of additional escorts – including the escort carriers HMS *Biter* and *Archer* – from Operation Torch. The result was two more support groups composed of sloops and frigates. Moreover, the number of close escort groups rose to twelve with the return of the Canadian groups. The accidental loss of HMS *Dasher* on March 27th hurt but the loan of the carrier USS *Bogue* and its destroyer-escort to Western Approaches offset the loss. By mid-April, Western Approaches had six brand new support groups – three with escort carriers.¹⁰

This transfer of strength had an immediate impact. The close escort groups of the Mid-Ocean Escort Force averaged about 7.9 escorts per convoy in April and May.¹¹ When we add the six support groups which averaged about four destroyers, frigates or sloops and included three escort carriers – the theatre experienced an increase in fighting force in the range of 60-90%. It is tempting to speculate that the heavy losses to the British groups spurred the Allies to action. Still, it is clear that this reinforcement had support at the highest political levels in Britain and the US – suspension of the Russian convoys and transfers from Torch would not have happened without it.¹²

The numbers of VLR aircraft increased similarly in the North Atlantic theatre in April. Coastal Command had eighteen Liberators in Iceland and Northern Ireland on March 15th. This figure had risen by mid-April to twenty-seven Liberators, and by mid-

May to three squadrons of thirty-five Liberators: an increase of almost 100%. Ten of the new aircraft had centimetric radar (partially contradicting my claims that there was no technological improvement in this period) but none had Leigh Lights. The doubling of the number of VLR aircraft was crucial because only they could close the Greenland air gap. Service and national rivalries, however, prevented the deployment of VLR aircraft to Newfoundland until the summer of 1943.¹³

In a few weeks, Allied anti-submarine resources in the North Atlantic had virtually doubled in terms of numbers and fighting force. The knowledge of this coming reinforcement produced optimism at Western Approaches in spite of the devastating losses of SC 122 and HX 229. Within days of those battles, on March 23rd Admiral Horton wrote to another admiral and friend: "This job has been pretty sombre up to date, because one hadn't the means to do those very simple things for which numbers are essential, and which could quash the menace definitely in a reasonable time; but in the last few days things are much brighter and we are to be reinforced, and I really have hopes now that we can turn from the defensive to another and better role—killing them. The real trouble has been basic – too few ships, all too hard worked with no time for training and all that that entails." Horton continued that "The Air carried afloat is now turning up to an extent which may be almost embarrassing in the next few months. ... All these things are coming to a head just now, and although the last week has been one of the blackest on the sea, so far as this job is concerned, I am really hopeful."¹⁴

ONS 5 and the Convoy Battles of May 1943

In late April, the Germans stationed fifty U-boats in two patrol lines off Newfoundland and another fifteen boats in the eastern Atlantic.¹⁵ It was this smaller group that intercepted convoy ONS 5 on April 28th south of Iceland. The close escort, B7, consisted of nine British warships: two destroyers, a frigate, four corvettes, and two anti-submarine trawlers. Five or six U-boats made contact in bad weather and sank one merchant ship. Western Approaches ordered the newly-created Third Support Group, consisting of five destroyers, to sail from St. John's to reinforce ONS 5. They arrived on the 30th increasing the screen to fourteen escorts. In view of the disappointing results, U-boat Command called off the pack on May 1st. The heavy seas, however, had caused the escorts to run low on fuel. Four of the destroyers – including the Senior Officer – had to detach for port leaving the convoy with a screen of three destroyers, a frigate, four corvettes, and one trawler.

The battle was not over. Ahead, northeast of Newfoundland, thirty U-boats lay in wait for an eastbound convoy. Instead, ONS 5 blundered into the patrol line on May 4th from the other direction. Western Approaches sailed the First Support Group, consisting of frigates and sloops, to further reinforce the screen. An RCAF Canso from Newfoundland depth-charged *U-209* on the 4th, causing it to sink a few days later. Indeed, VLR aircraft from Iceland provided protection at extreme range on the 5th, revealing how they had closed the Greenland air gap. In spite of the air cover, U-boat Command ordered forty-odd subs to converge upon the convoy. A wild and confused battle ensued. Initially, the Germans had the upper hand sinking twelve ships during the 4th and 5th of May while the escort destroyed one sub. The tide turned on the 5th, however, as heavy fog set in – bad conditions for U-boat lookouts – and the rough seas calmed – good conditions for Allied radar. The reinforced escort seized the initiative and destroyed

five more U-boats on the 6th turning defeat into victory. The close escort took the honours, sinking four subs solo but the support groups sank two subs.

The balance sheet for ONS 5 showed seven U-boats lost in return for thirteen ships sunk – a disastrous rate of exchange for the Germans. All told, about forty U-boats stalked the convoy which received protection from no less than nineteen warships – seven destroyers, four frigates, two sloops, four corvettes, and two trawlers. British authorities hailed the result as a great victory; historians have called it a turning point in the war at sea. It is well to remember that only eight escorts were present when most of the merchant ships were lost and things might have been much different had the convoy had to transit the air cover gap for several nights far from surface reinforcement.¹⁶

From here, things went from bad to worse for the Germans. Subsequent convoy operations cost them heavily. The pursuit of HX 237 – defended by the seven escorts of C2 and the Fifth Support Group (including the carrier HMS *Biter*) – resulted in the destruction of three U-boats in exchange for three ships lost. HMCS *Drumheller* and the RCAF shared in one of the kills.¹⁷ The balance sheet for SC 129 – protected by a British group of eight escorts and reinforced by the Fifth Support Group with *Biter* – showed one U-boat destroyed and two merchant ships sunk—both by our old friend von Forstner in *U-402*. The attack on SC 130 was even less successful. Thirteen warships – nine close escorts and the First Support Group – prevented the pack from sinking a ship and destroyed one U-boat. VLR Liberators made twenty-seven U-boat sightings and destroyed one sub. German operations also failed against ON 184, defended by six close escorts and the four destroyers and USS *Bogue* of the Sixth Support Group. The pack could not penetrate the powerful screen to sink a single ship and carrier aircraft destroyed one U-boat. At the same time, eight close escorts, four support group destroyers and HMS *Archer* prevented any losses from HX 239. Carrier aircraft destroyed one U-boat.¹⁸

In two months, the Allies had solved the wolf pack. As the magnitude of “Black May” set in, U-boat Command conceded defeat. On May 24th it ordered submarines to withdraw from the North Atlantic convoy routes to the south beyond the range of land-based air cover. With the benefit of hindsight, Admiral Karl Dönitz later wrote: “We had lost the Battle of the Atlantic.”¹⁹

Allied forces had destroyed forty U-boats in May; North Atlantic convoy escorts destroyed twenty of these U-boats. Including shared kills, surface escorts had eleven kills, land-based aircraft had eight kills, and carrier aircraft had three kills. In return for the loss of twenty U-boats in the convoy battles, the wolf packs sank only nineteen merchant ships (including stragglers), most of them in the opening battle for ONS 5.²⁰

The key to the sudden reversal of fortunes was the increased protection given to convoys. Not only were there more close escorts, but support groups reinforced twenty of the twenty-two convoys that sailed between April 6th and May 19th. In fact, four of these convoys received protection from two support groups. For all intents and purposes the three escort carriers and two additional VLR squadrons had closed the Greenland air gap. Admiral Horton wrote with confidence at the end of May: “We now know ... what strength and composition of forces is necessary to deal with the U-boat menace against convoys.”²¹

Conclusions

The German U-boat fleet was also growing rapidly in the spring of 1943. The front-line Atlantic U-boat fleet consisted of 186 attack boats on May 1st; an increase of about 15% since February 1st, and enough to keep about sixty on active operations in the North Atlantic.²² The steady growth of U-boat strength did not have the same impact as the increase in surface and air escorts because the dynamics of convoy battles favoured large escorts over large packs.

With a small escort, the first sinkings forced the escort to counter-attack and rescue survivors. This opened up the screen for the rest of the pack to move in and swamp the defenders. A close escort of six or seven warships would become disorganized quite quickly after two or three sinkings. An escort of ten to twelve warships with strong air cover was much less susceptible to this kind of disorder. Even the bold U-boat commanders like von Forstner found it much more difficult to penetrate the tight screen, and if they did manage to attack, the screen regrouped quickly to prevent further losses.

The Admiralty's Operational Research unit, led by the scientist P.M.S. Blackett, demonstrated mathematically the superiority of a large escort. Blackett found that "that the chance that a U-boat would penetrate the screen depended only on the linear density of escorts, that is, on the number of escort vessels for each mile of perimeter to be defended." Indeed, increasing the size of the convoy did not increase the size of its perimeter by the same proportion so that a convoy of sixty merchant ships and twelve escorts was in fact much more strongly protected than a convoy of thirty ships and six escorts. Blackett described convoy battles as "unstable equilibriums" where, when the advantage went to one side, it went completely to that side. In May 1943, Allied reinforcements tipped the balance decisively in favour of the defenders.²³

Can we draw some larger conclusions from this analysis? Could these resources have been made available earlier? The Royal Navy had four escort carriers operational back in October 1942: three assigned to Operation Torch and one to the Russian convoys. They did not share in one U-boat kill in either of these assignments.²⁴ In addition, the Torch convoys absorbed scores of other escorts that could have been used more effectively in the North Atlantic where the weight of the German attack was heaviest. Moreover, by the end of 1942 ships sailing in convoy on the eastern seaboard of the United States received as much protection as those in the North Atlantic in spite of the much diminished threat and the presence of continuous air cover in coastal waters.²⁵ It was the same story with aircraft. Coastal Command had assigned two squadrons of long-range Liberators to the protection of the Torch convoys.²⁶ Scores of aircraft were lost in bombing raids over Germany. It is difficult not to conclude that had the Allied resources been dedicated to the task, victory in the North Atlantic could have come several months earlier. It would have been a more gradual and less dramatic victory than that of May 1943, but victory nonetheless.

NOTES

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- ⁶ Martin Middlebrook, *Convoy* (New York, 1976) and Jürgen Rohwer, *The Critical Convoy Battles of March 1943* (London, 1977), tell the story of these convoys battles.
- ⁷ Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH), 89/34, Convoy reports. Averages calculated for a full cycle of eleven convoys in November-December 1942, and ten convoys in February-March 1943.
- ⁸ DHH, 79/599, Great Britain, Air Ministry, Air Historical Branch, *The RAF in Maritime War*, Vol. 4, pp. 26-27, 32.
- ⁹ NARA, RG 218, Box 6, file 13W3 13 15K, "History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff," Chapter 4, pp. 103-104, 110.
- ¹⁰ Great Britain, Admiralty, Historical Section, *The Defeat of the Enemy Attack on Shipping*, Vol. 1A, pp. 95, 293-294; Stephen Roskill, *The War at Sea* (London, 1956), II, pp. 366-368, 373; and John Terraine, *Business in Great Waters* (London, 1989), pp. 584-587.
- ¹¹ DHH, 89/34, Convoy reports. Averages calculated for a full cycle of convoys in April-May 1943.
- ¹² DHH, 79/599, *The RAF in Maritime War*, Vol. 4, pp.23-26; and Stephen Roskill, *The War at Sea*, II, p. 364.
- ¹³ DHH, 79/599, *The RAF in Maritime War*, Vol. 4, pp. 21-27; and W.A.B. Douglas, *The Creation of a National Air Force* (Toronto, 1986), pp. 537-567.
- ¹⁴ W.S. Chalmers, *Max Horton and the Western Approaches* (London, 1954), p. 188.
- ¹⁵ Great Britain, Admiralty, Tactical and Staff Duties Division, *German Naval History: The U-boat War in the Atlantic*, II, pp. 102-103.
- ¹⁶ Michael Gannon, *Black May*, pp. 115-240; and *The U-boat War in the Atlantic*, II, pp. 104-106.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 334-349.
- ¹⁸ Michael Gannon, *Black May*, pp. 353-377; and Clay Blair, *The Hunted*, pp. 332-338.
- ¹⁹ DHH, 79/446, *Befehlshaber der U-boote* (BdU) War Diary, 22-24 May 1943; *The U-boat War in the Atlantic*, II, pp. 112-113; and Karl Dönitz, *Memoirs: Ten Years and Twenty Days* (London, 1959), p. 341.
- ²⁰ Axel Niestlé, *German U-boat Losses during World War II*, p. 193; and Jürgen Rohwer, *Axis Submarine Successes, 1939-1945* (Annapolis, MD, 1983), pp. 164-167. This figure includes the one merchant ship lost from ONS 5 at the end of April.
- ²¹ Stephen Roskill, *The War at Sea*, II, pp. 376, 380-381.
- ²² DHH, 79/446, BdU War Diary, Feb.-May 1943; and Clay Blair, *The Hunted*, p. 166.
- ²³ Michael Gannon, *Black May*, p. 111; and Marc Milner, *North Atlantic Run*, p. 181.
- ²⁴ *Defeat of the Enemy Attack on Shipping*, Vol. 1A, pp. 293-294.
- ²⁵ DHH, 85/588, United States Navy, Eastern Sea Frontier War Diary, October 1942.
- ²⁶ DHH, 79/599, *The RAF in Maritime War*, Vol. 3, pp. 514-521.

NIGHT ENCOUNTER: HMCS ASSINIBOINE AND U 119

Jan Drent

The night of March 2, 1943 was dark and misty when the Canadian destroyer *Assiniboine* surprised a u-boat on the surface 660 miles west of Ireland. *Assiniboine* immediately attacked. Intending to ram, Commander “Ken” Adams increased speed and reached the submarine just as it was diving, struck a glancing blow and dropped depth charges as the target disappeared below. Commander Adams was convinced that he had destroyed the u-boat. The submarine, whose identity – *U 119* – has only recently been established, had in fact been damaged but escaped. March 1943 would be a critical month in the Atlantic Campaign but neither *Assiniboine* nor *U 119* were involved in a convoy battle when they had their brief but eventful encounter. However, the events that dark night and the subsequent fate of *U 119* shed light on the state of both the Canadian Navy and the German U-Boat arm. This paper will demonstrate that on this occasion it was manning turbulence and inadequate workups in the RCN – and not inferior equipment – which was behind *Assiniboine*’s lack of success.

Assiniboine was purchased from the Royal Navy in mid 1939 as the culmination of Canada’s modest acquisition in the thirties of seven destroyers. By early 1943 the ship, known to sailors as *Bones*, had an enviable reputation¹, based in part on having destroyed *U 210* in a dramatic surface action off Newfoundland the previous August, during which the u-boat had been rammed. There had been several successive changes of the ship’s company since *Assiniboine* commissioned in October 1939 as one of the most capable ships in the RCN. These large turnovers were brought on by what was described in a contemporary document as the “unprecedented expansion in H.M.C. Navy.”² By the end of 1941 it was realised that the requirement to man the rapidly- growing fleet on the one hand – and a lack of trained personnel on the other – was severely limiting operational efficiency. At the same time new ships were being accepted in numbers (forty-two corvettes commissioned between May and November 1941) as the Canadian shipbuilding industry began to hit its stride. The only available source of officers and men with seagoing experience who could now be trained to take on greater responsibilities in what was an increasingly technological fighting force was from within the Navy. However, withdrawing experienced men from ships for further training meant that team cohesion would be lost and fighting effectiveness would suffer. The policy promulgated in December 1941 to deal with the expansion/training dilemma specified that roughly 20 percent of ratings could be withdrawn from ships per quarter. Ships already in commission were supposed to be worked up following a long refit.³ Manning turnovers in *Assiniboine* illustrate the impact of constant changes on a ship’s company: only four officers and 44 men (out of roughly twelve and 180 respectively) served in the ship throughout the twelve months which ended on July 1, 1942.⁴ Later that year the majority of the officers and ratings were replaced with less experienced men during fifteen weeks of repairs and refit in Halifax following the sinking of *U 210*.⁵

Assiniboine and the other “River class” ships had been built as fleet destroyers. As the war went on they were modified to make them better anti-submarine vessels and

classified as escort destroyers. The most significant improvement during the fall 1942 refit was the fitting of 271P centimetric radar. The ship was fitted for but not with HF/DF and the prewar Asdic 124 had not yet been replaced.⁶ By mid-December *Assiniboine* was considered ready to return to sea. The trials and exercise programme allocated a mere three days for exercising at sea and concluded optimistically with “Tuesday, 29th Dec. – Ready to rejoin Newfoundland Escort Force.”⁷ Years later the ship’s First Lieutenant recalled “We had about a week after refit plus two or three days in St. Margarets Bay, allegedly working up but it was pretty spurious ...” The Newfoundland Force was indeed desperately short of destroyers. Each escort group was supposed to include two destroyers but at the time there were only two for the four Canadian groups⁸. The RCN had made progress in improving post-refit training in 1942⁹DHH, 50, but the fact that *Assiniboine* was returned to operations with a new commanding officer, largely new officers, Chiefs and Petty Officers and ratings after the sketchiest of work-ups shows how the pressure to get ships to sea was overriding the established policies for post-refit training.¹⁰ The ship made two Atlantic crossings with convoys but on returning to St. John’s all but one of the escorts in *Assiniboine*’s group, C 3, had their asdic domes damaged by ice.¹¹ Because of the overtaxed repair facilities in Newfoundland *Assiniboine*’s dome was replaced in Halifax. Meanwhile, C 3 sailed with another eastbound convoy. While on the other side of the Atlantic it would receive the concentrated anti-submarine training being given to the Canadian groups in turn. *Assiniboine* was sailed independently on February 26 to join her group in Londonderry. Commander “Ken” Adams took command on the eve of sailing, replacing an officer invalidated ashore after only weeks in the ship. “Trickle drafting” had continued to affect the ship’s ability to develop cohesively and in February alone 35 ratings had been exchanged.¹²

Commander Adams, 39, was a rugged extrovert who had played rugby for the Royal Navy. An experienced mariner, Adams came to *Assiniboine* from command of the RCN barracks in Halifax and had earlier been captain of the Armed Merchant Cruiser *Prince David*. *Assiniboine* was sailed along a track south of the shortest (great circle) route to look for two derelicts and a life boat reported in mid ocean. When two thirds of the way across the Atlantic she encountered *U 119*.

This large minelaying submarine was on her first operational patrol. Only 9m shorter than *Assiniboine*, *U 119* was one of a class of eight type XB boats, the largest German submarines. The boat had commissioned in April 1942 and did four months of trials and intensive workups. The type XBs had two torpedo tubes aft but were designed primarily to carry 66 SMA (*Sonder- Mine A*) moored mines in vertical shafts which gave this class a distinctive rectangular cross-section. Given their size – huge for the time – and slab-sided hulls these submarines produced a much better radar echo than the smaller attack boats. The sophisticated SMA magnetic mines, which could be laid in depths down to 350 m, had only just been cleared for use. The first offensive SMA field was laid in the Strait of Gibraltar approaches by a sister type XB boat on February 1. These sank the corvette *HMCS Weyburn* three weeks later as well as three merchant ships.

U 119 was commanded by Kapitänleutnant Alois Zech, who at 35 was roughly seven years older than the average u-boat captain. The normal German practice was not to change members of a boat’s crew until after the first operational patrol. *U 119*’s crew would thus have been together for just under a year. Although this was their first offensive patrol they had laid a defensive minefield off Denmark the previous August.¹³

U 119 laid mines off Reykjavik on February 20 and 21, but this operation was not a success as some mines exploded prematurely. The British learned about the field through signals intelligence as soon its laying was reported and the mines were promptly swept.¹⁴ *U 119* was then ordered south to act as a u-tanker. Because the type XBs had been designed to lay mines in distant areas their long endurance enabled them to augment the ten purpose-built type XIV u-tankers. By 2 March *U 119* had reached her assigned area south of the convoy tracks and was on the surface. The visibility was intermittently poor in rain showers but the FuMB radar detector was rigged and operating.¹⁵ However, *Assiniboine's* new ten centimeter radar used a wavelength not covered by this equipment. The Germans were only just learning that the Allies had centimetric radar. Introduced seven months earlier, the FuMB typified how countermeasures could lag behind technological advances by the other side.

It was *Assiniboine* which made the first detection. Her 271P radar picked up an echo at 9000 yards (4.5 miles) at about 2,150. Because the German submarines normally encountered produced a much smaller radar target it was not expected that a u-boat would be detected at such a range but Commander Adams altered towards and closed up action stations. Within a few minutes a low-lying object was sighted on the starboard bow, illuminated using flares and identified at a range of 2,000 yards as a u-boat. It was difficult for an escort to seriously damage a submarine on the surface quickly with gunfire. Such a low-lying and narrow target was hard to hit using visual spotting and a slow rate of fire from a lively platform like *Assiniboine*. The approved method for causing immediate fatal damage was by ramming.¹⁶ Adams increased speed and steered for the u-boat. The 4.7 inch mountings each opened fire but managed to get off only one round each. The starboard forward oerlikon fired a stream of rounds which were seen to hit the submarine.

U 119 did not sight the destroyer until she was in to about 800 meters and closing rapidly from "the misty sector on the port quarter"¹⁷ *U 119* KTB. *U 119's* account of where the destroyer was sighted does not square with a diagram which accompanied *Assiniboine's* ROP but is consistent with the u-boat's immediate dive. but immediately turned away and started to dive. Because of this alteration *Assiniboine* was unable to ram beam on and instead struck a glancing blow. Simultaneously Commander Adams ordered the firing of a full pattern of ten depth charges set to shallow depth. A series of errors in *Assiniboine* now saved *U 119* from destruction. The officer aft in charge of firing depth charges, observing the u-boat bumping down the side, decided that only six charges would suffice. A smoke marker was not dropped to mark the attack and the plotting table was not running because of a defect. The depth charges, which exploded as the u-boat's conning tower dipped below the surface, appeared to lift the entire submarine out the water but the explosions also knocked all electrical power off *Assiniboine's* switch boards because of another operator error. The gyro compass, radar and steering motors all failed. Commander Adams attempted to turn the ship using his engines to make a further attack but "a very erratic course resulted." When power was restored an asdic contact was held briefly. The radar also picked up an echo but failed to report this to the bridge. *Assiniboine* searched in the darkness for forty minutes and then resumed her original course on one engine. The collision had pushed in plating in both boiler rooms and the starboard screw had been damaged as it chewed into the u-boat's casing. *Assiniboine* reported having "definitely destroyed submarine" and serious damage; she eventually reached Liverpool for repairs on March 7.¹⁸

Heavy vibrations were felt in *U 119* on being rammed. Fearing that the pressure hull had been punctured, Kapitänleutnant Zech promptly ordered his diving tanks to be blown in order to return to the surface. On opening the conning tower hatch he observed a destroyer lying stopped 500 meters on the beam. Zech ordered his guns to be manned and turned slowly away so that his stern was pointing at *Assiniboine*. However, he did not attack, probably because u-tankers were to avoid action unless in self defence.¹⁹ By now reports had reached him that the boat was not making water and he opened out on the surface. The Germans concluded that the destroyer must have been heavily damaged as she was not pursuing. *U 119* carried out a test dive an hour later and then continued to open out submerged. She surfaced in daylight the next morning and found that three to four meters of the bow casing had been torn off and 21 holes made by *Assiniboine's* oerlikon were counted on the conning tower and around the after deck mounting. Zech then reported concisely that he had been attacked. This message was intercepted and decrypted in just under nine hours later by Bletchley Park.²⁰ *U 119* was then ordered to move 120 miles to the southwest. Over a ten day period Zech, despite his crumpled bows, replenished ten attack boats 600 miles north of the Azores that had been operating against convoys. By early 1943 U-Boat Command was mounting a maximum effort against the North Atlantic convoys: during the first three weeks of March every convoy was located, half attacked, and one merchant ship in five sunk.²¹ Replenishment from u-tankers was one of the factors keeping this formidable force – an average of 116 boats in February and March²² – at sea. When her fuel had been exhausted *U 119* made for Bordeaux, arriving on April 1.

Meanwhile, *Assiniboine's* encounter was being dissected in Liverpool. Commander Adams' Report of Proceedings was submitted through the officer responsible for the operational efficiency of escorts operating out of the port, Captain Frederic J. Walker, RN. This officer, already a renowned u-boat killer, was in the final weeks of a six-month stint as Captain (Destroyers) Liverpool. Adams, accompanied by his First Lieutenant, Lieutenant-Commander R.L. Hennessy, called on Walker, who was critical about the outcome of the encounter and asked why *Assiniboine* had not pursued her target to destruction. Hennessy pointed out that *Assiniboine* was not a worked-up ship.²³ Adams wrote that Walker "offered me his congratulations" but the tone of the discussion as remembered by Admiral Hennessy was critical. *K.F. Adams Memoir*, 67, DHH. Walker was scathing when he forwarded Adams' written report to the c-in-c, Admiral Horton. Characteristically he deplored the fact that only six of the ten depth charges ordered had been dropped and commented "it would have been far more sensible to have dropped 20 in the circumstances." Walker concluded "it appears to be a clear case where the U-boat should have been hunted to the death."²⁴

Frederic Walker burned with single-minded and ruthless dedication to hunt and destroy u-boats. A pre-war anti-submarine specialist with long experience in the field, he had won fame during a six-day running battle in December 1941 when he had sunk three of the nine u-boats stalking his convoy. But Walker's successes were due not only to his drive and tactical ingenuity. Before taking his Support Group off for operations each ship and the group as a whole did intensive work-ups.²⁵ The two sloops he commanded in wartime were seakindly vessels newer and slightly larger than *Assiniboine*, and of a design which proved to be highly suitable for anti-submarine work. "From the time that he went to sea in *Stork*," his former gunnery officer wrote years later, "he was given the best ships, armaments and equipment that the Royal Navy could offer ... He was given

the best people to man his ships, some of whom followed him from ship to ship.²⁶ By temperament and experience Walker was thus unlikely to make allowances for a Canadian destroyer insufficiently prepared for tangling with a u-boat.

Others were less harsh. Admiral Horton, Adams later recalled, “kindly” explained that the u-boat had survived.²⁷ Captain (D) was instructed by the Admiral to obtain a “fuller report” from Commander Adams. By now Captain Walker had been appointed back to sea. His successor, Captain T. Pakenham, discussed the events with Adams and produced an account which cast events in a more positive light. He explained that Commander Adams might have risked attack from a second submarine had he illuminated the area to look for wreckage to confirm a sinking. By coincidence the destroyer *Harvester*, crippled by ramming a u-boat, had been torpedoed and sunk with heavy loss of life on March 11 not far from *Assiniboine*'s encounter²⁸ 551-2; this incident may have added a new perspective to Adams' actions after his ship had been damaged. Pakenham also speculated that the “dropping of further depth charges would have added little to the U-boat's discomfiture.”²⁹ Commander Adams' report of proceedings was forwarded to Canada on an upbeat note. “It is considered that the Commanding Officer, HMCS ASSINIBOINE, made a most determined effort to sink the U-boat by ramming, and only failed to do so by a matter of a few feet. Taking into consideration all the circumstances and the serious damage suffered by the ship, it is considered that the Commanding Officer was justified in proceeding in execution of his previous orders when he did.”³⁰

Repairs to *Assiniboine* in Liverpool dragged on for sixteen weeks from March 10 to July 20 due to a combination of factors. When the ship was docked a piece of *U 119*'s casing was found embedded on an “A” bracket, the strut supporting the propellor shaft, which itself was found to be bent. The legendary inefficiencies of British shipyards came into play. According to R.P. Welland, who replaced Hennessy as First Lieutenant during the refit, “When the dockyard mateys weren't drinking tea they were allegedly straightening out the propellor shaft. It took some time.”³¹ Surviving documentation is sketchy but suggests that the small Canadian technical staff in London found it difficult to influence progress in what was essentially a refit being conducted by the Flag Officer Liverpool. As the forecast completion date kept shifting the Canadian staff tried to introduce equipment modifications which had been approved to convert *Assiniboine* to an escort destroyer.³² Improvements fitted included a newer and more powerful radar and split hedgehog ahead-throwing anti-submarine projectile launchers but not the new Asdic 144 which was needed for efficient control of this new weapon. Adams was impressed that RCN ships refitting in Britain were able to receive better equipment than in Canada.³³ Meanwhile, advantage was taken of shore training in the UK and before *Assiniboine* returned to sea in August she was worked up, using the services of a British submarine.

It took only weeks to repair *U 119* and to prepare her for a second combination minelaying/u-tanker patrol. Kapitänleutnant Zech, commended for his successful replenishments despite “heavy damage forward”³⁴ was appointed ashore to a more senior position and survived the war. His successor, Kapitänleutnant Horst-Tessen von Kameke, 27, had been a submariner for 30 months. *U 119* sailed on April 25 to lay mines off Halifax. The operation order shows that the Germans were aware that ships from Halifax joined or left trans-Atlantic convoys off the port about eight times each month

and that they would use a track running southeast from Sambro lightship. Von Kameke was given considerable latitude in placing his mines but was to first establish the convoy tracks being used.³⁵

How much reconnaissance von Kameke carried out off Halifax is not known but he reported "mission accomplished" on June 3. Sixty-six SMA mines had been laid in a 6-7 mile ring around the Sambro lightship off the harbour entrance, with an extension northeastwards towards the second light vessel. Three mines that had broken loose from their moorings were sighted off the harbour during the afternoon of June 1 by the escorts of a westbound transatlantic convoy which was being augmented with ships coming out of Halifax. The port was closed for 20 hours while minesweepers cleared a 15 mile channel.

Because port defences were in place the German mines caused minimum disruption. Minesweepers had long been sweeping the harbour approaches daily.³⁶ A larger force was needed to clear the entire area off Halifax. Several "Bangors," versatile little warships originally built as minesweepers that were being used as coastal escorts were available.³⁷ In addition, ten British wooden motor minesweepers built on the Great Lakes were fortuitously staging through Halifax. Minesweeping was completed by June 27 and fifty-three mines had been destroyed. Two mines cut loose by sweepers were towed to shore and dismantled for examination in a daring operation.³⁸ *U 119's* mining was not without consequences. The small freighter *Halma*, a "romper" (a ship ahead of its convoy) was mined on June 3 six miles south of Sambro light vessel and sank.³⁹ Another merchant ship was damaged on June 28 by a drifting mine off Halifax that may have been laid by *U 119*. Convoy movements in and out of Halifax were adjusted to daylight hours. Using the swept channel extended the voyage to and from Sydney by six hours for coastal convoys and a merchant ship sank after colliding while in the swept channel.

By the third week of June *U 119* was approaching her French base and was ordered to join two other inbound boats for mutual protection. On June 23 all three were sighted on the surface by an RAF Liberator. The aircraft dropped depth charges and three boats dived but only one was damaged.⁴⁰ Captain Walker, back at sea since late March in command of the 2nd Support Group, now intervened. Having intercepted the aircraft report about the three u-boats Walker swept south in line abreast. It was *HMS Starling* which detected *U 119* by asdic shortly after 0800 on the twenty-fourth. As luck would have it *Starling* was approaching from exactly astern where the submarine's hydrophones were less efficient through its wake. It appears that von Kameke was at a relatively shallow depth as Walker's first pattern of ten depth charges, set to explode at 150 and 300 feet, immediately brought the u-boat to the surface. The entire group opened fire and Captain Walker decided to ram. He struck *U 119* abaft the conning tower just as she was starting to submerge. The u-boat rolled over and scraped down *Starling's* side. As she reached the stern the officer in charge fired a pattern of shallow charges on his own initiative. *U 119* was destroyed and all fifty-seven men aboard killed.⁴¹ *Starling* was seriously damaged by the collision and depth charges. Walker promptly swapped ships and took charge of a creeping attack which sank one of the boats that had been in company.⁴²

U 119's loss underlined how advances by the Allies in anti-submarine warfare had made old technology submarines dangerously obsolete. Unable to make reasonable progress submerged or to operate for more than a few hours without surfacing to charge her batteries, *U 119* had been located from the air and then despatched by a well-trained,

well-equipped and well-led support group. In retrospect it is apparent that *U 119* had been dangerously obsolete even in March when she was unaware that *Assiniboine* was closing in the dark. The laying of 66 mines in moderately deep water off Halifax had been an impressive technological achievement but had not caused serious disruption because the RCN was well prepared to deal with mine threats in home waters.

The successes of Captain Walker and his groups represent the “high end” on a spectrum of fighting efficiency. The RCN in early 1943 lacked the resources to deploy such capable support groups, but as Milner and Sarty have both pointed out, had made an essential contribution to the outcome of the Atlantic campaign by fielding sufficiently large numbers of escorts to make the convoy system viable.⁴³ In August 1942 *Assiniboine* had outfought a u-boat on the surface in an action which required a high degree of fighting efficiency.⁴⁴ But in March 1943 she been unable to exploit her initial tactical edge. On the earlier occasion the ship had the advantage of a higher proportion of officers and senior ratings with long experience in the ship and a crew that had been operating together under arduous conditions for seven months. Insufficient training and constant manning turnovers can be identified as key factors in determining the outcome on March 2. Commenting on *Assiniboine*'s encounter for internal circulation the Western Approaches staff officer, Anti-Submarine, noted cryptically “the R.C.N. difficulty is that the crews are changing the whole time. The C.O. had been in command a few days only.”⁴⁵ Two months later, an experienced Canadian destroyer captain, Commander D.W. Piers, RCN, submitted a painstakingly comprehensive memorandum on fighting effectiveness, citing “constant drafting changes” as “an evil.”⁴⁶ The “exceptional expansion in HMC Navy” had been accompanied by serious problems in manning stability, training and obsolescent equipment. All three areas were recognised at the time⁴⁷ but manning turbulence has not received as much prominence in recent scholarship as equipment and training.

Comparisons with stability in RN escorts are difficult because data is not available. Major personnel changes in British escorts were made during refits. Because the RN's greatest personnel expansion did not occur until 1943 there was not the same requirement to drain men out of ships for higher training as soon as they had acquired minimum experience.⁴⁸ *The Royal Navy, an Illustrated Social History* (Wiltshire: Sutton, 1994), 187. Anecdotal evidence shows that British escorts at that time enjoyed greater continuity: when Captain MacIntyre returned to the destroyer *Hesperus* in October 1942 after sixteen months he found many of the same ratings while the officers had changed⁴⁹; when Vice-Admiral Gretton took the elderly destroyer *Wolverine* out of a an extensive refit in the summer of 1942 only half of his new crew were in their first ship.⁵⁰ In fact, the stability of Canadian ships' companies began improving somewhat in 1943. In April a manning depot was established to control all movements of personnel.⁵¹ Piers had noted on 1 June that the situation had “improved lately.” By September changes of seaman ratings in ships were being limited to not more than 5% per month.⁵² However this was an improvement over the 1941 target of 20% per quarter only because it spread changes out more evenly.

Assuming roughly equivalent leadership, the factors which determine whether one warship's fighting efficiency is better than another's are equipment, training and the quality of the crew. A warship is fought by a number of teams; cohesion, group experience and continuity are important to realise the benefits of training each team and the ship as a whole. Inferior equipment has often been cited as the reason why Canadian

warships on occasion experienced difficulties in 1942 and 43. But in the night encounter between *Assiniboine* and *U 119* capable equipment – the newly fitted centimetric radar – gave the Canadians an initial tactical edge. However, because the ship had not been given adequate training and was manned by a largely new crew the u-boat escaped. The Germans, on the other hand, were operating a large vulnerable submarine made obsolete by allied technological advances. Thorough training and a cohesive experienced crew enabled them to evade destruction. The outcome of the encounter can be traced to the rapid expansion of the RCN from its tiny prewar size. It is fashionable to consider the Mackenzie King government as a success because it steered the country into war without an internal national crisis and presided over explosive wartime economic growth. The cost of its extreme caution and reluctance to tackle anything more than token rearmament in the run-up to 1939 was the wartime “unprecedented expansion in HMC Navy” whose fallout of operational weaknesses was still affecting performance in early 1943, after the RCN had been fighting for three and a half years. But the other side of the coin is that by 1943 the Navy was overcoming its training and equipment problems and was aiming for more stability in individual ships and escort groups. When *Assiniboine* returned to operations she was better trained and better equipped. *U 119* had been destroyed and because of superior anti-submarine forces the u-boat fleet as a whole was no longer able to seriously threaten the flow of allied cargoes.

NOTES

- ¹ Discussion on 10 April 2000 with Cdr N.R. Banfield, RCN (Ret'd) who served in *Assiniboine* 1939-42 as an Electrical Artificer.
- ² “Training and Manning Policy,” 24 December 1941, NAC RG 24, Vol. 3993, NSS 1033-7-2 Vol. 1 (Newfoundland).
- ³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴ “Details of Twelve Months’ Service in the Newfoundland Escort Force,” 1 July 1942, NAC, RG 24 Vol. 11351, NRC 166. During the war RCN ships were refitted roughly every 9 months.
- ⁵ Interview by H. Lawrence with Vice-Admiral R.L. Hennessy, 1983, p. 63, DHH, Biographies file. R.L. Hennessy, First Lieutenant at the time, had been in *Assiniboine* since commissioning. He recalled ending the previous refit in December 1941 with a large percentage of men who had “never been to sea before.” One year later at the end of the repair period “again we got about 75 to 80 percent people who had never been to sea.” Hennessy remarked that the officers and Chief Petty Officers had now also largely been changed. The *Assiniboine* nominal lists available at the NAC reflect how the ship’s company changed over time. Experienced Permanent force (RCN) officers and men commissioned the ship in October 1939. By mid 1941, 95 of the 182 ratings were still RCN and there were also 17 RCNRs (i.e. men with previous seagoing experience). Sixty two percent of the ratings were thus experienced. Only six months later, in December 1941, the picture had changed: 103 of the 174 ratings (almost sixty percent) were now RCNVR, i.e. men who had joined for the war. 63 were RCN and there were 8 RCNRs. However, all but 4 of the 27 Chiefs and Petty Officers were still RCN. The next available list is dated November 1944. By then there were only 11 RCN and 12 RCNR out of 182 ratings. NAC, RG 24, volume 11351, NRC 56. In a discussion on April 12, 2000 LCDR N. Burke, who served in the ship from 1940 to 1944 with interruptions, and was a PO in March 1943 confirmed that there had been a substantial turnover of his messmates at the end of 1942.

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- ⁶ Report on fitted equipment titled “Particulars of Canadian War Vessels,” 7 December 1942, NAC RG 24, Vol. 11351, NRC 166; Hennessy interview, p. 62.
- ⁷ Hennessy interview, p. 63. The trials and working up programme promulgated by Captain Prentice, Captain (D) Halifax allowed six days to fit new gun mountings, provision, ammunition, and carry out trials followed by three days of exercises at sea. “Programme of Trials-HMCS Assiniboine,” 16th December 1942, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 11351, NRC 166.
- ⁸ Marc Milner, *Canada’s Navy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 116.
- ⁹ W. Glover, “1942: ... but the expansion of the RCN has created a training problem”
- ¹⁰ The Newfoundland Escort Force was stretched. Encounters with u-boats were increasing and “exceptionally bad weather” was shortening periods in harbour between convoys. Flag Officer Newfoundland Force Monthly Report for February 1943, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 11505, 1445-10213 Vol. 1.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² Captain (D) Liverpool memorandum “HMCS Assiniboine Report of Proceedings, 29th March 1943”, PRO, ADM 217/87, 64843.
- ¹³ J. White, *U-Boat Tankers* (Annapolis: US Naval Institute, 1998), 81.
- ¹⁴ J. White, 112.
- ¹⁵ U 119 KTB (War Diary), DHH.
- ¹⁶ Allied Convoy Instructions (ACI), Article 117, issued in September 1942. DHH. ACI’s predecessor, Western Approaches Convoy Instructions (WACI), contained identical guidance on ramming. However, an order “discouraging” ramming had apparently been issued after *Hesperus* was seriously damaged when using this method of attack in December 1942. Captain D. MacIntyre *U-Boat Killer*, (Bantam Books: New York, 1979), 101.
- ¹⁷ *Assiniboine* Report of Proceedings, 9 March 1943, PRO, ADM 217/87, 64843.
- ¹⁸ Message reports are in NAC RG 24, Vol. 11976, 283-1 Vol. II; *Assiniboine* ROP.
- ¹⁹ Letter from Mr Horst Bredow, U-Boot Archiv, Cuxhaven, January 6, 2000. Bredow, who served in u-boats and has been involved in amassing records and answering queries for decades, believes that there was such a self-defence policy, and that it is consistent with the lack of adverse comment when the war diary was subsequently reviewed.
- ²⁰ PRO, DEFE 3/712, message ZIP/ZTPGU/7459, intercepted 0801, decrypted 1540/3/3.
- ²¹ M.. Milner, *Canada’s Navy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 121.
- ²² G. Hessler, *The U-Boat War in the Atlantic* (London: HMSO, 1989), Vol. II, plan 59.
- ²³ Discussion with Vice-Admiral Hennessy, Ottawa, 1 December, 1999. In later years
- ²⁴ Minute by Captain (D) forwarding *Assiniboine* ROP, 13 March 1943, PRO, ADM 217/87, 64843.
- ²⁵ A. Burn, *The Fighting Captain* (London: Leo Cooper, 1993), 13-15.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 176.
- ²⁷ *KF. Adams Memoir*, 67.
- ²⁸ MacIntyre, 101, J. Terraine, *Business in Great Waters* (London: Leo Cooper, 1989).
- ²⁹ Captain (D) Liverpool Memorandum “H.M.C.S. Assiniboine – Report of Proceedings,” 29th March 1943.” PRO ADM 217/87, 64893.
- ³⁰ Covering Minute forwarding HMCS ASSINIBOINE ROP to Flag Officer, Newfoundland Force dated 6 April 1943, PRO, ADM 217/87, 64843.
- ³¹ R.P. Welland, “Welland’s War” in *Salty Dips*, Vol. 6 (Ottawa: Ottawa Branch, Naval Officers’ Association of Canada, 1999), 158.
- ³² CNMO files in NAC, RG 24, C.S. 384-19.
- ³³ K. Adams Interview with HAL Lawrence, DHH, 35.
- ³⁴ U 119 KTB, Remarks for the period 1.2.43-1.4.43 by Admiral Commanding Submarines.
- ³⁵ U 119 KTB, June 1943, DHH. This was compiled by BdU and consists of the operation order and messages exchanged with the boat up until her unexplained loss.
- ³⁶ The “Monthly Report of Proceedings-Halifax Local Defence Force, March 1943” in DHH NSS 1000-8-5-13 Vol. 13 for example records routine daily activity by 2 minesweepers fitted with three types of sweeps to deal with contact and magnetic mines.

- ³⁷ It had been decided in February 1943 to land minesweeping gear from Bangors employed as escorts but to retain it in storage. Whether this had been carried out by June is unclear. "Minesweeping Gear in BANGOR and ALGERINE Minesweepers" February 4, 1943 in DHH 8670-440B Mine Disposal.
- ³⁸ "Report on Mine Recovery Operations – ML 053," June 11 1943 in DHH 8670-440B and G. Schulte, "MIs and Mine Recovery" in *Salty Dips*, Vol. 1, 79-84.
- ³⁹ "Minesweeping Operations-Halifax, June 1943" in monthly reports by Commodore Halifax, DHH NSS 1000-5-13 Vol. 13. *Halma* was carrying cargo for a U.S. base in Greenland. *Lloyd's War Losses*, Vol. I (London: Lloyd's of London Press, 1989), 681.
- ⁴⁰ K. Wynn, *U-Boat Operations of the Second World War*, Vol. I (Annapolis: US Naval Institute, 1997), 97.
- ⁴¹ Their average age was 21.8. U 119 file at U-Boot Archiv, Cuxhaven-Altenbruch.
- ⁴² T. Robertson, *Walker R.N.* (London: Evans Brothers, 1956), 112-6; Burn *op. cit.*, 84-90, S. Roskill, *The War At Sea* Volume III Part I (London: HMSO, 1960), 21. U-boat difficulties in hearing astern are touched on in "Destruction of a U-Boat from Astern," 31 May, 1944, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 119938, 8100-1 (Vol. 1).
- ⁴³ Milner, "Squaring Some of the Corners," 136 in Runyan and Copps, eds *To Die Gallently* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), Sarty, *Canada and the Battle of the Atlantic* (Montreal: Art Global, 1999), 158.
- ⁴⁴ MacIntrye, *op. cit.*, 92.
- ⁴⁵ "HMCS ASSINIBOINE-Attack on s/m 2/3/43," 21 March 1943. PRO ADM 217/87, 64843.
- ⁴⁶ "Comments on the Operation and Performance of H.M.C. Ships, Establishments and Personnel in the Battle of the Atlantic," 1 June, 1943, NAC RG 24, Vol. 3997.
- ⁴⁷ Milner, 247-8, notes that six senior officers met in Halifax in June 1943 to discuss improving efficiency and recommended commissioning new ships with a totally new crew and then leaving it intact after work-ups.
- ⁴⁸ Information on changes during refits from Lt Cdr Arnold Hague, RNVR, a former researcher at the MOD Naval Historical Branch. Personnel growth is touched on in J. Wells.
- ⁴⁹ MacIntrye, *op. cit.*, 78.
- ⁵⁰ P. Gretton, *Convoy Escort Commander* (London: Cassell, 1964), 80.
- ⁵¹ G. Tucker, *The Naval Service of Canada*, Volume II (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1952), 140.
- ⁵² "Conditions in the RCN," 14 September 1943, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 3997, 1057-3-24/Vol. 1.

The Post-War RCN

La MRC dans l'après-guerre

NAVIRES POUR UNE GUERRE SANS COMBAT : GENÈSE DE LA CLASSE *ST-LAURENT*

Bill Rawling

L'émérgence de l'État moderne a eu pour effet de compliquer la tâche des historiens spécialisés en technologie; même si ce phénomène d'ordre culturel n'est pas subordonné à des lignes imaginaires tracées sur des cartes, le nationalisme exige que l'on attribue chaque invention ou autre développement technologique à un pays en particulier. Les Canadiens ne font pas exception à la règle, et se montrent fiers d'exploits comme le satellite Alouette ou continuent à déplorer l'abandon d'appareils tels que l'Avro Arrow, qui passent tous deux, aux yeux de certains, pour des réalisations purement nationales, malgré le fait qu'une bonne partie des connaissances et des techniques ayant servi à leur production soient originaires d'ailleurs. Dans la même veine, on s'est souvent félicité du fait que les destroyers d'escorte de la classe *St-Laurent*, objet de la présente étude, seraient des navires de guerre conçus et construits par des Canadiens, même si, comme nous le verrons plus loin, ils s'inspiraient et tiraient plusieurs de leurs composantes de navires américains et britanniques. Cependant, il ne s'agit pas ici de discuter le pour et le contre de la fierté nationaliste; cette étude vise plutôt un objectif plus prosaïque, élucider les raisons pour lesquelles le Canada a dépensé des sommes considérables pour construire une vingtaine de navires de guerre entre 1950 et 1964, durant une période où le pays se trouvait – on le disait – en temps de paix. Le tout a débuté par une commande de trois destroyers en 1949, et le programme a pris rapidement de l'ampleur au cours des années subséquentes, avec l'ajout de sept vaisseaux de classe *St-Laurent* (de 1955 à 1957) puis de sept autres du même genre désignés sous le nom de *Restigouche* (1958-59). Sont venus ensuite quatre autres navires appelés *Mackenzie* (1962-63), et enfin deux navires de la classe *Annapolis* (1964), le tout représentant un rythme de production en temps de paix inégalé au Canada, auparavant ou depuis lors.

Engagement de la Marine royale canadienne dans la guerre froide

À la fin de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, la MRC possédait une des plus grandes flottes au monde, mais la restauration de la paix entraîna bientôt sa réduction; pourtant, quand notre pays s'engagea dans la guerre froide à la fin des années 1940, elle était déjà prête, sur le plan intellectuel, pour un tel virage, puisqu'elle avait entrepris de planifier la situation d'après guerre dès 1940. Tandis que faisait rage le conflit contre l'Allemagne et

le Japon, les responsables des forces navales avaient prévu chercher en temps de paix à équilibrer la flotte en la dotant de porte-avions légers, de croiseurs, de destroyers et de navires auxiliaires semblables à ceux que les Américains et les Britanniques avaient déployés pendant la guerre du Pacifique. La cessation abrupte des hostilités après les attaques nucléaires contre des villes japonaises n'a pas mis fin à ces préparatifs théoriques, si bien qu'en novembre 1945 le directeur des plans a présenté un mémoire à l'état-major de la Marine analysant l'idée d'un groupe de destroyers MRC en vue d'établir la composition qui conviendrait le mieux aux impératifs canadiens. On y laissait entendre clairement qu'à la lumière des leçons de la guerre du Pacifique, il fallait que les destroyers puissent servir d'écran de protection anti-sous-marine et antiaérienne pour les porte-avions, qu'ils soient capables d'évoluer de façon autonome en petits groupes tels que flottille ou division, et intègrent les moyens nécessaires pour escorter efficacement les convois. Pour être en mesure de remplir toutes ces fonctions, ils devaient disposer d'armes antiaériennes et de torpilles puissantes, en plus d'offrir une grande endurance, de bonnes qualités de navigabilité, une homogénéité et des quartiers d'habitation convenables, sans compter des installations sur terre adéquates aux fins d'instruction¹.

Toutefois, deux événements échappant au contrôle de la MRC ont obligé celle-ci à modifier ses plans. Premièrement, il y avait la question triviale de l'argent; avec le rétablissement de la paix, la Marine a vu son budget amputé au cours de l'année financière 1947-1948, de sorte qu'elle n'a pu garder en service que six destroyers, en plus de quatre navires de réserve². Deuxièmement, il y a eu la mise au point de sous-marins plus perfectionnés, de sorte que, selon le directeur des manœuvres et de l'instruction (DMI), «on sait fort bien que les navires des flottes britannique, américaine et canadienne sont actuellement mal outillés pour traquer et attaquer les sous-marins rapides», ajoutant que «la Royal Navy britannique tente de surmonter ce handicap par un reclassement des destroyers et des navires d'escorte», créant ainsi dans les faits une division du travail pour les opérations pratiques. Selon les plans de la Royal Navy, chaque destroyer s'inscrirait dans une des trois catégories suivantes : lutte anti-sous-marine, lutte antiaérienne, et orientation des aéronefs, une conception radicalement différente de celle adoptée par l'état-major de la Marine canadienne dans les premiers mois de l'après-guerre. Le directeur des manœuvres et de l'instruction avait ainsi proposé de convertir l'un des destroyers de la MRC en escorteur anti-sous-marins dans un but expérimental et, après maintes discussions, l'état-major a donné son aval, décidant de recommander une telle transformation pour un de ses navires au cours de l'année 1949³.

Cette même année, au mois de mars, le ministre de la Défense de l'époque, Brooke Claxton, avait annoncé la décision de commander la construction de trois destroyers⁴, le gouvernement ayant décidé d'augmenter le budget pour la défense nationale suite au *putsch* en Tchécoslovaquie en 1948. Cependant, lorsque la Corée du Nord envahit son voisin du sud en juin 1950, il fallut moins d'un mois au Cabinet pour, selon l'analyste James Eayrs, se rendre compte que les trois branches des services armées canadiens avaient besoin encore d'avantage de personnel et de matériel, et donc de plus d'argent⁵ : «À la réunion du comité des chefs d'état-major du 18 juillet 1950, chacun des commandants des trois branches décrivit ses suggestions de réarmement.» Or, le représentant de la Marine, qui n'était peut-être pas tout à fait convaincu que le gouvernement consentirait à adopter une position belliqueuse, s'était montré plutôt modéré dans ses requêtes, proposant «d'ajouter à la flotte deux destroyers et un dragueur de mines», entre autres⁶.

L'année suivante, le ministre de la Défense Brooke Claxton annonça le retour des forces armées canadiennes en Europe et que le gouvernement dépenserait 5 milliards de dollars pour la défense nationale au cours des trois années subséquentes⁷. Ce fut la plus grosse dépense pour les forces armées au Canada, compte tenu de l'inflation, durant la période de l'après-guerre⁸. Notre pays avait été un des membres fondateurs de l'OTAN en 1949, mais c'est seulement lors du déclenchement de la guerre de Corée que l'alliance a commencé à se militariser (d'où la décision d'envoyer une brigade canadienne en Europe). En 1952, Brooke Claxton pouvait dévoiler au Parlement l'intention du gouvernement de dépenser 2 milliards de dollars durant cette année financière pour mettre sur pied un tiers d'une division d'infanterie (devenue plus tard un groupe-brigade), quatre escadrons d'avions de chasse (chiffre qui devait grimper à douze en 1954) et 24 navires, des chiffres remarquables quand on les compare aux trois bâtiments que la MRC avait jugé bon de réclamer deux ans auparavant. Comme le ministre s'en était vanté, depuis l'invasion nord-coréenne: « la Marine a armé neuf navires et en a lancé six autres; elle compte 27 vaisseaux en bon ordre, tandis que 40 attendent d'être réparés ou rénovés. De plus, elle dispose de 16 écoles⁹ ». Les forces armées se mobilisaient, et pas uniquement pour la Corée, qui n'apparaissait guère qu'un test idéologique musclé visant à mettre à l'épreuve la détermination des pays démocratiques. Comme l'a indiqué David Bercuson dans sa biographie de Brooke Claxton, même après la conclusion d'un accord d'armistice dans la péninsule coréenne, « la Marine royale canadienne s'est transformée », en partie grâce à « l'acquisition de nouveaux navires de guerre plus modernes », ¹⁰ comme ceux faisant l'objet de cette étude.

Durant la décennie suivante, la MRC a beaucoup prospéré; au milieu de l'année 1956, elle atteignit son apogée pour ce qui est du personnel naval et civil (soit 20 000 et 12 616 membres respectivement)¹¹, et elle pouvait, sans faire des pieds et des mains, demander le remplacement de deux croiseurs et de trois navires de classe Tribal tout en réclamant l'ajout d'un porte-avions léger (pour en conserver deux au total)¹². Cet âge d'or devait durer 12 ans, plus longtemps que la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, pour prendre fin en 1964, année de l'entrée en service des derniers destroyers *St-Laurent*. D'une somme de 1,96 milliards de dollars en 1952, le budget pour la défense nationale n'était que de 1,55 milliards en 1965, et la construction navale était particulièrement touchée, puisque la part du budget de la défense nationale consacrée à l'équipement de la flotte a alors chuté de près de 43 p. 100 à moins de 14 p. 100¹³. Toutefois, on venait à ce moment de terminer la majeure partie du programme de construction des navires de la classe *St-Laurent*.

L'industrie

Le secteur des chantiers navals prospérait dans le sillage de la Marine; Garth Wilson, historien qui a étudié le sujet à fond, en donne l'analyse suivante :

Après 1945, l'industrie de la construction navale canadienne s'est surtout occupée de combler les besoins liés à la guerre, réelle ou appréhendée [...] Par conséquent, et du fait que cette industrie avait obtenu ses plus grands succès dans le cadre de l'économie strictement réglementée qui prévaut pendant la guerre, les chantiers navals canadiens ont développé des rapports étroits avec l'État; quant au gouvernement fédéral, il s'est montré beaucoup plus désireux, après 1945, d'intervenir dans toutes les facettes du développement social et économique au pays. L'exemple le plus frappant du rapport étroit qui liait

l'État et l'industrie navale après la guerre est le programme de construction des destroyers d'escorte de la classe *St-Laurent*, qui a permis aux chantiers navals canadiens de décrocher des contrats juteux et d'apporter des améliorations précieuses au niveau des installations d'usines et des technologies. Parallèlement, la décision de produire des navires conçus et fabriqués au Canada a eu pour effet d'élargir considérablement les horizons de l'industrie, et a amené par la suite une bonne partie des travaux de construction et de réparation effectués durant la guerre froide¹⁴.

Dès le régime français au Canada, les décideurs s'étaient rendu compte « de la valeur intrinsèque ou des avantages potentiels de la construction navale¹⁵ », particulièrement en temps de guerre, et la période ayant suivi la Deuxième Guerre mondiale confirme ce constat.

On a donc put constater à la fin des années 1940 que l'industrie navale au Canada, comme cela avait été le cas durant des siècles, connaissait des jours bien meilleurs en temps de guerre qu'en période de paix. Le bureau d'architecture navale *German and Milne*, longtemps un important chef de file dans le domaine, a produit vers la fin de cette décennie un rapport intitulé « Perspectives pour 1949 », qui ne laissait présager rien de bon. L'auteur anonyme des « Perspectives » insistait sur le fait que « nous-mêmes et la quasi totalité de nos chantiers navals avons besoin IMMÉDIATEMENT d'assistance¹⁶ ». La construction de navires marchands ne suffisait pas, et

[...] [J]'espérais personnellement que le gouvernement aurait donné le coup d'envoi à une politique de construction quelconque vers la fin de l'automne 1948, mais cet espoir ne s'étant pas matérialisé, j'en suis venu avec regret à la conclusion qu'il n'y aurait guère de travaux mis en branle dans le cadre d'un nouveau programme avant le milieu de l'été ou même l'automne de cette année. Et même là, cela prendrait du temps avant que les chantiers navals et les travailleurs en général bénéficient des retombées d'un tel programme, puisqu'il faut consacrer autant de temps à l'ébauche des plans et des devis techniques avant de pouvoir commander les matériaux, et d'autres délais pour enfin réunir tout le matériel afin de construire les navires de façon ordonnée.

Je tiens à mentionner qu'au Canada, nous avons actuellement en abondance des techniciens, gérants de chantiers et chefs de département, des gens de métier compétents et d'autres travailleurs suffisamment qualifiés de même que le « savoir-faire » nécessaire pour livrer n'importe quel type de navire dont le Canada aurait besoin et pouvant être construits sur les cales de lancement disponibles [...]

En conclusion, je rappellerai que si notre entreprise ne profite pas très bientôt de nouveaux contrats de construction, nous nous verrons contraints de mettre à pied au moins 80 p. 100 du personnel. Je vous assure que ce serait un vrai crève-cœur, sachant que du travail dès maintenant au lieu de disons dans trois mois ferait la différence entre le démantèlement de notre organisation ou sa survie¹⁷.

Soulignons que le personnel en question était l'équipe de dessinateurs employés dans les bureaux de German and Milne, et non la main-d'œuvre de l'ensemble de l'industrie, mais le constat n'en demeurait pas moins exact.

Le salut est venu grâce à l'invasion des troupes nord-coréennes cherchant à unifier la péninsule par la force des armes. Partie d'un seuil de main-d'œuvre de 8 242 travailleurs en 1950, l'industrie comptait en moyenne 13 500 employés vers 1954, « en bonne partie grâce aux nouvelles commandes de la Marine et du gouvernement ». En fait, d'après l'analyse de Garth Wilson, la construction des destroyers d'escorte de même que « des investissements publics accrus pour l'acquisition de brise-glaces et d'autres navires, en plus des nouvelles commandes portant sur des navires plus gros conçus pour naviguer sur le système de canaux des Grands Lacs ont représenté une véritable manne pour l'industrie durant les années 1950¹⁸ », permettant aux constructeurs de se montrer euphoriques face aux largesses gouvernementales. Dans un article publié en avril 1957 dans la revue *Canadian Shipyard* portant le titre provocateur « The Navy has already served » (la Marine a déjà contribué) ses porte-parole soulignaient que les navires de guerre évoluent dans les parties éloignées du globe : « Mais la Marine a déjà servi à des fins essentielles, malgré qu'aucune salve n'ait été tirée contre un ennemi quelconque. Nous faisons allusion au fait que c'est uniquement grâce au programme ambitieux de construction de nouveaux navires que certains chantiers navals ont pu surmonter les années de disette commerciale depuis 1949¹⁹. »

L'avènement des navires de la classe *St-Laurent*

Parallèlement à ces pressions stratégiques et économiques conjointes, on mettait au point les modèles de bâtiments de la classe *St-Laurent* et des classes subséquentes, en déployant cependant beaucoup d'efforts pour régler les détails pratiques, comme l'a rappelé Garth Wilson :

La conception des navires de guerre modernes implique la conversion d'un ensemble d'exigences et de consignes sous une forme permettant d'atteindre le mieux possible les fins visées. Étant donné que les navires de guerre modernes consistent en un ensemble complexe et sophistiqué pour ce qui est de la forme de la coque, des installations d'hébergement, des engins de propulsion, des mécanismes de contrôle et de commandement et des systèmes de combat, leur conception oblige forcément à résoudre avec succès les exigences contradictoires, si bien qu'elle réclame souvent beaucoup de temps. Pour entreprendre la conception d'un modèle de navire de lutte anti-sous-marine « fait au Canada », il a d'abord fallu mettre sur pied un bureau canadien de conception navale, connu à l'origine sous l'appellation de Bureau central de dessin de la Marine, mais rebaptisé par la suite Agence de conception de navires. Toutefois, une bonne partie de l'expertise nécessaire pour faire marcher ce nouveau centre provenait d'Angleterre, y compris son concepteur en chef, le capitaine de construction Ro[w]land Baker. Cette initiative a surtout permis la conception et la mise au point d'un nouveau type unique de destroyers d'escorte, connus sous le nom de classe « *St-Laurent*²⁰ ».

Par conséquent, même si on cherchait ainsi à créer une Marine proprement canadienne, les experts venaient du Royaume-Uni, du moins au départ.

Fait intéressant, même si les décideurs et les officiers d'état-major parvenaient à s'entendre sur la nécessité de s'équiper de navires de lutte anti-sous-marine, certains perfectionnements techniques qu'on y a apportés sont le fruit de recherches en vue de la construction d'un brise-glace, baptisé subséquemment *Labrador*. Ces travaux résultaient d'une décision du Cabinet qui s'est révélée significative sous deux aspects : elle dénotait

un intérêt renouvelé de la part du gouvernement pour la construction navale, et « marquait un changement de cap caractérisé par un penchant pour les concepts américains de construction navale », puisque rares sont les autres pays qui s'intéressent aux brise-glace, « et en particulier envers les normes américaines, surtout dans les domaines complexes de l'appareillage électrique et électronique équipant les navires ». En mai 1948, cet intérêt pour la technologie américaine avait atteint un point tel que la MRC a alors noué contact avec les responsables de la USN pour leur indiquer que « l'état-major de la Marine étudie actuellement les questions entourant la construction de nouveaux navires, en sondant les possibilités de faire construire au Canada des escorteurs du même modèle que ceux de l'USN, et dotés de machines et d'un équipement de conception américaine²¹ ». Observation empreinte d'ironie, le capitaine Rowland Baker, que la Marine royale du Canada a emprunté de la Royal Navy, a « détourné l'état-major de la philosophie propre à l'Amirauté britannique ». Son expérience durant la guerre « avait consisté à mettre au point un large éventail de péniches de débarquement. À cette fin, il avait travaillé au début en Angleterre, puis il était venu aider la marine américaine à produire des péniches de débarquement. Par conséquent, il connaissait bien les méthodes américaines de production en masse s'appliquant aux navires de guerre ». La connaissance qu'avait Baker des méthodes américaines, combinée aux recherches sur le brise-glace *Labrador*, ont fait que « les normes américaines de conception et de construction, surtout par rapport aux systèmes électriques, étaient en passe de s'imposer globalement²² ».

Synthétisant le processus mental de Baker, S. Mathwin Davis, lui-même un commandant constructeur plus tard, a rappelé que :

[...] [T]out en admettant la dépendance inévitable face aux concepts et aux devis britanniques, son désir de se lancer dans cette nouvelle aventure a été stimulé par la propension de l'état-major de la Marine à « canadianiser » la flotte, et par les pressions en vue d'acquérir des appareils électriques et électroniques proprement nord-américains. Par conséquent, il pouvait prétendre, avec l'appui des autres services techniques, que le moment était venu de prendre une nouvelle orientation. En échange, pour ainsi dire, d'une direction de la construction navale améliorée et de la mise sur pied d'un bureau central de dessin chargé de produire les plans de travail, Baker cherchait désormais (démarche qui mène habituellement à l'échec, a-t-il observé) à plaire à tout le monde. Ainsi, il fallait se procurer des engins de propulsion, conçus au Royaume-Uni (quoique de fabrication canadienne) pour satisfaire les ingénieurs navals de la MRC formés en Angleterre, et des appareils électriques et électroniques américains pour contenter les ingénieurs en électricité, en plus de déployer des efforts particuliers pour répondre aux divers besoins, à mesure qu'ils se faisaient *progressivement* sentir, transmis par les diverses sections de l'état-major de la Marine²³.

Certains de ses propres concepts prévoyaient « l'ajout de vastes espaces supplémentaires, des livets de ponts arrondis et un gaillard d'avant à carapace de tortue pour assurer une bonne navigabilité, des surfaces lisses sur le pont pour faciliter le déglçage, une attention spéciale accordée à la stabilité en cas de dommages, de bonnes qualités de flottaison, l'application du principe de construction unitaire », c'est-à-dire la préfabrication, « de même que des quartiers d'habitation plus confortables et des commodités grandement améliorées²⁴ ».

Pour ce faire, Baker faisait face à un problème du manque de personnel qualifié, puisque au moment où il s'occupait à concevoir un nouvel escorteur de lutte anti-sous-marine, le nombre d'officiers constructeurs au quartier général s'élevait à six, dont trois lieutenants²⁵. Par conséquent, un des principaux défis de Baker consistait à former un groupe de personnes compétentes, comme l'a rappelé S. Mathwin Davis.

Pour réaliser ces entreprises, il ne pouvait compter que sur une équipe plutôt hétéroclite de Canadiens aux antécédents professionnels douteux, et sur deux officiers prêtés par le RCNC (Royal Corps of Naval Constructors), les commandants constructeurs H.R. Mason et K.P. Farrell, tous deux promus subséquemment au grade de capitaine ... En dehors de ses autres tâches exigeantes, Baker cherchait désespérément à recruter des officiers constructeurs compétents, vu l'évidence que la MRC s'engageait dans un programme tous azimuts de construction de navires de guerre et de bateaux auxiliaires²⁶.

Une des solutions pour élargir l'équipe était Davis lui-même, qui travaillait alors chez *German and Milne*.

Je dois avouer dès le départ que je n'étais pas tellement enthousiaste vu la perspective inévitable de tiraillements internes, et d'ailleurs, je n'étais pas sûr de vouloir retourner dans le giron du RCNC, même dans sa version canadienne. On m'a toutefois proposé d'intégrer la réserve navale à Montréal, à bord du HMCS Donnacona. Et le rejet rapide par deux fois de ma candidature n'a rien fait non plus pour stimuler mon enthousiasme. De toute évidence, les officiers constructeurs étaient une espèce d'oiseaux rares dont la réserve à Montréal ne voulait rien savoir. Toutefois, par chance ou par malchance, les commandants du Donnacona se succédaient à un rythme accéléré, et on m'a donc poussé à présenter à nouveau ma candidature, ce que j'ai fait en février 1959 [en réalité 1949]. Les dossiers indiquent que, même si j'étais « considéré apte à ce poste », la liste active d'effectifs du HMCS Donnacona ne pouvait pas inclure les services d'un officier appartenant à la section de la construction²⁷.

Après de nombreuses tractations à divers niveaux, il fit son entrée dans la Marine royale canadienne au début de 1950, un an après avoir approché pour la première fois cette organisation.

Au début de cette même année, les collègues de Davis pouvaient déjà présenter les ébauches aux décideurs chargés d'établir la politique navale; le chef d'état-major de la Marine a alors indiqué, lors d'une réunion des officiers supérieurs, que la conception d'un nouveau navire était suffisamment avancée pour que l'on puisse entreprendre l'étude des aspects particuliers. Le chef de la construction navale fournit des renseignements contextuels précisant que le modèle original d'escorteur de lutte anti-sous-marine avait pour but de rivaliser avec les sous-marins rapides apparus à la fin de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale et que l'on avait perfectionnés depuis. Il donna ensuite plus de détails, soulignant que ce modèle avec un déplacement prévu de 2 600 tonnes correspondait au plus petit navire capable de naviguer à la vitesse requise de 28 nœuds, tout en offrant des qualités de navigabilité suffisantes pour évoluer dans l'Atlantique Nord. Il ajouta aussi qu'à son avis, « pour ce qui est des caractéristiques de limitations des dégâts, même si la salle des machines et le compartiment de propulsion étaient tous deux inondés, le navire garderait sa stabilité », admettant toutefois que « le gros du système de propulsion paraissait vulnérable, une contrainte inévitable pour respecter les limites de poids. Les génératrices auxiliaires au diesel étaient placées à trois endroits

distincts, et n'importe laquelle des trois suffisait à assurer les services essentiels ». Enfin, il indiqua que « le nouveau navire offrirait le dernier cri en matière d'habitabilité », aspect qui avait été expérimenté à bord du HMCS *Sioux*²⁸.

La question de l'habitabilité revêt un intérêt particulier, car c'était un des principaux aspects par lesquels les navires de la classe *St-Laurent* se distinguaient des modèles antérieurs. Depuis longtemps, dans la Royal Navy, la Marine royale canadienne, et dans d'autres marines des pays du Commonwealth, on considérait que vu l'objectif premier d'un navire de guerre, il n'y avait guère ou pas du tout de place à bord pour les commodités et le « luxe ». Néanmoins, les opérations de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale dans l'Atlantique Nord de même que les opérations prévues dans le Pacifique devaient chacune à leur manière démontrer la corrélation entre un niveau minimum de confort pour l'équipage et l'efficacité. Par conséquent, dans les navires de la classe *St-Laurent*, les quartiers d'habitation et les lieux d'alimentation seraient séparés, les marins bénéficieraient de lits au lieu de hamacs et certains locaux au moins seraient climatisés. C'est pour cette raison, et non à cause des présumés qualités manœuvrières de ces bâtiments, qu'on a surnommé ce modèle la « Cadillac des destroyers ».

En ce qui concerne le système de propulsion, l'ingénieur en chef rappelait, au cours de la réunion des officiers supérieurs de 1950 mentionnée précédemment, que « même si la conception de la machinerie était rendue à un stade avancé, elle n'incluait aucune caractéristique radicalement nouvelle ou jamais expérimentée, et qu'elle ne s'écartait pas des limites normalement admises », ce qui répondait peut-être aux craintes appréhendées quant à un modèle intégrant un apport canadien beaucoup plus poussé qu'auparavant. Le chef de l'ingénierie électrique abordait des questions plus matérielles, quoique tout aussi importantes, en soulignant que

le courant alternatif et les spécifications du *USN Bureau of Ships* s'appliqueraient systématiquement. Cela permettrait de réduire le poids et de simplifier l'entretien, comparativement aux installations actuelles fonctionnant avec le courant continu [...] On a décidé de renoncer au type de câblage de l'Amirauté et d'opter plutôt pour les normes de la marine américaine. En plus d'économiser sur le poids et de simplifier le problème d'approvisionnement, cela revient aussi moins cher. Parmi les autres techniques américaines adoptées, mentionnons le système de guidage du tir (Gunar) de même que le central automatique assurant les communications téléphoniques dans l'ensemble du navire. Le chef de l'état-major de la Marine conclut la réunion en annonçant que les esquisses finales seraient soumises à l'approbation du Conseil naval dans environ six semaines²⁹.

Or, la guerre de Corée devait éclater moins de quatre mois plus tard.

Ainsi, en 1950, le modèle *St-Laurent* était déjà conçu et sur le point de naître, même si les participants aux multiples processus en cause ignoraient sans doute la portée de leur travail. Quand Garth Wilson a laissé entendre que « les architectes et les constructeurs navals canadiens peuvent être fiers de leurs réussites dans les cas où l'invention et l'innovation étaient possibles ou nécessaires », il avait quatre exemples à l'esprit : les brise-glaces, les hydroptères, les vraquiers capables de naviguer dans la voie maritime du Saint Laurent, et les navires de lutte anti-sous-marine³⁰. Exprimé d'une autre façon « en raison de la géographie et du lien de dépendance coloniale, les idées et les experts venus d'ailleurs ont prédominé dans la pratique de l'architecture navale au Canada. C'est seulement au cours de la deuxième moitié du 20^e siècle que le Canada est devenu un pôle

d'expertise, et ce uniquement par rapport à des domaines précis », entre autres les navires de lutte anti-sous-marine³¹. Les bâtiments de la classe *St-Laurent* s'inscrivaient donc dans un courant technologique canadien naissant, même s'ils empruntaient abondamment des innovations étrangères, et avaient été rendus possible par la menace d'une nouvelle guerre mondiale.

NOTES

- ¹ Ministère de la Défense nationale, Direction Histoire et patrimoine, procès-verbal de la 320^e réunion de l'état-major de la Marine, 7 janvier 1946.
- ² DHP, procès-verbal de la 359^e réunion de l'état-major de la Marine, 20 janvier 1947.
- ³ DHP, procès-verbal de la 388^e réunion de l'état-major de la Marine, 13 octobre 1947.
- ⁴ Archives nationales du Canada, MG 31, G33, Fonds S. Mathwin Davis, dossier 16, p. 8.
- ⁵ James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada: Growing Up Allied*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1980, p. 200.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ John English, *The Worldly Years: The Life of Lester Pearson, 1949-1972*, Toronto, Vintage Books, 1993, p. 55-56.
- ⁸ Voir *Statistiques historiques du Canada* (2^e éd., Ottawa, Statistique Canada, 1983) et comparer les séries de H-19 à H-34 avec la section K.
- ⁹ James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada: Growing Up Allied*, p. 200.
- ¹⁰ David Bercuson, *True Patriot: The Life of Brooke Claxton, 1898-1960*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1993, p. 264.
- ¹¹ DHP, procès-verbal de la réunion 12/56 de l'état-major de la Marine, 28 mai 1956.
- ¹² ANC, RG 24, n^o d'acquisition 83-84/167, boîte 143, 1279-118, v. 4, Onzième Conférence des officiers supérieurs, 12-14 mai 1954.
- ¹³ J.L. Granatstein, *Canada 1957-1967: The Years of Uncertainty and Innovation*, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1986, p. 221.
- ¹⁴ Garth Wilson, *A History of Shipbuilding and Naval Architecture in Canada*, Ottawa, National Museum of Science and Technology, 1994, p. 60.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 83.
- ¹⁶ ANC, RG 24, n^o d'acquisition 83-84/167, boîte 3788, 8200-6, v. 1, German and Milne, "Perspectives pour 1949," 3 février 1949.
- ¹⁷ ANC, RG 24, n^o d'acquisition 83-84/167, boîte 3788, 8200-6, v. 1, German and Milne, "Perspectives pour 1949," 3 février 1949.
- ¹⁸ Garth Wilson, *A History of Shipbuilding and Naval Architecture in Canada*, p. 56.
- ¹⁹ DHP, 8200, Construction – Ships, 1950-1960, « The Navy has already served », *Canadian Shipping*, avril 1957.
- ²⁰ Garth Wilson, *A History of Shipbuilding and Naval Architecture in Canada*, p. 55.
- ²¹ ANC, MG 31, G33, Fonds S. Mathwin Davis, dossier 17, p. 14-15.
- ²² ANC, MG 31, G33, Fonds S. Mathwin Davis, dossier 16, p. 4.
- ²³ ANC, MG 31, G33, Fonds S. Mathwin Davis, dossier 17, p. 17-18.
- ²⁴ ANC, MG 31, G33, Fonds S. Mathwin Davis, dossier 17, p. 18.
- ²⁵ ANC, MG 31, G33, Fonds S. Mathwin Davis, dossier 17, p. 17.
- ²⁶ ANC, MG 31, G33, Fonds S. Mathwin Davis, dossier 4, p. 3.
- ²⁷ ANC, MG 31, G33, Fonds S. Mathwin Davis, dossier 4, p. 3.
- ²⁸ ANC, RG 24, n^o d'acquisition 83-84/167, boîte 143, 1279-118, v. 2, procès-verbal de la réunion des officiers supérieurs, 2-3 mars 1950, p. 1-2.

- ²⁹ ANC, RG 24, n° d'acquisition 83-84/167, boîte 143, 1279-118, v. 2, procès-verbal de la réunion des officiers supérieurs, 2-3 mars 1950, p. 2.
- ³⁰ Garth Wilson, *A History of Shipbuilding and Naval Architecture in Canada*, p. 62.
- ³¹ *Ibid*, p. 86.

MR HELLYER'S NAVY: CANADIAN FLEET PLANNING AND POLITICS 1960-1970¹

Marc Milner

In 1960, at the time of the fiftieth anniversary of its founding, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) was able to put to sea over 10,000 men and nearly sixty warships. This represented the largest peacetime strength ever achieved by Canada's navy, and the fleet was as close to balanced – or general purpose – as it would ever get. Among those three score warships was a carrier with jet fighters, powerful two-engine Tracker fixed wing ASW aircraft and helicopters embarked. The fleet around the carrier was composed of heavily armed destroyers, new state-of-the-art ASW frigates, modern minesweepers and a gaggle of rebuilt WWI vintage frigates. The only thing missing from the mix was submarines, and fleet planners were working on that problem seriously. Ten years later the fleet was half the size, had shed its carrier, had added a submarine service, and had become – briefly it seems – specialized exclusively in ASW. At least, that was the plan developed and implemented by Paul Hellyer – even if that was not the intent at the outset of his tenure as MND. Curiously, Hellyer's conception for the integrated, and then unified, Canadian Armed Forces had them all working together as a kind of Marine Corps, and the navy made efforts to meet that requirement. Instead, Hellyer's ministry stripped the navy of any pretence of balance roles, and squeezed it into a highly specialized task. Then, once the navy had been completely re-organized to meet that narrow ASW specialty, Trudeau's *Defence in the Seventies* White Paper articulated a general purpose role and capability for the fleet! This paper explores the muddled process of casting-off the last of the World War II vintage ships and the navy's attempt to build a fleet in the politically chaotic and cash strapped 1960s.

In fairness to Mr Hellyer, that balanced fleet of 1960 was an illusion and the RCN knew it, too. The fighter aircraft capability was limited – no more than eight outdated F2H-3 Banshees at sea at any time – and brutally expensive. The destroyers, which provided the serious firepower of the fleet, were all WW II vintage. Aging, small, and lacking modern equipment, the destroyers were also so burdened with extra kit that they dare not burn more than half of their bunkers before refuelling again. The rebuilt wartime River class frigates, renamed the Prestonian class, were useful only for training, and the minesweeping capability was running down fast. Even the new ships of the St. Laurent and Restigouche classes – most just fresh from the builders – were seriously deficient in the equipment needed to deal with new, very high speed nuclear propelled missile firing submarines. If this was not bad enough, the costs of moving into the submarine business, especially the SSN business, looked prohibitive.

The RCN was alive to this problem and, by 1960, had been wrestling with it for several years. Planning and fleet development was complicated by the rapidly changing technology of war at sea, and an annual budget which was barely two-thirds of what was needed to stay current and meet commitments.² In fact, by the end of the 1950s the RCN

was already deficient in meeting its obligations to NATO, which included two aircraft carriers and thirty-two escorts operational in the Atlantic, plus the fourteen escorts committed to the Pacific as part of the Canada-US Regional Planning Group (CUSPRG). The current fleet barely met those requirements with nothing left over for ships in refit and training. By 1966 it was estimated that the RCN would have only forty major warships operational, leaving the fleet nine ships short of its requirements – and no room for ships under repair or in training. Moreover, of the forty vessels still in service by the middle of the 1960s, fully half would be WW II vintage and of marginal value. Therefore, simply to stay where they were – marginally behind the country's commitment of operational forces to NATO – the RCN needed to build two ships per year during the 1960s. Filling in the gap between actual forces and commitments would, the navy hoped, be achieved in part by building nuclear powered attack submarines. At the same time the “new” fleet needed to be modernized with new sonars and retrofitting with small decks for ASW helicopters. The RCN was also committed to building at least three fleet replenishment ships, the new ASW helicopter purchase, possibly fighters for *Bonaventure*, and much more besides. Trying to squeeze this all into about \$290 million per year proved impossible.³

Given the rapidly changing strategic environment of the late 1950s, especially the advent of the ICBM and prospect of Mutually Assured Destruction by thermonuclear weapons, it was extremely difficult for the RCN to know which way to turn in fleet planning. At Admiral Harry DeWolf's last meeting with the Naval Board as CNS on 22 July 1960 the navy came to grips with some of the hard realities. So far Diefenbaker's government had only authorized completion of the repeat Restigouche class ships, which would emerge as the Mackenzie and Annapolis classes. That still left the surface fleet five ships short of its *operational* requirement, and about twelve short of what was really needed when all the WW II vintage ships were discarded. The NB decided that fighters for fleet air defence were a luxury that the navy could no longer afford, and that long range air defence would now have to be covered by missile systems. There was as yet no authorization from the government for submarines, but it was clear that these could now only be had by sacrificing surface vessels in the fleet plan. What type and how many remained to be determined. However, the Navy's senior officers were now convinced that submarines were the most pressing issue in the fleet plan.⁴

There were, in fact, other pressing issues. A study prepared in early 1961 on fleet air defence, probably arising out the NB decision in July 1960 not to replace the Banshee fighters aboard *Bonaventure*, revealed that without adequate air defences the fleet's movement in the North Atlantic would be severely restricted. In fact, operating in British waters posed “unacceptable risks” from Soviet air launched missiles, and even the northeastern Atlantic – in an arc running from Cape Farewell in Greenland to the northwestern tip of Spain – was “extremely hazardous.” Only fighters could hope to knock-down long range missile carrying Soviet maritime patrol aircraft. Moreover, only fighters could prevent such aircraft from gaining essential intelligence in the mid-Atlantic. Without adequate air defences the RCN would not be able to operate in areas long familiar to Canadian sailors. But at an estimated cost of thirty-five million to replace eight aircraft at sea, a new fighter was simply too rich for the navy. In 1961 the RCN concluded that it would have to start relying on allies to provide an air umbrella under which it could operate while it put some money into identifying a missile system for point defence. In the meantime, the guns of the fleet would have to stop enemy missiles.⁵

While the navy was clearly concerned about falling behind in the battle for air defence of the fleet, it also faced an increasingly dangerous threat from Soviet ballistic missile firing submarines. In 1961 the threat was from a comparatively small number of conventionally powered submarines armed with missiles limited to a range of 300 nm. The *Maritime Threat to Canada 1962-1972* analysis completed in late 1961 estimated that by 1972 there would be some eighty Soviet SSBN and SSBs in service equipped with nuclear tipped missiles of “greater” than 1000nm. This meant that most major urban areas in North America would be vulnerable to sea-based attack.⁶ The best way of dealing with that threat was to put attack submarines down into the ocean itself, and the best attack submarines were nuclear powered.

Just what all this meant to the fleet was completely unclear in 1961, and it remained so for the rest of the decade. Initial attempts to resolve it nonetheless looked promising. In March 1961 the Diefenbaker government, flush with a bit of cash as a result of an upturn in the economy, accepted NATO’s Medium Term Defence Plan as outlined in MC-70, which called for a half billion dollar increase in the current \$1.5 billion defence budget. The new CNS, Admiral Herbert Sharples Rayner, responded to the opportunity by appointing his ACNS – and soon to be VCNS – Rear Admiral Jeffrey Vanstone Brock to the post of “Special Assistant” in charge of an ad hoc committee to look at “future building and equipment policies” for the navy.⁷

The Rayner-Brock combination proved unfortunate for the RCN. Those who knew him well described Rayner as “a nit picker from the personnel side of the staff.” Unquestionably, the new CNS was a quiet, soft-spoken genteel man, better suited for less tumultuous days. What made matters worse was that his Brock, an accomplished warrior and Anglophile, was also a boorish self-promoter who’s arrogance, according to Tony German, “outweighed his understanding.”⁸ At a time when the RCN desperately needed the steady hand of “Hard Over” Harry DeWolf, it had fallen into the clutches of the timid and tempestuous.

The *Ad Hoc Report on Naval Objectives*, commonly known as the Brock Report and printed on glossy paper and bound for internal distribution in July 1961, is a seminal document in Canadian naval history. Its theme is ASW in a wide array of platforms, with heavy emphasis on helicopters on existing ships and on a new fleet of “heliporters,” supported by a fleet of twelve submarines (half of them nuclear powered) and eight “General Purpose Frigates” (GPF). The Brock Report has typically been seen as a call for a fleet of ‘cheap and numerous’ ASW platforms, but it was anything but. It did accept abandonment of fixed wing aviation, and the carrier, and a clear concentration on ASW as the prime role.. But according to the Brock Report the replacement for *Bonaventure* and the *Prestonians* was to be a fleet of twelve heliporters, which were large ships capable of handling a number of large helicopters, carrying troops, air defence missiles and a complete suite of ASW equipment.

Although the Brock Report has been seen as a shift to an ASW specialized fleet plan, in fact it argued for a reasonably balanced capability with a strong sore of missile based anti-air and anti-surface capability in the eight GPFs. These, the six SSNs and the twelve heliporters, represented an ambitious building scheme: larger than anything yet contemplated for the postwar navy. Brock’s vision was also pricy. The Report estimated that its fleet scheme would cost only one percent of the GNP. But that was based on a projected steadily rising GNP that would draw the RCN’s annual budget up from just under \$300 million per year 1961 to over \$500 million by 1969-70.⁹

In 1961 the only parts of the Brock fleet plan that were in place were the conversion of the St. Laurent class into DDH, the building of the last two Mackenzie class as DDH, and a commitment on the part of the navy to build the GPF. The rest was pie in the sky, and even the GPF was by no means a done deal. Conceived of as a replacement for the aging Tribals, the GPF was an all-singing all-dancing ship, with powerful guns, two missiles systems, a complete ASW suite including helicopter, and an ability to lift several hundred troops. Only in April 1962 did the Diefenbaker government authorize the construction of eight GPFs. At the same time it made a commitment to purchase three British built O-class submarines, the cheap alternative to the American conventional and nuclear submarines envisaged in the Brock Report. It was also confirmed that the fighters on *Bonaventure* would not be replaced, and the last Banshee left the carrier in June 1962: the first of the RCN capabilities to fall victim to the gap between ambition and cash.¹⁰

More importantly, this tentative government commitment to the fleet plan came just weeks before the general election of 1962. In June Diefenbaker was returned with a minority government and a year of domestic political chaos ensued. This was compounded by the Cuban Missile Crisis, in which Diefenbaker's tottering government was seen to falter while the navy went off to war alongside the Americans – much to the chagrin of the politicians. When Diefenbaker's government finally fell in February 1963 it was replaced by Pearson's Liberals, who had campaigned on a platform of sweeping change. Paul Hellyer, the former RCAF corporal and Liberal defence critic, became the new MND.

Historians have still not probed the underlying reasons behind the Liberals rush to reign in defence spending and, more importantly, the armed services themselves. The ostensible reason for reform of the whole armed forces organization was money. The Liberals had an ambitious social agenda and a budding quiet revolution in Quebec to wrestle with. Moreover, in an era of MAD it was unclear just what, if anything, spending on defence was meant to accomplish. On top of that, inflation had eaten steadily away at the portion of the defence budget allocated to new capital acquisition. In 1954 the forces had 42.9% of their budget for new equipment, in 1963 that figure stood at 13.3% and falling. Nothing could be modernized at that rate: savings needed to be found.

It is also clear that the Liberals were not happy with the RCN itself: too Anglophile, too conservative, and perhaps actually out of control. Although the navy's reaction to the Cuban Missile Crisis, when it slipped into existing operational agreements with the US and went to sea on a war footing without government sanction, is seen by many as the right thing to do, from the government perspective it was perilously close to mutiny. Nothing truly illegal was done, but by all accounts the Navy skated very close to the edge. Perhaps for this reason, rather than Hellyer's own personal animus, the objective of integration and unification was – in Charles Lynch's words – to “get the Navy.” Bungling at the top and the public squabbling over the GPF and the Plomer affair – in which the senior officer corps of the RCN was described in *Maclean's* a “Tammany Hall,” a marching society of mindless, self-serving Anglophile incompetence – in September 1963 did not help either.¹¹

By the time Hellyer took office the navy had lost none of its ambition for rebuilding the fleet, but it had lost a year and there was little firm in the works. By early 1963 it was clear that to bridge the gap in new construction it would have to keep all the WW II vintage ships going into the 1970s. The Naval Planning Guide completed in February of that year hoped to have the eight GPFs and modernized St. Laurents authorized by the

late Diefenbaker government in service, plus a fleet of the nine submarines and the twelve heliporters of the Brock scheme by the early 1970s.¹² How the six additional submarines and twelve heliporters were to be acquired remained to be determined. In the spring of 1963 the only new vessels in the works were the GPFs and the three O-Boats.

The Liberals came to power in early 1963 promising sweeping changes, including radical changes to the Department of National Defence. Hellyer, the new MND, was bent on re-organizing the armed forces into a single integrated, and ultimately unified, service which was capable of mutually supporting operations in distant theatres in service of the UN and other collective security interests. Not surprisingly, “The Future Fleet” plan prepared by the Director of Naval Operational Requirements in the late summer of 1963 reflects a dramatic shift in conception, and a major change from the Brock Report just recently endorsed by the naval Planning Guide in February. Under “The Future Fleet” plan the RCN would now be rebuilt around the idea of a balanced, “general purpose” role, with heavy emphasis on air power and light carriers. “Capabilities” mattered more now than numbers of ships. This new scheme was even more audacious than the Brock Report. To meet a full range of threats at sea and provide sealift and tactical support for the army, the future fleet would be composed of “modules” built around one light fleet carrier and at least two, and preferably three, Iwo Jima class LPH assault carriers. *Bonaventure* would be retained and re-equipped with fighters to form the core of the Atlantic CVL group, while two other operational modules – one on the east coast and one on the west – would be built around the LPHs with a full suite of dual purpose (ASW and troops lift) heavy helicopters.¹³

Just what Hellyer’s role was in shaping this new fleet concept remains unclear, but we do know that he had no brief for either Brock or the GPF. In November 1963 the GPF project was killed just as steel was about to be cut, and had informed Rayner that the navy had to get by with its \$276 million per year. Thus, while further planning went ahead on the module concept Rayner began cutting operations, decommissioning ships and paring back costs in the first of what would become a series of painful and profound changes in the navy during the 1960s.

The three module carrier task force concept was further developed by Cmdre H.G. Burchell, under CNS direction, later in 1963 and a full report was tabled in January 1964 as the “Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Naval Programs.” According to Burchell, the whole plan could be built and sustained on the current budget of roughly \$277 million, less R&D, for the first three years. It would, moreover, contribute to Hellyer’s new “Mobile Force Concept” by being able to lift a full brigade on the east coast, and a battalion group on the west coast, and provided independent support, air defence, and logistics in distant theatres.¹⁴

How useful and how serious this scheme was to the navy’s ongoing battle with the new MND remains for historians to determine. According to Doug Bland, Hellyer carried his ambitious scheme for re-organizing the forces into a single, self-supporting expeditionary force to Cabinet early in 1964 only to have his colleagues dismiss it out of hand. The forces could and would be re-organized, but not along the lines Hellyer wanted. Within a month of the appearance of Burchell’s report the whole modular naval scheme was apparently dead, and the navy was growing anxious over its ability to save fixed wing aviation and the tatters of the fleet plan.

The Defence White Paper of March 1964 set out Hellyer’s plan for completely re-organizing the Canadian forces, first through integration and ultimately by unification.

That story is well known and most of it is beyond the scope of this paper. The most immediate effect was the early retirement of Rayner as CNS in July 1964, in part because on 1 August that position ceased to exist under the new integrated staff system lead by a CDS. Two weeks later Jeffrey Brock, now the senior flag officer on the Atlantic coast, was dismissed by Hellyer. Brock's replacement, Bill Landymore, was no more enamoured of Hellyer's plans, and what followed over the next two years was a bitter and often public and personal battle between the Minister and his senior admirals over unification. In the end Hellyer's won, although the battle probably destroyed his career as it had done those of the men who opposed it.

More important to our purposes here was the definition in the 1964 White Paper of the navy's primary role as ASW in the Atlantic and Pacific as part of alliance systems – not dashing off around the world supporting the army and air force in UN operations and brush-fire wars. This is also usually taken as the signal for abandonment of the balanced fleet concept and the narrow specialization of the navy on ASW. However, it not quite that simple. The White Paper was accompanied by a major review of maritime requirements in 1964, the results of which were available by the summer. The driving issue was money, and how much the government was prepared to spend to get what it wanted. As the "Maritime System Study" observed, the navy had a Volkswagen income, with Cadillac tastes, and was currently driving an Oldsmobile and headed for motor scooter status. A fixed budget of \$375 million, which included maritime air assets, was not going to buy much. In fact, the study warned, it meant a cut in operational forces and personnel by a full 25% by the early 1970s. The trend was obvious: no carrier and no nuclear powered submarines, and certainly no "versatility." Given present funds the best the navy could hope for was four Guided missile destroyers (DDGs) as the new "semi-capital ship" of the fleet. This would provide a modest anti-air defence and, equally important in the absence of the carrier, an ability to command Canadian task groups.¹⁵

Hellyer generally agreed with the findings of the 1964 study, but cautioned that the dismissal of the light carrier/assault ship idea was premature since it fit the requirement as "set out in the White Paper to improve the cost effectiveness of our forces as a whole."¹⁶ DDGs as flotilla leaders were, Hellyer concluded, a good idea, but the LPHs were perhaps better. They certainly suited his re-organization scheme. But they also required a major infusion of funds and that was not going to happen.

Instead, Hellyer opted for the destroyer flotilla leader – the ship previously known as GPF – and improved operational effectiveness of the fleet in its ASW role. His plan for capital equipment acquisition for the forces was announced to the House on 22 December 1964. The navy would build four new helicopter equipped destroyer escorts (DDHs), two new fleet support ships – to extend the range and on-station time of the existing fleet – modernize *Bonaventure* and the Restigouche class ships, as well as make improvements in weapons, sensors and electronics of both ships and aircraft.¹⁷

The fleet building program announced in December 1964 was a far cry from what the Navy – and in fact the Minister himself – felt it needed in both numbers and types. Planners had long warned that if decisive action on replacements was not taken by the middle of the 1960s, the fleet would quickly collapse to about half of its 1960 size simply because the WW II vintage ships would have to be discarded. That would leave Canada about twenty ships short of its operational commitments, and nothing to cover-off the requirement for ships in refit and training. Hellyer's modest building program in 1964

made that a certainty. Instead of building at least twenty new major warships in the 1960s, Canada built only six – four Mackenzie and two Annapolis. The three O-class submarines purchased from Britain during the decade might have fit into the fleet plan articulated early in the 1960s had they been equipped for ASW, but they were not. The O-boats were essentially targets until the Submarine Operational Update Program two decades later. But it was not simply in numbers that the fleet plan fell short of ambitions. Hellyer's conception of the Canadian forces as something like the US Marine Corps meant that a general purpose fleet was important, which is why he was reluctant to dismiss the LPH idea out of hand. But the fleet plan outlined in December 1964 limited the fleet to an ASW role, albeit better supported with an expanded AOR capability. The new target for the fleet by the spring of 1965 was *Bonaventure*, with her Trackers, and helicopters, twenty-four DDE/DDHs, and four submarines: no LPHs, no particular amphibious support capability. This, less *Bonnie*, is what the navy ultimately became.

The building and modernization program announced by Hellyer in 1964 became crucial to the battle over unification that followed in 1965-66. When Rear Admiral Scruffy O'Brien took over from Landymore, following the latter's public dismissal in July 1966, O'Brien sought assurance that the plan would go ahead before accepting the appointment. Up to that point Hellyer was as good as his word. *Bonaventure* went into refit in April 1966, the two new AORs were ordered that December, and design work on the four new DDHs was well underway. By then unification was largely a done-deal. The new functional commands of unification were established in June 1965, and Hellyer hoped to have the forces in their new uniform by 1 July 1967. In 1965 the modernization of the Restigouche class began with *Terra Nova* with, in theory, more to follow before the end of the decade. Not all had been accomplished by the time left defence for the transportation portfolio in September 1967, but it simply remained for the final act of unification to be passed in February 1968. So far, so good.

Unification was, of course, only part of Hellyer's scheme, and he remained interested in the navy's general purpose capability right to the end of his tenure as MND. The "Maritime System Study" of 1967, for example, was shaped by a directive from Hellyer on 1 December 1966 which observed that, even though Maritime Command's primary role was ASW, "planning is underway to increase its capability for general purpose tasks." Just what that planning was remains, for this historian, unknown. But the 1967 study that followed displayed an intriguing ability to shape definitions and functions in such a way that the rump of the navy, its ASW core, could be defined as having a general purpose capability.

The 1967 study now defined general purpose – what the 1964 study called 'versatility' – as "flexibility," and flexibility in turn as the ability to do a number of things. "Anti-submarine warfare," the study observed, "is organic to all [modern] maritime operations ..." and because of this the Canadian navy was already in the mainstream of naval warfare. It now remained a question of properly defining the fleet's residual capabilities – its flexibility. The study admitted that the fleet had virtually no ability to defend itself against hostile surface and aerial threats whatever. However, it could use its guns against *unarmed* shipping and aircraft, and these guns could also provide limited "fire support capability" for the army. And, naturally, all ships, regardless of their design or function, had some "limited lift" capability for carrying soldiers. As the 1967 study concluded, destroyers were flexible "irrespective of the specialized role for which they were built." According to this logic, the fleet was already flexible, it was

simply a matter of “**increasing** the capability for general purpose tasks ...”¹⁸ This is little short of saying that the fleet was already flexible – and by implication general purpose – if the government said it was.

Whatever Hellyer’s intentions – good or misguided – his plans were undone by his failure to find new money for DND, if only to cushion it from inflation. In the early sixties, when the budget crisis began, the navy was struggling to get by on about \$270 million a year, which all planners knew was impossible. The situation was worse by the end of the decade. The new Maritime Command had a budget of \$373 million in the 1970 fiscal year, but that now included land-based maritime air forces, plus a full decade of inflation which ate-up the money which should have been freed by casting off old ships and trimming personnel.¹⁹

As a result, the wheels began to fall off Hellyer’s fleet plan the moment he left office. When Pierre Elliott Trudeau became Prime Minister in 1968 he immediately ordered a review of foreign affairs and defence. Trudeau was not interested in operational effectiveness at sea. He saw no winnable scenario for nuclear war, and little if any value in deterrence at sea through effective ASW. If a war started in Europe, it would soon escalate into a nuclear exchange anyway, and if it started at sea the simple act of trying to destroy the Soviet sea-based nuclear threat would trigger a release of weapons. Either way the world was plunged into a nuclear holocaust and so money spent on ships at sea was wasteful if it was more than tokenism. In a twinkling all the rational arguments about force structure and capabilities were irrelevant: being there was now enough.

Not surprisingly the impact on the fleet was immediate and profound. The new defence priorities were announced in April 1968 and the decision to scrap *Bonaventure* was made in September. Trudeau also wanted to cancel the DDH 280 program, but it was too far advanced to be struck. But the modernization of the Restigouche class was stopped at four, leaving three unaltered. And no money was allocated for the Mackenzie class updates. As a result, the newest ships in the fleet were also among the first to be placed in reserve or assigned to a training squadron. By 1970 the fleet of the next decade looked exactly like that outlined in 1965, less *Bonaventure*. In reality, it proved much less than that. Although the navy had some twenty-four DDH/DDEs in service, the modernization program was never completed and about one third of the fleet was soon relegated to training or reserve. Operational strength quickly got down to the four new DDH 280s, four modernized Restigouche class (the IREs), two Annapolis class DDHs, and six rebuilt St. Laurent class DDHs: a total of sixteen major warships. No naval planner of 1960 ever envisaged such a collapse of operational capability.

Ironically, this tiny rump of a fleet, highly specialized in ASW and essentially unable to defend itself, had general purpose tasks as its primary role. This shift was laid-out in Trudeau’s defence policy document of 1970 called *Defence in the Seventies*. It reflected Trudeau’s desire to build some distance between Canada and its alliance partners: to chart a uniquely Canadian path. Whereas Hellyer’s White Paper in 1964 put aid to the UN and participation in NATO high on the list of commitments, Trudeau preferred to keep the forces close to home and to define Canadian roles for them. The number one priority was now sovereignty, which included the “social and economic development of Canada” as a key domestic role. Defence of North America came second, followed by NATO and then support for the UN. This, in fact, turned Hellyer’s priorities on their head. Not surprisingly, Trudeau envisioned a different, and general purpose, role for the navy in all this. In fact, the DDH 280, ordered under Hellyer as flotilla leaders for

an ASW navy, now emerged as vessels with a “general purpose capability.” Moreover, *Defence in the Seventies* announced that the emphasis on ASW “will be reduced in favour of other maritime roles.” In short, what the government now had was the highly specialized anti-submarine niche navy – which was all it was prepared to buy – while its new defence policy shifted its emphasis to general purpose!

Over the 1970s the story only gets worse, since the “move” towards more general purpose capability implied in both the 1976 Maritime System Study and *Defence in the Seventies* failed to materialize. In fact, the fleet was allowed to deteriorate to the point where, by the early 1980s, it had only a residual ASW capability and had to be escorted by Allied ships when at sea in an operational mode. This, of course, fit Trudeau’s notions of tokenism. And, in fairness, when he understood in the late 1970s that tokenism was undermining western deterrence and lower the nuclear threshold to dangerous levels, Trudeau began to put money back into defence. By then of course the rust out was so extensive that forces – with the exception of the navy – never recovered. The navy, for its part, built a new fleet in the 1980s and 1990s composed of destroyer escorts/frigates that were truly general purpose – but that’s another story.

NOTES

- ¹ With special thanks to Peter Haydon, Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, who very kindly supplied most of the planning documents upon which this paper is based.
- ² In 1963, at Hellyer’s request, Dr R.J. Sutherland reviewed RCN budgets and their impact on fleet development and concluded that the Navy had been starved of funds. See Milner, *Canada’s Navy*, 243-4.
- ³ See “RCN Requirements Plans (Medium Range) for Period 1960-1966,” also known as the Boulton Report, after Cmdre A.G. Boulton, RCN, the ACNS(Plans) and author, in DHH 125.089 (D3).
- ⁴ Minutes of Special Meeting of the Naval Board, 22 July 1960, DHH.
- ⁵ RCN Air Defence Requirement, 10 March 1961, DHH 73/1223 file 381.
- ⁶ Maritime Threat to Canada 1962-1972, 31 December 1961, DHH 80/205.
- ⁷ Brock, *The Thunder and the Sunshine*, p. 80.
- ⁸ Milner, p. 188.
- ⁹ *Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Naval Objectives*, 31 July 1961. See budget chart on p. 97.
- ¹⁰ The last fighter squadron in RCN service disbanded at the end of September. See Stuart E Soward, *Hands to Flying Stations*, Vol. II, Chapter 3.
- ¹¹ Cmdre James Plomer, RCN, resigned and went public with a series of scathing charges of nepotism and incompetence with the RCN, which appeared in *Maclean’s* magazine on 7 September 1963. See Milner, 237-8.
- ¹² Naval Planning Guide 1964-74, 7 February 1963, DHH 121.013 (D1).
- ¹³ The Future Fleet, DNOR September 1963, submitted to the Naval Staff in November 1963, DHH 124.019 (D1).
- ¹⁴ Report of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Naval Programs,” December 1963, DHH 124.019 (D1).
- ¹⁵ The Maritime System Study, 1964, DHH 73/1223 file 402.
- ¹⁶ MND to CDS 3 September 1964, *ibid.*
- ¹⁷ Milner, p. 247.
- ¹⁸ Study of Maritime System Flexibility, 31 January 1967, DHH 72/1223 file 384.
- ¹⁹ For budget details see Dan W. Middlemiss, “Economic Considerations in the Development of the Canadian Navy Since 1945,” in W.A.B. Douglas, ed., *The RCN in Transition*, UBC, 1988.

THE 1975 DEFENCE STRUCTURE REVIEW: THE NAVAL DIMENSION¹

Peter Haydon
and Dan Middlemiss

Conventional wisdom holds that the 1975 Defence Structure Review (DSR) was but another, almost routine, round in the familiar budgetary tug-of-war between a cost-conscious Cabinet and a spending-prone military. To use Bland's terms, it "did not send Canada in a new strategic direction" because it essentially re-affirmed the basic policy priorities of the 1971 *White Paper on Defence*. It "did not even serve as a lever to pry large amounts out of the treasury" and simply sought to justify efforts to compensate the Department of National Defence (DND) for the high, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)-induced inflation rates of the early 1970s.²

Our interpretation is somewhat different. Far from being yet another step in a series of internal budgetary adjustments by DND (although it may have started out that way), the DSR represented a serious challenge to the defence and foreign policy goals of the Trudeau government, forced a major realignment in those policy goals, and ended up justifying a major infusion of inflation-proofed funds for equipment procurement that served to structure the posture of the Canadian Forces (CF), and ultimately the Navy, until the late 1980s at least, and perhaps some would argue well into the 1990s. Upon closer analysis, the DSR also reveals a wealth of interesting historical detail about military professionalism, the politics of defence funding, interdepartmental relationships, and civil-military relations at the highest echelons of policy making.

The roots of the DSR go back at least to the mid-1960s and the attempts by the Pearson government to put a financial "cap" on defence spending. Essentially, from 1964 onwards, DND was being forced to live within a more or less "fixed" budget, but rising costs and increased commitments meant that for the Forces to stay within the imposed ceilings, cost savings had to be found usually from where expenditures were highest: personnel. The Departmental expedient was to embark on a seemingly never-ending series of personnel reductions which took the CF from 114,000 troops in 1964 to about 83,000 regular force personnel in 1973. Other measures, such as Paul Hellyer's integration and unification reforms which were intended in part to generate sufficient cost-savings to fund equipment programs, proved to be financial failures – for a variety of reasons that are beyond the scope of this paper.

Moreover, the proximate cause of the funding crisis that sparked the DSR process itself, was the utter failure of yet another budgetary "rescue" measure in the form of the cabinet approved "modernization and renewal" program of July 1973, which was another stopgap formula to deal with the erosion of the purchasing power of the defence budget. This five-year formula proved to be "totally unrealistic" because the OPEC-fired inflationary crisis was far outstripping all predicted levels.³ The immediate problem for the CF was how to deal with an expected shortfall of some \$255 million for the

FY1975/76 budget – a staggering sum given that cabinet and Treasury Board were adamant that DND had to remain within the budgetary confines of the “7% solution” of 1973 which was thought to provide sufficient funds for the CF to carry out its commitments under the 1971 *White Paper*.

Simply, the DSR started life as a solution to a financial problem but became the catalyst for a major naval modernization program of a magnitude incomprehensible in 1975 when the initiative was started. To explain this seemingly strange and, to some, contradictory linkage we have to go back to the arrival of Pierre Elliott Trudeau as prime minister in 1968.

Trudeau and Defence Policy

When Trudeau became Canada’s fifteenth prime minister in April 1968, he inherited a defence policy in turmoil. The Hellyer years (1963-68) had done more harm than good to the fragile Canadian defence structure: morale was at an all-time low; the DND budget was in crisis, and there was a distinct lack of understanding on what the CF should actually be doing – political perceptions and military intentions were out of step. In May 1968, Cabinet directed a full review of Canadian defence policy by all concerned departments. This led, eventually, to the 1971 *White Paper on Defence*.

The underlying issue was one of diminishing defence budgets and steadfast reluctance of politicians to make either the necessary increases in funding or reductions in commitments to keep the Forces effective; as a result, manpower was continually reduced. This was the beginning of the “commitment-capability gap” which would haunt Canadian defence policy for years to come.

Interestingly, there was absolutely no common view within government (politicians, bureaucrats, and military leaders) of what the military should be doing, let alone a clear consensus about what Canada should be doing.

The 1968-79 Defence Review and the 1971 White Paper

The review of defence policy started in Spring 1968 brought out all the internal divisions within Cabinet. As a result, many of the discussions focussed on the “non-alignment versus alignment” philosophy for Canadian defence and foreign policy. In reality, the debate was about NATO and whether Canada should remain part of the allied military structure. Joint continental defence was a “given” and seen as a fundamental requirement in preserving political and territorial sovereignty. The Department of External Affairs (DEA) was the champion of NATO, not just because of the Canadian role in its formation but also because it was seen as prudent policy. In supporting continued military involvement in the Alliance, DEA attempted to deal with the opponents in a position paper which opined that:

- war in Europe was more likely to happen as a result of miscalculation than by any deliberate attempt on the part of the Russians to seize territory;
- the Russians were, however, intransigent about renouncing the use of force as a political instrument and dialogue with them on this issue was of little value;
- any unilateral Canadian disarmament would likely be more harmful than useful to the collective cause; and moreover

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- any Canadian withdrawal from NATO could well lead to American requests for greater Canadian involvement in continental defence, especially North American Air Defence Command (NORAD).

The debate was deeply divisive and was eventually brought to an end by Trudeau himself.

In preparation for the forthcoming *White Paper*, a series of statements was made concerning a new approach to Canadian defence policy. On 12 April 1969 Trudeau made what was to become a landmark statement on defence that contained important ideas about future naval plans.

We're beginning to realize now that we're not a one-ocean country, not an Atlantic country, not even a two-ocean country, and Atlantic and a Pacific. We're a three-ocean country. We're beginning to realize that this Pacific seaboard is more important to Canadians than we realized in the past. We're beginning to realize that countries like Japan, like China, like Australia, and those on the Pacific coast of South America, are as important partners for Canadians as the nations across the Atlantic. And we're beginning to realize that in the Arctic Canadian interests are very great and that there are not only ice and barren lands up there but that there is oil and there are minerals and there is untold wealth.⁴

This should have served as the warning that things were going to change, but it did not give any indication that the road ahead would be as bumpy for the Navy as it turned out to be.

Meanwhile, the government's 1968 decision to hold the defence budget at \$1.72 billion put the Department in an unenviable position; for the first time there would not be enough money to meet the existing commitments. A defence budget of \$1.72 billion, according to an internal estimate would only provide \$199 million for capital procurement and sustain 99,000 military and 31,000 civilian man-years. The departmental solution to the financial crisis was to close bases and reduce activity rates. This was seen as preferable to reducing force commitments to NATO or to the bilateral continental defence structure. From a naval perspective, the notion of making further cuts in force levels was seen as a clear abrogation of defence responsibilities in the Canadian NATO (ACLANT) sub-area and in the Pacific which would require that US forces assume part or all of the responsibility for those waters.⁵ In the end, however, cuts would have to be made and they would change the basic character of the Navy.

As the financial wrangling went on, it became quite clear that the government was not about to provide more money and, as it later transpired, the NATO commitment was indeed not held sacrosanct. How the necessary adjustments were to be made was left to the Department to work out. This process, about which little has been written, hit the Navy particularly hard for it resulted in the loss of the carrier *Bonaventure* which the admirals had strived for so long to keep operational. The reasons for the decision were largely financial but also reflected NATO priorities: 5-6 destroyers were of greater tactical value to the Allied strategy than one antisubmarine warfare (ASW) carrier.

More importantly, the financial situation was desperate and in trying to find solutions Cabinet discussions again became heated and led to extensive debate on both NORAD and strategic ASW and raised the spectre of U.S. forces operating in Canadian territory. By September 1969 things had sorted themselves out and in addition to getting

rid of *Bonaventure* other naval cuts would be made. It seemed obvious that Cabinet wanted naval things done differently.

The 1970 House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence (SCEAND) hearings on Canada's maritime forces added fuel to the naval pyre in recommending that future naval capabilities be limited to:

- a considerable surface and subsurface surveillance and identification capability;
- limited tracking and locating capability;
- limited ability to challenge and destroy; and
- limited self-defence capability.

It was also a very much more nationalistic view of Canada's approach to maritime security. The proposed force structure favoured using maritime long range patrol aircraft (LRPA) and small warships to meet Canada's ocean responsibilities. But this perspective on the future navy indicated more of an armed "coast guard" structure than a useful contribution to the NATO fleet.

After much political wrangling the 1971 *White Paper on Defence* finally emerged and with it some enlightenment about the Navy's future. The new naval policy established that:

- the maritime air fleet would be retained and the *Argus* LRPA replaced;
- there would be a fleet modernization;
- fleet size was set at 24 destroyers; and
- the future fleet would be "general purpose" rather than specialized for ASW, and
- Canadian involvement in North American ASW was blessed albeit reluctantly.⁶

This was all well and good but as DND and the admirals agreed, the problem lay in making the model fit the budget.

The New Naval Program

A comprehensive study of Canada's future maritime requirements began in November 1971.⁷ Some will say that the final report (submitted in May 1972) was little more than a justification for the status quo, but in fact all the options were examined and the existing force model was considered the best for the next fleet because it had the necessary flexibility. The Report specifically recommended replacing the *Argus* and beginning a ship replacement program. However, inflation had started to take hold and such programs demanded full Cabinet review. Rather than run the risk of opening whole defence policy issue again, the *Argus* replacement went to a Special Committee of Cabinet for further study.

Implementing the new defence policy was a political nightmare; it needed more money – more money than the government was prepared to provide. As a result, two things happened: first, another batch of force reductions was considered, and secondly, "formula funding" was introduced.⁸

Formula funding did not work, and so in May 1973 further cuts were proposed. For the Navy this meant the loss of four reserve destroyers and the West Coast submarine.

The problem was that while these budget cuts solved the short-term cash-flow problem, they exacerbated the steady decline in operational capability. Modernization was still necessary. In September 1973, the Minister of National Defence (MND) proposed to Cabinet that Lockheed and Boeing begin contract definition for the new aircraft.

The Navy, meanwhile, began a series of studies on new ship types from hydrofoils to 10,000 tonne “surface control ships” and also looking at options for modernization. New submarines were also considered. By late 1974 the Navy seems to agree that the best option was to build a new class of ship rather than try to adapt an existing design – the US FFG 7 class was held up as a potential model from which a Canadian variant could be designed and built.⁹

The Defence Structure Review

By 1974, the financial situation had become one of near crisis and was the overarching consideration in implementing the 1971 defence policy and the much-needed modernization program. In August 1974 the MND had to go to Cabinet with the problem – it could not longer be resolved by the Department alone. By October 1974 the MND was proposing further personnel cuts: down to 79,000. As one Cabinet document stated, “These were radical measures and not only show the desperate financial situation but also, just as significantly, show that the 1971 White Paper was already out of date.” Cabinet discussed the problem and essentially re-opened the defence debate in looking at even deeper personnel cuts down to 73,000 people and re-examining the NATO commitment. That November, Cabinet directed a “Defence Structure Review” to “look at all possible alternatives to the CF tasks, structures, etc. including NORAD and strategic ASW.” In other words, an in-house defence review without involving Cabinet in the process.

The military response to the funding crunch was essentially well-coordinated. At first, the CF and DND began to search for further cost-savings in the usual places; P, O&M, and capital were all reduced in efforts to deal with the impending FY 1975/76 budgetary crunch. For the navy, this “rationalization” (always a bureaucratic code word for reductions of some sort) took many different forms. For instance:

- reduced “activity rates” involved a one-third reduction in ship-days at sea [415 days cut in all] in training cruises and scheduled exercises (RIMPAC and MARCOT series especially) and aerial surveillance patrols (8,300 hours cut in total), including *Tracker* fisheries patrols and *Argus* NORPATS reduced to virtually none; in one notable incident, MARCOM cancelled a naval firing exercise because of a shortage of funds – later, the CDS himself stepped in to re-instate this exercise as being too vital to neglect from an operational readiness standpoint.
- deferral and outright cancellation of equipment modernization/replacement programs: the LRPA program was caught right in the middle of the funding crunch, and its necessary start-up funding had to be put on hold.

As these and other reductions began to take effect, senior military planners began to vent their frustration over what they now perceived as a systemic problem of the chronic under-funding of the Forces in relation to the tasks and commitments allotted them by cabinet. In one memorable briefing to Defence Council on 29 September 1974, the VCDS warned the Minister that the Forces had now

come to the nitty-gritty. We are being forced to hold troops in garrison, ground aircraft and stop our ships from sailing. I cannot help but be reminded of the story of Procrustes, the famous robber of Greek mythology, who tied his victims on an iron bed and fitted their limbs to the length of the bed – stretching them if too short – cutting them off if too long. Your Department is now on a Procrustean couch, scaled to an invalid funding formula of seven percent. With current rates of inflation running well beyond this, we have begun to hack off arms and legs. But the most worrisome (*sic*) part of this process to me, is that, despite our best efforts of persuasion and leadership, there is a danger that we may be unable to convince our sailors, soldiers, and airmen of the validity of all of this. Our troops may see these drastic activity cuts as culminating proof that the Government and their country neither understands nor cares for their Armed Forces, especially if we have to perform further surgery this year. If this be so, the exodus from the Forces may well (solve) some of our financial problems, but this ... can hardly be considered as a rational method of restructuring the defence effort.¹⁰

By late 1974, CDS and VCDS were clearly digging in their heels at any further “annual ad hocery” attempts by the Deputy Minister to reduce personnel and operations. The “magic” number that they were trying to preserve seemed to be about 79,000 military personnel. Instead of simply going along with yet more cuts, the CDS adopted a new strategy of preparing studies to demonstrate to cabinet conclusively that: the less than a year old formula funding scheme was a failure, and should be modified to sustain the CF at their current levels; and that, if the CF were to be forced to live within the current unrealistic funding arrangement, then certain capabilities, facilities, and readiness commitments would have to be abandoned.

A flurry of papers and studies ensued, culminating in a joint MND/SSEA Memo to Cabinet of 13 October 1974 in which the military essentially presented two basic options for dealing with its funding crisis. First, a general reduction of the Forces spread over all three services and including base closures, closure of military colleges, and reduced fisheries patrols. For the navy, this general “shaving the ice cube” approach would entail laying up two destroyers, reducing the complement of 4 West Coast destroyers by 560 (which meant eliminating their ASW capability), and reducing the East Coast *Argus* fleet from 18 to 12 aircraft, and major reductions in both sea and air patrol activity. Second, to withdraw all CF personnel from NATO as a single, comprehensive option to find all the necessary savings needed to solve the immediate budgetary shortfall, and to preclude a general run-down of all the CF’s tasks and activities. Thus, in a single measure, the CF would save some \$120 million a year by reducing military and civilian personnel by 7,310, reducing O&M costs by \$40 million a year, and reducing ammunition procurement by another \$40M.

The crucial point about this is that, notwithstanding the merits of the two options (the military clearly preferred the second approach), the senior military planners recognized that if the existing, inadequate funding arrangement remained in place, and if either personnel or equipment continued to be cut as result, then the CF could no longer carry out all of its assigned commitments. Something drastic had to be done. By the end of October 1974, a Report of the Cabinet Committee on External Policy, with Treasury Board support, finally acknowledged that:

there would appear to be a conflict between maintaining National Defence Funding with a 7% annual increase as agreed by Cabinet, and the Department's ability to discharge its present roles in order to maintain the defence and external policy of the government;¹¹

The military further recognized, and to its credit alerted the government to the fact, that such wider ranging reductions of tasks and commitments could no longer be treated as the same old, recurring internal budgetary "problem" for the Forces, but rather now took on the dimensions of a major policy crisis that required a complete review of Canada's defence and foreign policy objectives and commitments. That the military realized the true nature of the crisis and brought it to the attention of the cabinet in those terms, speaks volumes about the healthy state of civil-military relations at this time.

The DSR Process

Political reaction was predictable. These revelations came as something of a bombshell to the Cabinet, partly because some members believed that they had resolved the matter of defence priorities once and for all in the 1969 review process, and the issue of funding to meet those priorities in the July 1973 funding formula, and partly because some recognized the political sensitivity of measures involving the closure of military facilities and colleges and reduced fisheries patrols for their constituents. However, most recognized that some fundamental shifts in Canadian security policy were involved here which could not be lightly dismissed. This was particularly true later in the year when cabinet sought and received information that Canada's NATO allies were handling similar inflationary pressures on their defence budgets by increasing these budgets significantly [the US, France, and Norway]. With these issues in mind, on 28 November 1974 Cabinet approved a force-structure study to be conducted via a "Steering Group" involving officials from PCO (as chair), Treasury Board, DEA, and DND and to be completed within six months. Two specific tasks were to be examined in particular: air defence against the manned bomber threat, and anti-submarine warfare. The latter was surely ominous news for the navy. At the same time, Cabinet directed the President of the Treasury Board (Chretien) and MND (Richardson) to review "other means of effecting reductions" and to report at the next meeting of Cabinet.

As it transpired, the DSR was to proceed in three phases: the first dealing with the approved tasks of the Forces; the second dealing with the force structure necessary to meet those tasks; and the third (which was never formally concluded) involving a detailed costing of alternate capabilities for the proposed force posture model.

- **Phase One "The Tasks."** The report of the first phase raised five "basic issues" in the form of five questions concerning the tasks which the CF should be capable of performing. This important report (6 February 1975) covered the entire range of traditional Canadian military activities, presented good evaluations of the various options, and quite brilliantly focussed political attention on the key issues that determine force structure and related national infrastructure. Three of the five "core" tasks eventually endorsed by Cabinet (17 April 1975) were of vital interest to the navy: providing escort protection for the deployment of combat forces to Europe; compelling submarines operating in Canadian territorial waters to surface when ordered to do so; contributing through surveillance to the maintenance of a continuing

intelligence picture of potentially hostile submarine activities in both shallow and deep waters.

- **Phase Two “Force Structure.”** It is instructive to note, and perhaps to compare to the circumstances of today, the extent to which DEA not only supported DND’s request for a re-assessment of the bases of its funding arrangements from Cabinet, but also vigorously supported the NATO “core task,” and the navy’s role in contributing to it. In response to Cabinet direction that the SSEA prepare “an analysis of the strategic situation and NATO perceptions of the threat as they affect the future form of the Canadian contribution to NATO,” on 7 November 1975 the SSEA, Allan MacEachen, presented a Memo to Cabinet entitled, *Defence Structure Review – Analysis of the Strategic Situation and Canadian Foreign Policy Implications*. This extremely important document can properly be regarded as the “Magna Carta” for Canadian defence policy and funding in the 1970s, and represented a strong defence of Canadian naval ASW in the context of NATO.

On 10 November 1975, MND submitted the key force structure Memorandum to Cabinet, *The Defence Program - Force Structure*. This crucial document, which was eventually approved by Cabinet in its major respects, not only recommended a continued land and air presence for the CF in NATO, but also requested a quick decision by Cabinet on the type and number of LRPA to replace the *Argus*, and in addition requested an early 1976 submission of detailed proposals for a new fighter program and a future ship replacement program. The sections on “Maritime Combat Capabilities,” which were clearly derived from the SSEA study mentioned earlier, constitute as robust and comprehensive a defence of the Canadian Navy’s NATO roles and tasks as can be found in any naval staff college. This Memo also urged the development of coordinated arrangements for the employment of ships and aircraft which were currently under utilized in support of other government departments. Finally, on 20 November 1975, Cabinet not only agreed that the LRPA decision had to be resolved immediately, but also authorized the MND to prepare “a future ship replacement program, for consideration by Cabinet early in 1976 and supported by an analysis of the maritime threat, including the need and possibility of keeping the sea lanes open in time of hostilities,” and the “role of the proposed ships in: national sovereignty and surveillance, contributing to deterrence of both conventional and nuclear war, assisting to cope with the maritime threat in the event of hostilities.” This latter study took until December 1977 to complete to everyone’s satisfaction and was eventually piggy-backed into Cabinet on the tail of the memo on the crisis in the Canadian shipyards.

To ensure that this new force structure would be adequately funded, the Cabinet authorized a new “formula” that would compensate the P, O&M components for inflation each year, and that would permit a 12 % annual increase in the capital component of the defence budget “in real terms for five years from 1976-77, based on a capital budget of \$470 million in 1976-77.” Here, then, was the essential core approvals for the Navy’s new capital replacement programs – that became the 18 CP-140 *Aurora* LRPA and the 12 City-class Canadian Patrol Frigates, even though final approval for a modern, 24-ship fleet would not be forthcoming until December 1977.

The Naval Program

The problem was that both the *Argus* replacement and the new ship program became trapped in the DSR process and were thus delayed by the political wrangling. As a brief example, a July 1975 Memorandum to Cabinet, *Capabilities and Resources for Sovereignty Control*, from Secretary Treasury Board refers to Cabinet direction of 8 August 1974 that an interdepartmental study be carried out to assess:

- the present and potential non-military challenges to Canadian sovereignty;
- capabilities and level of response required or desirable for protection of sovereignty; and
- alternative mixes of equipment, including the LRPA, and associated costs of providing capabilities required to present and potential non-military challenges.

The study concluded that “there are at present no serious non-military challenges to Canadian sovereignty given the current jurisdictions but that some additional surveillance and enforcement capability is desirable in carrying out responsibilities under ICNAF on the East Coast and with respect to vessel source pollution on the West Coast. A polar icebreaking capability is needed for support of any future year-round shipping in the Arctic.” Recommendations included the following:

- that a decision to procure the LRPA was justified on demonstrated military needs;
- that priority be given to construction of a polar icebreaker;
- that DND should replace the Tracker aircraft with a medium range patrol aircraft by 1985;
- that DND planning for replacement destroyers should take into account possible advantages of smaller ships “more suitable and economical for use as back-up for fisheries enforcement” in the longer term.

A later memo to Cabinet from MND then presented Cabinet with four options:

- acquire 18 Lockheed P3 to meet both operational and financial constraints;
- acquire 16 Boeing LRPA to meet operational capability and have necessary industrial benefits and interoperability with other CF aircraft;
- acquire 10 Boeing LRPA to meet financial constraints and part of the operational need; or
- acquire 23 Lockheed P3C to meet financial constraints but little else.

The rationale behind these options is enormously complex and the political process took two years to complete before industrial benefits and other economic considerations were resolved. As a result, the ship program was held back.

In September 1977 the summary of the Steering Group of Deputy Ministers’ review of CPF Program. The Steering Group (formed by Cabinet directive in 1974) concluded:

- a system to protect Canadian sovereignty contains many elements and that ships are only one of these elements;

- regulatory tasks can on most occasions be carried out by unarmed patrol vessels; however, these vessels must be backed up by armed vessels that can enforce laws on those offenders who resist arrest, or who would resist arrest if they believed their resistance would not be met by force;
- the armed vessels required to enforce laws can be either civilian or military: an armed patrol vessel conceived solely for regulatory tasks would differ from a warship of equivalent size in the type and quality of its sensor and weapon systems. And to operate efficiently in Canadian waters this vessel would need to be in the 3,000 ton range;
- there will be occasions when warships are essential to enforce jurisdiction, and armed patrol vessels are inadequate are conceivable, but most unlikely to occur; therefore, a fleet of armed patrol vessels could probably meet our regulatory need;
- warships can fulfill all aspects of sovereignty as in present practice but armed patrol vessels cannot fulfill the collective defence role.

In many respects this was the breakthrough the Navy had been looking for.

Concluding Observations

The DSR was the culmination of a decade of the Forces' unsuccessful attempts to live within an unrealistically restrictive funding envelope. The reason the Forces were successful in the 1974-75 DSR when they had not been previously, was that they grasped the core of what has come to be known now as the "commitment-capability gap" in Canadian defence policy: namely, that continual reductions of the defence budget will at some point erode the Forces' ability to carry out their politically mandated tasks. Moreover, the senior military planners not only recognized what was at the centre of this "gap," but they also were able to devise a skilful strategy for rectifying it. Essentially, they recognized that it was their duty, as CDS Dextraze put it to the Minister, Richardson, in one particularly "intense discussion" in 1974, to provide the Minister with "true facts expressed as a professional military assessment unmodified by political considerations."¹² And what were these "facts"? Simply, that it was up to the government of Canada to determine if Canadians still wanted a military in the first place, and if they did, to determine what they wanted this military to do. Once that was done, then the military pointed out quite forcefully that the Cabinet then would have a reciprocal obligation to provide the Forces with the funds necessary to carry out these agreed upon tasks and commitments according to the best advice provided by the military itself, unadorned by "political considerations."

If the DSR process of the mid-1970s has anything to teach us today, it is surely the wisdom and honesty of this simple tenet of mutual obligation between our military and civilian leaders. While the 1971 *White Paper on Defence* (and the prior defence review) might seem to be the genesis of the new fleet, the DSR in fact became the point of departure, but in the process:

- major program funding was deferred;
- the Navy had to prevent rust out through series of innovative "stop-gap" programs; and

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- there was a false appearance of “bunched-up” Navy funding that Army has often referred to as the “Navy stealing all the budget.”

Hence the moral of the story is that we still have a great deal to learn from the more recent history of Canadian defence policy.

Finally, when looked at objectively, there are a number of similarities between the Trudeau defence budget crisis and the present time:

- money is short;
- Cabinet support for the military is mixed and “soft” at best;
- the military’s function is not well entrenched nor well understood;
- the Navy needs to design and get approval for its next fleet.

Perhaps the greatest danger lies in the return of the Navy to the “Procrustean couch” as a result of a less than clear political (and, perhaps, bureaucratic) understanding of just what it is that naval forces offer a traditional “medium” power such as Canada. They are not simply “toys for the boys and girls;” they are, in fact, highly versatile instruments of state policy over the oceans and relatively low-cost, in terms of both political risk and economic commitment, agents of foreign policy.

NOTES

- ¹ A paper prepared for the *Military History Conference 2000* held in Ottawa in May 2000. This paper represents the preliminary findings of the authors’ research under a series of Access To Information requests. We are especially grateful to Lt. Cdr Richard Gimblett of the Department of National Defence (ATI Directorate) and Herb Barrett of PCO (ATIP Section) for their tireless efforts to facilitate this project.
- ² Douglas L. Bland, *Chiefs of Defence: Government and the Unified Command of the Canadian Armed Forces*, (Toronto, ON: The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1995), 239.
- ³ “P” was to increase by 6% per year, “O&M” by 4%, with the balance of an overall defence budget increase of a 7% annual increase to go to capital. MGen (Ret’d) Charles J. Gauthier, *The Formulation of Defence Policy from 1970 to 1990*, (Ottawa, Directorate of History, National Defence Headquarters, 29 September 1992), 15.
- ⁴ “The Relation of Defence Policy to Foreign Policy,” *Statements and Speeches*, No. 69/8. Excerpts from an address by Prime Minister Trudeau to a Dinner of the Alberta Liberal Association, Calgary, April 12, 1969.
- ⁵ Draft Memorandum to Cabinet “1968/69 Defence Budget” V 7150-1 (DSFP) of 3 November 1967. DHH Archives, Raymont Collection (73/1223), File No. 1034.
- ⁶ Donald S. Macdonald, Minister of National Defence, *White Paper on Defence*, (Ottawa: Information Canada, August 1971).
- ⁷ *Maritime Policy Review* (D 1150-110/M21) dated 16 May 1972. Approved by the Minister on 17 May 1972.
- ⁸ Dan Middlemiss, “Paying for National Defence: The Pitfalls of Formula Funding,” *Canadian Defence Quarterly*, 12:3 (Winter 1982/83), 24-29.
- ⁹ These were a series of three studies conducted by the Director General Maritime Engineering and Management (DGMEM): (1) the Surface Warship Study of 25 January 1974; (2) the Surface Warship Follow On Study of 29 March 1974; and the Surface Warship Study

Destroyer/Helicopter Options of September 1974, all under file number 3120-280/C3-3 (DMEM 5).

¹⁰ Gauthier, 103.

¹¹ Gauthier, 138.

¹² Gauthier, 105.

Part V

WAR AND PEACE SINCE 1945

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Partie V

GUERRE ET PAIX DEPUIS 1945

Defence Policy and Doctrines since 1945

Politiques et doctrines de défense depuis 1945

“LIFE IN THE EMPIRE YET?” POST-WAR DEFENCE COOPERATION WITHIN THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

Stephen Prince

The Second World War demonstrated the most extraordinary military cooperation between the British dominions.¹ This was achieved even though there was no formal obligation, and little planning, for the dominions to fight with Britain. It is ironic, therefore, that this war should also represent for many a fatal turning point in serious Commonwealth defence cooperation, with all of the wartime dominions subsequently seeking to give priority to the achievement of a security relationship with the United States. Many historians have commented on the direct connection between the events of the Second World War and much of the post-war security architecture in order to demonstrate this. Britain's quest for a “Special Relationship,” the NATO Alliance, and the ANZUS Treaty are all cited as examples.²

While this chapter does not contend the powerful linkage between these events it does seek to suggest that the line between them was not as direct or defined as it has seemed to many in retrospect. Serious Commonwealth defence cooperation did continue in the post-war period and the nature of that cooperation was fundamentally effected by the Korean War, both to a much greater extent that has been generally recognized.³ Focusing on the post-war decade the paper examines Britain's relations with Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, the “Southern dominions,” before contrasting those relationships with Britain's links to Canada.⁴ Superficially such an examination might suggest that Britain's relationship with its Southern dominions was closer, but more detailed study reveals that the Anglo-Canadian relationship was actually more intimate. Though it was also more complex and less exclusive it was more profound and significant. Anglo-Canadian security relations had evolved into a symbiotic post-imperial alliance.

Britain's motivations for a close post-war defence alliance with the dominions are obvious. From 1944 onwards the British government had identified the Soviet Union as a likely and potent military opponent. There was no doubt that Britain's primary ally in a confrontation would have to be the United States. However, there was also a belief that in order to achieve an alliance in which Britain was not completely subordinated to America, there would have to be maximum mobilization potential of “British” forces.

Given the limitations of Britain's manpower and economy, and loss of access to the raw resources of the Indian sub-continent, this placed a renewed stress on the need to gain "old" Commonwealth supplements.⁵ Within British defence circles this was acknowledged by references to the strategy of "Commonwealth Defence."⁶

This strategy essentially built on the Second World War model, looking to the dominions to provide supplementary units, primarily in the Middle East. The Middle East was the focus of Britain's war planning from 1947 because Britain believed that defence plans for the Continent were largely matters of psychological reassurance within Europe and, that if they were ever put to the test, the forces available would be rapidly swept aside. British attitudes to these plans, and their view of the likely result of them, can be inferred from the titles of Britain's successive European defence planning documents, GALLOPER and DOUBLEQUICK! Britain sought to minimize the scale of any new "Dunkirk" and it was in the Middle East that a reinforced Britain would make a viable stand.⁷

By the summer of 1950 this policy had achieved what might seem a surprising level of success with the Southern dominions. In 1948 the New Zealand government accepted Britain's preferences and undertook to provide a reinforced infantry division and five air squadrons ready to deploy to the Middle East by D+90. New Zealand then reinforced the level of this commitment by endorsing peacetime conscription at a referendum in August 1949, with the first conscripts being inducted in May 1950. After a visit to New Zealand in 1950 Lord Slim, then Chief of the Imperial General Staff, described the New Zealanders as, "almost embarrassingly cooperative."⁸ In June 1950 South Africa offered Britain an armoured division and nine air squadrons for the Middle East.⁹ In the same month Australia stated its agreement with British priorities and Australian war planning assumed a Middle East deployment of initially a division and eventually a corps.¹⁰ Though contingency planning for a Malayan deployment also continued Prime Minister Menzies stated he had no doubt that Australian forces would go to the Middle East in general war.¹¹ In March 1950 Australia announced the withdrawal of its occupation force from Japan, in order to provide the personnel for a conscription scheme, even though this meant ending the only high level military contact Australia had with the United States.¹² On the outbreak of the Korean War on 25 June 1950 Australia's immediate reaction was to deploy RAAF reinforcements to Malaya rather than halt the withdrawal from Japan.¹³ Menzies also wanted to deploy troops there in preference to Korea.¹⁴

What factors explain this apparent commitment to British priorities, despite the events of the Second World War? First, sentiment was a significant political factor, even if it was one that is now slightly uncomfortable for the countries involved recalling. Many of the populations still regarded themselves having both a British and a local identity which were complementary. Many also believed that Britain's apparent failings in the Second World War had been because of a uniquely desperate set of circumstances and that overall Britain had actually performed well. There was perceived to be a duty in assisting Britain, as well as a self-interest, given its status as both the largest trade partner and the centre of the Sterling Area financial system.

There was also a broad consensus of view regarding the Soviet Union. This emerged by the late 1940s and identified the Soviet bloc as the only serious threat to world peace and the western world, through the medium of threatening or launching a general war. Responding to this belief was most easily achieved by working through the system of the British led Commonwealth. This methodology was most likely to retain domestic

consensus and offered the familiarity of a system where representation of dominion interests was now, finally, well established. Alignment with Britain allowed the military to function at economic cost, through British technical support and encouraged development of valuable national capacities such as signals intelligence and aerospace technology through shared projects.¹⁵ This could also be achieved without defence becoming a strain on the scarce resource of the dollar, through the development and purchase of equipment within the Sterling Area.¹⁶

The final indirect but important shaper of cooperation was America's attitude. America's attitude to the Southern dominions was ultimately one of indifference, largely as the result of low priority. American foreign and defence policies had had to undergo a huge expansion in their areas of interest and geographical coverage in a short space of time so prioritization had been inevitable. The geographical position of the dominions, combined with their already friendly status and Commonwealth links meant they were areas of little concern and most easily dealt with by the British, America's major ally, which might well resent too much American interest. This was coupled with a frank assessment of the Southern dominions relatively minor political and military assets, something which had already manifested itself in the later stages of the Pacific War, when Australian forces had been effectively excluded from serious participation.¹⁷

While the dominions realised the potential danger that their association with Britain might inhibit the development of greater security relations with the USA, on balance they felt they had no better alternative. Combination through the Commonwealth gave some link to America, while following a national policy might well result in none.¹⁸ When Australia was excluded from access to any classified US information from 1948 this was due to doubts about Australian security but an underlying reason was also that America gained virtually nothing from the link. Britain was the only remaining external source of military information for Australia and when a limited link was regained in 1950 the Australian government were fully aware that this was largely due to British lobbying in Washington.¹⁹ Overall, by the middle of 1950 the Commonwealth remained the Southern dominions' best possible option.

The Korean War stimulated major changes to this situation. In some ways it undoubtedly enhanced Commonwealth defence cooperation. A unique Commonwealth Division was formed with British and Canadian brigades, Australian battalions, New Zealand batteries, South African Staff Officers, and even an Indian medical unit. A reduced version of this integrated unit continued in Korea until 1957 and then after its withdrawal Australian and New Zealand forces served in a British Far East Strategic Reserve until 1971. These forces participated in the latter stages of the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960) and the "Confrontation" with Indonesia (1962-1966).²⁰ All of the Commonwealth countries involved followed rearmament programs that produced enhancements in their forces.

However these developments must be set against others which tended to degrade cooperation in order to determine a net balance. The most important of these developments was the emergence of China as a great power, capable of military influence beyond its own borders, something powerfully illustrated on the battlefields of Korea in the winter of 1950-1951. While this capacity was contained it was not defeated; something that was equally true for Russian produced Chinese MiG 15s in the skies over North Korea. In three years China went from possessing no air force to being the world's fourth largest airpower.

The effect of these developments was to break the Commonwealth consensus of focusing on the Soviet general-war threat. For Australia and, to a lesser extent, New Zealand Chinese Communism had now emerged as a much more substantial and immediate shadow in South Asia.²¹ Instead of low level, sporadic guerrilla activity they now feared waves of Chinese “Volunteers,” supported by first-rate airpower, while the frustrating new logic of limited war, powerfully demonstrated in Korea, might limit the weapons deployed against them. Coupled with this was the fact the very suddenness and unexpectedness of the new situation tended to make Australasian planners focus on “worst case” scenarios for the future. The events of 1950-1951 set the “alarm bells ringing and wakened ghosts of 1941-1942.”²² The Chinese Volunteer and the MiG inherited the mantle of Japanese infantry and the Zero.

A natural corollary of this perception was much greater attention by the dominions to the forces Britain was likely to generate. As the Soviet threat to Europe was now seen as increasingly military, immediate British forces in Europe were enlarged and converted from being occupational to operational. This was necessary to match and facilitate large-scale US deployments to Europe, to ensure the development of European forces and the conversion of NATO from a treaty to an active alliance. However, this altered priority, and the limits to Britain’s productive capacity, as demonstrated by rearmament, inevitably reduced forces elsewhere. This, in turn, reduced the willingness of the dominions to deploy in more dangerous circumstances, rendering the situation yet more desperate. In this vicious circle commitments became increasingly uncertain. By 1953 a new agreement was struck which envisaged Australasian forces now deploying to Malaya instead of the Middle East. However, Australia still remained concerned about Britain’s ability to provide adequate forces in the new situation, even with Australian reinforcements, and, together with New Zealand, therefore permanently held back from anything but token commitments at battalion level for counter-insurgency.²³

Simultaneously, and connected to this decline in defence relations with Britain, was the achievement of improved relations with the USA. This was connected with the Korean War, which immediately increased the flow of military data that directly disclosed. This added to an improved perception of America, which was seen to have met the challenge posed in Korea and was demonstrating a capacity for apparently limitless military expansion, in sharp contrast to Britain. On the American side, there was improved willingness to contemplate links with the Australasians who had provided combat forces.

The greater motivation, though, was renewed urgency about achieving a Japanese Peace Treaty without delay in order to anchor Japan in the anti-Communist camp. The end result was the ANZUS Treaty of 1951. Australia saw this as the achievement of a relationship with America that was now much more necessary and sought to develop it, trying to gain access to US strategic planning. When greater access did not develop the perception was that Americans were holding back because they felt Australia’s position was ambiguous due to its links with Britain.²⁴ The Commonwealth connection was now viewed as a barrier to improved strategic relations with America rather than a bridge. Thus links with Britain were downgraded accordingly. While there was an element of truth to this assessment the underlying reality was that Australia’s move towards America simply repeated the gross power imbalance of 1943-1945. America was unwilling to grant the sort of access that Britain felt more compelled to. Ironically, America’s Joint Chiefs of Staff had insisted on the insertion of a paragraph referring to Commonwealth

Defence commitments in the preamble to ANZUS precisely to try and limit expectations of a close relationship.²⁵

This gap between aspiration and achievement was also to be found in the area of defence procurement, with a similarly degrading impact on Commonwealth defence cooperation. As a result of its Korean War Australia gained considerable resources of dollars from both soft US loans and the proceeds of the wool sales to America for rearmament.²⁶ In addition America was more willing to provide Australia with equipment, now that restrictions on military information had been relaxed. This gave Australia the freedom to set up domestic production of the F-86 Sabre as a MiG-15 matching fighter, superseding British pattern aircraft, despite the fact the Sabres were three times the cost, with a high dollar input.²⁷ This reduced Australian deployability with British forces as Britain could not now provide a common support structure and Australia had a very limited capacity to provide its own.

Australian leaders actually now clearly hoped that their country would become a centre for US offshore procurement, where America would pay Australia in dollars to export equipment to America's allies.²⁸ This was an example, similar to information, where Australia hoped to gain a relationship with America equivalent to Canada's. Once again Australia was disappointed but, as with information, once the move was made it was impossible to reverse.

It would be wrong however to see these developments as purely the Southern dominions moving away from an imploring Britain. This period also saw significant changes in Britain's own perceptions and priorities, in addition to the shift to European deployment. From the start of the Korean War there began a general process of rearmament, with Britain feeling compelled to take a lead despite its already heavy commitments and fragile economy. During this process Britain felt increasingly disappointed by the extent of Commonwealth forces and preparations, mirroring many of the dominions concerns about Britain. None of the Southern Dominions actually procured a fraction of the equipment they required to mobilize the forces envisaged.²⁹ Increasingly this was contrasted with the level of investment being made by Britain's new European allies.³⁰ While not wishing to discourage any global assistance that the Commonwealth might provide, the clear shift in emphasis towards fighting in Europe was accompanied by a clear shift of attention to those who would be allies in Europe from an early stage, a stage that would be decisive in what was predicted to be a short war. This was one of the main pillars of the developing post-imperial alliance between Britain and Canada.

The strength of the last stage of imperial alliance had been demonstrated by Canada's enormous financial and material aid to Britain during the Second World War and by the operations of First Canadian Army, the army that made Montgomery's 21st Army Group viable. It also demonstrated Britain had finally taken on a more mature attitude to its Canadian alliance, with up to nine British divisions operating, if with some caveats, under Canadian command.³¹ Canada's significance was then further illustrated by the \$1.25 billion loan of 1946, a loan relatively five times more generous than American support and available more immediately, though often forgotten in British accounts.³²

An important part of Britain's attitude to Canada was an acceptance that links with Britain were no longer exclusive and that post-war Canada had immediately achieved what Britain had not, a formal security link with America.³³ Rather than resent this or try and undermine it, Britain largely tried to ally with Canada and include it in the

development of security relations with America. This policy was not followed completely consistently, with an example being the attempt by the British Chiefs of Staff to exclude Canadian observers from the Western Union on the basis that they could keep Canada informed, but it was largely observed.³⁴ Britain ensured the Anglo-American Burns-Templer of 1950 on exchange of military information explicitly included a separate agreement on equal tripartite exchange including Canada.³⁵

The relationship was also possible because of Canadian eagerness to nurture it. Having achieved a security link with America Canada was now anxious not to be overwhelmed or ignored by an ally of such magnitude. A triangular relationship with Britain provided balance through familiarity with Canadian requirements, similar interests, and equally close links to the United States.³⁶ For both Canada and Britain pursuing this alliance was complimentary to their links with the USA, as demonstrated during the various ABC defence talks and the establishment of NATO. For Canadian leaders it was also good politics, given the continuing links of much of the population to Britain.³⁷ When Canadian cooperation with America was announced care was taken to stress these arrangements as parallel to Commonwealth measures, which for Canada meant Anglo-Canadian links, rather than any wider definition. Canadian interest in anything identified as Commonwealth was applied only to the broadest, diplomatic definition, rather than a “White” Commonwealth security one. For Canada the Commonwealth was useful for diplomatic connections with Asia rather than military ties to Australia.

The continuing inevitability of the British link was demonstrated during the Korean War over the issue of committing ground troops. Both Britain and Canada were under intense America pressure to announce troop commitments but were reluctant to. Only when Britain finally succumbed, however, did that example render the pressure on Canada, in common with the Southern dominions, intolerable.³⁸ The Korean deployments also illustrated the potential for mutual benefit, as it was the Anglo-Canadian brigades that made a division, visibly independent of American forces, possible.³⁹ This reasoning, together with the sensitivity Britain had now achieved about working with Canadian forces, then facilitated the deployment of the Canadian brigade, sent to Europe as part of Korean War rearmament, with the British Army of the Rhine.⁴⁰ This meant by 1951 two Canadian brigades were operating under British Command, rendering viable the scale of nominally “British” deployments, though the main Canadian requirement was these should, as far as possible, not be identified as Commonwealth forces.⁴¹

The Korean War also further illustrates the functioning of the Anglo-Canadian alliance. Consultation with America became a priority during the crisis of the war after Chinese intervention in the winter of 1950-1951, when there was real fear of America escalation. This led to Attlee’s visit to Washington in December 1950. While there was much apparent consultation with all Commonwealth representatives, there was much greater but less obvious coordination with Canada.⁴² Approaches to American officials were complementary and resulted in Canada being given the same guarantees over consultation on use of atomic weapons as Britain.⁴³ These reassurances were a testimony to Canada’s status with America and Anglo-Canadian cooperation, though perhaps also evidence of how seriously America took its verbal promises over the use of atomic weapons!

A final area of consideration is procurement. Here again the events of Korean War rearmament demonstrated the differential between Canada and any other dominion. Like

Britain, Canada made very serious enhancements to both its production and its forces, which contrasted favourably with those of the Southern dominions.⁴⁴ It provided equipment to Britain's European allies and 395 vital Sabre fighters for the RAF, as well as a RCAF Sabre wing for the defence of Britain and then Europe more generally.⁴⁵ These aircraft credibly filled the gap, giving Britain an opportunity to develop its forces and new aircraft such as the Hunter, in turn developing the European contribution to NATO in line with Canadian wishes.⁴⁶ Canada also purchased operational quantities of weapons from Britain, in particular over 400 Centurion tanks.⁴⁷

In conclusion then, I would maintain that there was significant, and significantly varied, defence cooperation between Britain and the "Old" dominions in the post-war decade and that the Korean War affected this. The Southern dominions' consensus with Britain diverged and they increasingly looked towards developing their new opportunities for a security relationship with America, perceiving that close relations with Britain were now potentially a barrier rather than a bridge. This resulted in a declining circle in their Commonwealth connections. By contrast Britain and Canada retained their shared vision of global priorities and had this reinforced by the rising tempo of NATO development from 1950. Having established security links with America, in which they were confident, they also shared a policy in trying to constrain the United States. There was a little life left in the Empire after 1945 and this was developed with a chance of success until 1950. However, it was then largely extinguished by Chinese intervention in Korea. The most significant security relationship to be maintained after this was then achieved on the basis that its imperial origins were minimized. Ultimately there was little life in the Empire but significant life in its legacy.

NOTES

- ¹ One of the best examples of this interaction comes from the Royal Air Force. By 1944 39% of all RAF aircrew came from the Empire and Commonwealth, largely as a result of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP), David French, *The British Way in Warfare* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), p. 205.
- ² *Ibid*, pp. 211-16; John Baylis, *Anglo-American Defence Relations 1945-1984* (London: MacMillan, 1986), p. 61; John Young, *Britain and the World in the Twentieth Century* (London: Arnold, 1997), p. 142; David Devereux, *The Formulation of British Defence Policy Towards the Middle East* (London: MacMillan, 1990), p. 76 and note 3, p. 206.
- ³ See for instance William Stuck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1995), which provides an excellent and extensive account of the international consequences of the war but does not include any impact on Commonwealth defence co-operation.
- ⁴ Limitations of space mean that this chapter will not directly address the issue of relations, or indeed the lack of them, directly between Dominions, although this in itself is an important and interesting area. It also excludes discussion of Britain's relationships with the new post-war Dominions in Asia.
- ⁵ The loss of Indian manpower was partially offset by agreements with the Indian and Nepalese governments that allowed Britain to retain eight Gurkha battalions, units which played a prominent part in Britain's post-war counter-insurgencies operations in the Far East. The British Army still includes 2,500 Gurkhas.

- ⁶ The only full account of the early development of the Commonwealth Defence concept is John Albert, "Attlee, the Chiefs of Staff and the development of 'Commonwealth Defence' between VJ Day and the outbreak of the Korean War," PhD, Merton College, Oxford, 1986. While very thorough, it is constrained by the fact it considers the topic purely from British sources.
- ⁷ See Paul Cornish, *British Defence Planning for the Defence of Germany 1945-1950* (London: MacMillan, 1996).
- ⁸ Ian McGibbon, *New Zealand and the Korean War, Vol. 1, Politics and Diplomacy* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 29-31.
- ⁹ Ritchie Owendale, *The English Speaking Alliance Britain, the United States, the Dominions and the Cold War* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1985), p. 256.
- ¹⁰ "Planning for Cooperation in British Commonwealth Defence, Conclusions of the Council of Defence," 21 June 1950, CRS, A5954/1, Box 1682, Australian Archives (AA).
- ¹¹ "Minutes of a Meeting Between Prime Minister Menzies and the British Cabinet," 14 July 1950, Public Records Office (PRO), PREM 8/1148.
- ¹² New Zealand High Commissioner to Department of External Affairs, n.d., CRS A462/7 443/1/8 Pt.2, AA. The occupation force was the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) but by 1950 consisted solely of Australian forces. Its commander was a three star appointment, responsible to General MacArthur. Its closure was halted at the end of June 1950 in order to support operations in Korea and it ended with the end of the occupation in 1952.
- ¹³ Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War, Vol. 1, Strategy and Diplomacy* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial and Government Publishing Service, 1981), p. 48.
- ¹⁴ Menzies Diary Entry, 10 July 1950, MS4936, Series 13, Box 398, Folder 5, National Library of Australia (NLA).
- ¹⁵ Lorna Arnold, *A Very Special Relationship* (London: HMSO, 1987), p. 24.
- ¹⁶ David Lee, *Search for Security* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1995), pp. 33-9.
- ¹⁷ Donald McIntyre, *Background to ANZUS* (Canterbury: Canterbury UP, 1995), pp. 46-9.
- ¹⁸ Chris Watersm, *The Empire Fractures* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1995), p. 26; Ann Trotter, *New Zealand and Japan 1945-1952* (London: Athlone Press, 1990), p. 2.
- ¹⁹ Prime Minister Menzies to Prime Minister Attlee, 17 January 1950, CRS A6706/1 AA.
- ²⁰ See P. Dennis and J. Grey, *Emergency and Confrontation* (Canberra: Allen Unwin, 1996).
- ²¹ Cabinet Brief by Sir Percy Spender, Australian Minister for External Affairs, 15 February 1951, B1/70, Papers of the Official Historian for the Korean War, Australian War Memorial.
- ²² Interview with Sir Arthur Tange, Australian Under-Secretary of External Affairs, 1950-1953, Canberra, 16 April 1996.
- ²³ New Zealand's initial contribution was limited to a Special Air Service (SAS) Squadron of 120 men.
- ²⁴ Tange Interview, 16 April 1996.
- ²⁵ McIntyre, *Background*, p. 320.
- ²⁶ The world wool price rose by 400% between 1948 and 1951. See Lee, *Search* p. 140.
- ²⁷ Australian Cabinet Decision, 22 February 1951, CRS, A4638/XM1, AA. Sabres cost £A241,000 each as opposed to the British alternative the Hunter at £A80,000, Report on Aircraft Costs, 11 November 1952, Item 12346, RAAF Historical Branch. The dollar initial investment required for Sabre was \$7.5 million.
- ²⁸ Report on the Australian Aircraft Industry, 31 August 1953, Item 12353, RAAF Historical Branch.
- ²⁹ In 1953 UK defence expenditure was 12.8% of GDP compared to 4.8% for Australia and 3.5% for New Zealand, New Zealand Treasury Memo, 30 April 1954, AAFD 811, 222/2/1, New Zealand Archives.
- ³⁰ For instance in 1951 Australia and New Zealand deferred orders for 500 Centurion tanks while Holland and Denmark wished their orders for 400 accelerated, Ministry of Defence Memo on Tanks, October 1951, DO 35/5460, PRO.
- ³¹ John English, *Failure in High Command* (Ottawa: Golden Dog, 1995), p. 300. By Contrast Australian complaints about Britain's reluctance to allow Australian commanders authority

- over British troops continued through the 1940s and into the 1950s, see text of interview with General Sydney Rowell, n.d., B1/15, Records of the Official Historian of Australia in the Korean War, AWM.
- ³² For instance Peter Hennessy, *Never Again* (London: Vintage, 1993), p. 97; Alex Danchev, *Oliver Franks Founding Father* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 61.
- ³³ Soward Manuscript, "Canadian External Policy 1946-52," Department of External Affairs Library (DEAL), Ottawa, Ch.2, p. 15.
- ³⁴ On the attempt by the British Chiefs of Staff see Canadian Chiefs of Staff Memo for the Prime Minister, "Defence Cooperation within the Commonwealth: Recent Developments," 1 October 1948, DHH 632C.003. On general Canadian satisfaction with Britain's attitudes and actions see Soward Manuscript, DEAL, Ch.2, p. 59.
- ³⁵ Cabinet Defence Committee Memo, "Exchange of Information between the US, UK and Foreign Powers," 3 May 1950, National Archives of Canada (NAC) RG24 21, 247 1601.1 VI.
- ³⁶ Soward Manuscript, DEAL, Ch. 3, p. 62.
- ³⁷ Bothwell, Drummond and English, *Canada Since 1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 37.
- ³⁸ Cabinet Conclusions, 27 July and 2, 3, 7 August 1950, NAC RG2 Vol. 2645 and 2646.
- ³⁹ Cabinet Conclusions, 11 April and 5 September 1951, NAC RG2 2646.
- ⁴⁰ In December 1949 the Cabinet Defence Committee had reported that "it did not appear practical to provide Canadian troops in Europe." Memo "North Atlantic Treaty: Mutual Aid," 3 December 1949, DHH, 73/1233/1324.
- ⁴¹ The Canadian Brigade within BAOR was often referred to as "The Light Division" reflecting its strength, relative to the five British Brigades with which it was combined. Sean Maloney, *War Without Battles Canada's NATO Brigade in Germany 1951-1993* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1997), p. 132.
- ⁴² Cabinet Conclusions, 9 December 1950, NAC RG 2, Vol. 2646; Canadian High Commissioner in London to Secretary of State for External affairs, 9 December 1950, NAC RG25, Vol. 4737 500069-A-40 Pt.13.
- ⁴³ Ambassador Wrong to Secretary of State for External Affairs, 9 December 1950, NAC, RG25 4758, 500069-C-40, Pt. 1.
- ⁴⁴ By 1953 Canadian defence expenditure was \$3.73 billion, 8.3% of GDP. DHH 79/137 p. 122. Canadian spending was nearly half that of Britain's and four times greater than that of Australia's.
- ⁴⁵ Cabinet Defence Committee Minutes, 15 January 1951, DHH 73/1223/1325 and Cabinet Conclusions, 13 February 1952, NAC RG2 Vol. 2649.
- ⁴⁶ J. English and N. Hillmer, eds., *Making A Difference? Canada's Foreign Policy in a Changing World Order* (Toronto: Lester Publishing, 1992), p. 105.
- ⁴⁷ Cabinet Defence Committee Memo, 22 October 1952, DHH 73/1223/1327.

THE LIMITS OF ALLIANCE: CANADA AND POLITICAL CONSULTATION IN NATO

Robin S. Gendron

The Canadian government had high hopes for the North Atlantic Alliance at and following its creation in 1949. It may have been considered a military necessity to protect the West from the Soviet Union but for the Canadians at least it was supposed to be more than just another military alliance. Throughout the 1950s, the Canadian government anticipated the unification of the Atlantic Community in a type of political confederation that spanned the Atlantic Ocean. Consultation among the allies within the North Atlantic Alliance on non-military subjects and the attempt thereby to encourage common policies towards non-military issues was part of a process expected to lead to the emergence of a supra-national institution uniting the allies militarily, economically, socially and politically. The North Atlantic Treaty, however, never did lead to such a supra-national political institution. This failure is commonly blamed on the reluctance of the alliance's Great Powers, the United States, Britain and France, to consult their allies on important foreign policy issues. Yet the Canadian government's own attitude towards political consultation in NATO in the 1950s reveals that even it placed clear limits on the degree to which it believed political integration could be and should be pursued in the alliance. In the end, the Canadian government's doubts about the desirability of political integration helped keep NATO what it had always been, a military alliance.

It was clear from the beginning that the Canadian government expected more from the Treaty than just a military alliance. Lester Pearson stated during the North Atlantic negotiations in 1948 that "the document should not be exclusively military in character and that there were economic and even spiritual defences that should not be overlooked."¹ Article 2 of the Treaty, included at Canada's insistence, was supposed to demonstrate the alliance's dedication to economic and social progress in addition to military security.² Individuals like Louis St. Laurent, Pearson and Escott Reid believed that Canada shared interests and values beyond military security alone with the community of nations on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. These men believed that binding this community in an ever-closer union with common liberal values and a commitment to political and social betterment would help protect the West from communist expansion.³

Pearson, for one, did not worry that a strong Atlantic community threatened Canada's own sovereignty. The upheavals of the 1930s and 1940s had convinced him that there was strength in unity.⁴ Throughout the 1950s he believed that political integration would follow the military and economic integration of the Atlantic Community. In this, Pearson was not alone. Endorsements of closer integration among the members of the North Atlantic Alliance remained a fixture in the public and private communications of the Canadian government throughout the Cold War years. As late as 1965, Canadian officials wrote, albeit wistfully, of their hopes that European integration

through the European Community would lead to wider Atlantic integration.⁵ Kim Nossal has demonstrated that the rhetorical appeal of the unity of the Atlantic Community persisted for successive Canadian governments even into the 1990s.⁶

The first attempts to integrate the members of the Atlantic Alliance focussed on economic co-operation but no one, including the Canadian government, could suggest concrete measures to implement Article 2.⁷ By the mid-1950s, the allies had turned to the political sphere. During Paul-Henri Spaak's visit to Canada in February 1955, the Belgian Foreign Minister and Lester Pearson observed that non-military co-operation had been subordinated to military preparedness in NATO. They believed, in particular, that the allies needed to enhance the discussion of non-NATO political subjects at the meetings of NATO's Ministerial Council.⁸ The allies had initiated a practice of sharing views regarding the intentions and capabilities of the Soviet Union in 1950, but political consultation within the alliance never progressed much beyond this admittedly vital subject in the first half of the 1950s.

It was easy for the allies to discuss the intentions of the Soviet Union – the alliance, after all, had been established to counter the Soviet threat – but discussions within NATO on non-NATO subjects were another matter. Issues such as the nationalist uprisings against France in North Africa or the tension between Greece and Britain over Cyprus, though not directly related to NATO's *raison d'être*, deeply affected the alliance yet it proved exceedingly difficult to raise them for discussion within NATO. The problem lay in balancing the interests of the alliance as a whole against the interests of its individual members in cases where the two did not coincide. A mechanism for political consultation within the alliance could have helped the allies reconcile their differences over such potentially divisive subjects. It would also have helped protect the smaller members of the alliance from the Great Power impulse to make unilateral decisions that affected all of their allies.

Many of the allied governments believed that political consultation within NATO needed enhancement in the mid-1950s. The German and Italian governments, in particular, insisted upon being consulted by Britain, France and the United States about such matters as disarmament and European security. The problem, according to the Italian Ambassador in Ottawa, was that if “the community of power which has been built up through NATO is to be used in the interests of all the members of the alliance, the Big Three, and especially the United States, will have to take its allies more into their confidence on important issues of foreign policy.”⁹ This growing restlessness with the tendency of Britain, France and the US to cloak decisions arrived at among themselves with the authority of the whole of NATO resulted in an urge to enhance political consultation within the alliance. Consequently, the allies devoted the Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in May of 1956 to discussing co-operation between the members of the alliance in non-military fields.¹⁰

To the surprise of many, John Foster Dulles stated during this meeting that this military side of NATO should be “supplemented by non-military activities with a view to bringing a new and enlarged political relationship between the members of the alliance.”¹¹ Dulles suggested that several NATO Foreign Ministers form a committee to examine political consultation within the alliance and “advise the Council on ways and means to improve and extend NATO co-operation in the non-military fields and to develop greater unity within the Atlantic Community.”¹² The establishment of the Committee of Three Wise Men, composed of Lester Pearson, Halvard Lange of Norway

and Gaetano Martino of Italy, was the most concrete result of the NATO Ministerial Meeting in May of 1956. Yet the Committee faced a daunting task from the beginning of its mandate. Throughout the summer of 1956 it became clear to Pearson that despite Dulles' statement during the meeting in May, the American government had not abandoned its scepticism regarding greater co-operation in NATO. In mid-June, Dulles informed Pearson that the United States would consult with its allies when possible, but that as a great power it reserved the right to act independently should the need arise. The British government similarly informed Pearson that summer that it planned to reduce its armed forces in Europe without consulting the North Atlantic Council.¹³ Revelations such as these did not bode well for the success of the Three Wise Men's mission. Nevertheless, Pearson, Lange and Martino continued to prepare their report throughout the summer and fall of 1956 in the hope that even modest reforms might be achieved.

The Suez Crisis in the fall of 1956, however, undermined the efforts to achieve closer political co-operation between the allies. The collusion between Britain and France, with Israel, to invade Egypt opened a rift within NATO and highlighted the tendency of some members to make unilateral decisions that affected the entire alliance. Yet the Suez Crisis also reinforced the perception that political consultation in NATO could help the allies avoid disastrous foreign policy divergences by forging common responses to such problems as the nationalisation of the Suez Canal by Egypt. Late in November of 1956, the German government told the Canadian Ambassador in Bonn that the Suez Crisis had "strengthened the German view that closer consultation in the North Atlantic Council was absolutely indispensable."¹⁴ Yet hardened feelings within the alliance as a result of the crisis, especially on the part of the French government which felt betrayed by its allies, reduced even further the already dim prospects for enhanced political consultation within NATO.

The Three Wise Men presented their report at the NATO Ministerial Meeting in December of 1956. The allies devoted a large part of this meeting to discussing political developments in non-NATO areas, a departure from earlier practices that the Canadian government took as evidence that NATO might be less reluctant thereafter to discuss non-NATO problems.¹⁵ Nevertheless, little progress was made in entrenching political discussions in NATO and the Committee of Three's report made only minimal suggestions for improvements in this area. The report recognised that only the willingness of the allies to commit themselves to consultation, rather than new organisational changes within NATO, would lead to the development of common policies that took into account the interests of all of the members of the alliance.¹⁶ The report did recommend, however, the establishment of a Political Advisers Committee to facilitate discussions on political subjects.

John Holmes has claimed that "looking in retrospect at the discussions that actually took place in the ministerial meetings of the NATO Council in the fifties, one might well conclude that there was about as much political consultation as could reasonably have been expected."¹⁷ The smaller members of the alliance, with some exceptions, generally advocated greater political consultation in NATO. The problem, according to the Canadian government, lay with the larger and more powerful members of the alliance and their reluctance to submit their foreign policies to the Council for consultation.¹⁸ The Suez Crisis had damaged relations between the most important of the NATO allies and in its aftermath the alliance focussed on healing this rift rather than on forming closer political ties between the members. The critical importance of consultation may have

been reinforced for the allies but the will to develop common policies towards non-NATO political subjects remained suspect.

The new Political Adviser's Committee, established in early 1957, did increase the opportunities for sharing political views and forging common policies in NATO and the Secretary General was given the authority to raise political issues for discussion. Nevertheless, the need to improve both the means and the substance of political consultation within NATO remained a principal concern in the years following the Suez Crisis. In 1957, for example, the German government suggested creating a Political Standing Group within NATO to promote the sharing of views on political issues among the biggest NATO powers. In 1958, Charles de Gaulle proposed that France sit with the United States and the United Kingdom on a Steering Committee to shape policy for all of NATO since these states were in the best position to respond to the global threat that communism then posed.¹⁹ The next year, NATO Secretary General Paul-Henri Spaak submitted his own ideas for reorganising the alliance. Among other reforms, Spaak envisaged a series of special committees within NATO devoted to problems in the Middle East, the Far East, Africa and South-east Asia, with membership in the committees restricted to those powers with interests in the area.²⁰

The response of the Canadian government to these proposals for 'improved' political consultation within NATO remained consistent throughout this period. Both the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker governments continued to express Canada's interest in "regular and effective consultations in NATO as a means to give substance to the concept of an Atlantic Community."²¹ Neither administration, however, would abandon the principle of consultations being conducted on a fifteen-nation basis. In the Canadian view, all of the above proposals would implicitly create a two-tiered system of membership in NATO between the biggest and smallest members.²² No Canadian government could have endorsed proposals that left NATO policies to be established without any Canadian input.

The Canadian government did not want NATO to rubber stamp policy decisions made by the largest members about issues that affected the entire alliance. According to John Holmes the North Atlantic Treaty "was never designed as an instrument for mustering collective support for the individual national policies of its senior members pursued outside the NATO area and only indirectly relevant to NATO's basic purpose."²³ The only form of political consultation acceptable to the Canadian government remained the free and frank exchange of views among all fifteen members of NATO as the only way to pave the way for the development of a true North Atlantic Community. In its absence, the Canadian government continued to blame the reluctance of the Big Powers to subordinate their own national interests to those of the alliance for blocking effective political consultation in NATO.²⁴

In reality, however, the Canadian government itself shares some of the responsibility for the failure of political consultation within NATO to fulfil its hopes and expectations. Despite their rhetoric in favour of closer consultation and co-operation among the allies on political issues Canadian officials set clear limits on the types of issues on which NATO could appropriately take action. There had always been, for example, one faction within the Canadian government that believed that NATO was only, and should remain, a military alliance.²⁵ Moreover, officials like Dana Wilgress knew that while some subjects were easy for the allies to discuss, other subjects had the potential to cause great disruptions within the alliance.²⁶ Exchanging views on expected trends in Soviet foreign

policy, for example, fell into the former category while the dispute between Greece and Britain over Cyprus clearly had the potential to undermine NATO unity. Thus, the Canadian government judged the advisability of discussing political subjects within NATO according to the degree to which such discussions would further the objectives and maintain the solidarity of the alliance. On the most potentially divisive of subjects the Canadian government preferred to maintain the appearance of NATO unity rather than initiate discussions that revealed the fragility of that unity.

In the mid-1950s, the government of Greece advanced its claim to British-ruled Cyprus, a question in which Turkey also took an interest. This dispute had the potential to impair relations between these allies and to introduce a serious weakness into the alliance. In early 1956, Lester Pearson asked his officials to consider the wisdom of initiating a discussion about Cyprus at the NATO Ministerial Meeting in May of 1956. Jules Léger, the Under-secretary of State for External Affairs, advised Pearson that “the importance, both political and strategic, of the Cyprus problem to NATO represents a powerful argument in favour of NATO discussion of the issue. Indeed, the lack of discussion could only be interpreted as a serious weakness in the body politic of NATO.”²⁷ Canada’s representative to NATO, in contrast, observed that a discussion of Cyprus would aggravate the dispute between Greece and Britain. After being told by British officials that the U.K. opposed intervention by NATO in its affairs Pearson decided not to raise Cyprus at the NATO meeting.²⁸ For Pearson, the risk of dividing the alliance and antagonising Canada’s allies outweighed the potential benefit of NATO’s involvement in the dispute over Cyprus.

The Canadian government displayed a similar reluctance to discuss colonial questions within NATO, in many respects because colonial issues were expected to divide the alliance between those members with colonial dependencies and those, like the United States and Canada, with anti-colonial leanings. France’s difficulties in its North African territories of Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria, for example, caused many problems for NATO throughout the 1950s. The French government claimed that NATO had no business intervening in French internal affairs, yet the removal of French troops from NATO duty in Europe to North Africa and the negative effect France’s colonial policies in North Africa had on NATO’s image made this an issue of overriding importance to the alliance in this period. In 1951 and 1952, several Arab and Asian states tried to have the United Nations discuss the French treatment of nationalists in Morocco and Tunisia. This development pitted France against important Third World states like India and Pakistan whose friendship was vital to the West during the Cold War.

Canadian official Charles Ritchie argued that the best way to resolve this difficult problem would be for Canada and the other allies to use the North Atlantic Council to “urge upon the French government policies which they believe are in the long run interests of the alliance as a whole.”²⁹ Ritchie, like many others, believed that the allies should try to persuade the French to accommodate nationalist demands in North Africa in order to preserve NATO’s relations with Third World states and to avoid embarrassing anti-France measures in the United Nations. The French government, however, did not look favourably upon interference in what it considered its domestic affairs.³⁰ Anxious not to antagonise its ally, the Canadian government decided that discussing Tunisia and Morocco in NATO would do more harm than good since Pearson had concluded that the French would greatly resent unsolicited advice from its allies about its policies in North Africa.³¹ The desire to maintain harmonious relations with France and to prevent a split

among the allies on a colonial issue thus convinced the Canadian government not to press for a political discussion of France's North African problems in NATO in the early 1950s.

France's difficulties with nationalism in North Africa increased exponentially after the nationalist uprising that took place in Algeria in November of 1954. Algeria was France's most important dependent territory, home to a large population of French *colons*, and the French government was determined to retain its position there at all costs.³² Yet as more and more French troops poured into Algeria criticism of France mounted both in the United Nations and, privately, among many of France's NATO allies. This criticism, however, only intensified the French government's opposition to attempts to undermine the French position in Algeria. Until Charles de Gaulle finally allowed for the possibility of independence for Algeria in 1959 the French government insisted it would never relinquish its hold upon its most important North African territory.

The Algerian issue remained one of the highest profile questions at the United Nations and bitterly divided France and many Third World states from 1955 through 1962. As the conflict deepened many Canadian officials, like Jules Léger for example, believed that Canada should use its ties to France through NATO to help France resolve its problems in Algeria.³³ They even considered the viability of a NATO economic aid programme for North Africa or junior partnership in NATO for Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco as measures to induce France to grant Algeria self-government. By early 1957, Jules Léger advised Pearson that the time had come to try to broker a solution to the Algerian problem in NATO, to put an end to the conflict and restore NATO's reputation with the Third World. Pearson, however, believed that Léger underestimated the strength of French feeling over Algeria and the growing bitterness towards NATO in France, particularly after the Suez Crisis.³⁴ The Canadian government did not raise this issue in NATO because Pearson was not willing to jeopardise France's willingness to contribute to NATO even further by an ill-considered attempt at peace brokering in Algeria.

The Canadian government thus subordinated its interest in frank and useful political discussions in NATO in these instances in order to maintain unity within the alliance. As Pearson himself observed about Cyprus and Algeria in 1956, "... there would be no point in discussing these problems in the Council if the end result were to widen the gap between the members most immediately concerned."³⁵ Political consultation within NATO was supposed to promote an increased sense of community among the allies and to encourage the adoption of common foreign policies. This goal was set aside on some of the most contentious issues that confronted the alliance, and thus on those issues that could arguably have benefited most from consultation among the allies, in the name of protecting NATO unity. It should be noted, however, that the Canadian government was not alone in its assessment of the potential dangers these types of subjects posed to the North Atlantic Alliance. The United States and the other allies felt similarly. Consequently, there were no substantive discussions or exchanges of views on the subjects of Cyprus, Tunisia, Morocco or Algeria within NATO during these years.

Concern for NATO unity alone, however, was not the only reason the Canadian government placed limits on what political issues it felt it was desirable to pursue within the context of NATO. Since the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was an alliance based on a strictly defined geographical area, for example, Canadian officials were leery of attempts to widen NATO's responsibilities to territories not already covered under Article 6 of the Treaty. In late 1957, for example, Jules Léger cautioned Sidney Smith,

the Secretary of State for External Affairs, that a Canadian initiative to discuss Cyprus in NATO could force Canada to accept Cyprus' inclusion in the alliance as proof of its eagerness to help resolve the problem.³⁶ Similarly, Canadian officials also rejected the idea of a NATO economic aid programme for North Africa because they doubted that the military alliance was the most appropriate channel for such aid.³⁷ According to Sidney Smith in late 1957, the Canadian government remained reluctant to expand NATO's responsibilities into the Middle East, the Near East or other regions beyond those defined by the North Atlantic Treaty.³⁸ The Canadian government thus perceived a danger that political consultations within NATO could lead the alliance to expand its responsibilities in the world beyond those outlined in the original Treaty.

The Canadian government perceived a similar danger that its own interests would suffer from being too closely linked to the policies of some of its allies. Canada desired close and friendly relations with the uncommitted countries of the Third World, yet the Canadian government feared that its association through NATO with the colonial policies of Britain and France, for example, would harm its relations with states such as India, Pakistan and Egypt. Escott Reid, a senior Canadian official deeply concerned about Canada's relations with India, knew that if the Third World states ever learned that the North Atlantic Council had discussed colonial issues, it would reinforce their belief that "NATO is a tight little club of white nations which disregards the aspirations of non-self-governing peoples."³⁹

By the early 1950s, many Third World states already suspected that the NATO members acted as a bloc to prevent anti-colonial measures in the United Nations from embarrassing the alliance's colonial powers. Canadian officials wanted to avoid any actions within NATO that reinforced this suspicion or gave credence to the belief that NATO supported the suppression of nationalism in its members' colonies.⁴⁰ The Canadian government retained a great deal of faith in the United Nations in the 1950s and did not want its ability to work with the Third World states in that organisation undermined by Canada's ties to unpopular colonial policies or by assumptions that Canadian policy had been pre-determined as a result of its membership in NATO.⁴¹

Concern for Canada's relations with Third World countries formed a significant backdrop to Canadian policy towards the nationalist difficulties in Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria throughout the 1950s. The importance of France to NATO ultimately compelled the Canadian government to support the efforts to combat nationalism in North Africa in this period, but the government greatly resented the effect such support had on Third World perceptions of both Canada and NATO.⁴² By 1956, for example, India and Egypt publicly accused NATO of giving France military support in its campaign against the nationalists in Algeria.⁴³ Avoiding a discussion on France's policies in North Africa within NATO was thus also an attempt to minimise Third World criticism of the alliance and an attempt to protect the image of Canada and NATO, as far as possible, by demonstrating that NATO was not actively involved in Algerian affairs. The Canadian government remained similarly leery about NATO shouldering responsibilities in the Middle East, Africa or Asia for fear of the effect this would have on opinion in Third World countries.⁴⁴ Clearly, the Canadian government was not prepared for NATO to become a vehicle for the exercise of global responsibilities in the 1950s.

The Canadian government reiterated its support for closer political consultation within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation throughout the 1950s. It also repeatedly expressed disappointment at the reluctance of the alliance's most powerful members to

consult their smaller allies on important political issues. There is a great deal of truth in Lester Pearson's observation that the "North Atlantic coalition could develop its non-military potential only as far as the United States, and to a lesser degree Britain and France, were prepared to go."⁴⁵ Yet it is clear from even a brief examination of the Canadian government's attitude towards political consultation on such subjects as the Anglo-Greek dispute over Cyprus and nationalism in Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria that the Canadian government itself placed limits on the degree to which it considered political consultation within NATO desirable and beneficial. Political consultation was avoided if the subject, like colonial issues, posed a threat to the alliance's unity. In such cases, the maintenance of the military relationship was considered more important than an attempt to forge common political policies. The Canadian government also opposed the extension of NATO's responsibilities beyond those outlined in the North Atlantic Treaty and remained, throughout the 1950s, very doubtful of the wisdom of NATO acting as a bloc in international affairs at the risk of its relations with Third World countries.

It is thus fair to say that the Canadian government itself was as reluctant to embrace political consultation in NATO on some issues, indeed upon some of the most important issues, as the United States, Britain or France. In the end, it was the European members of NATO that pursued the ideal of a closer political, economic and social community through the European Community. NATO remained strictly a military alliance, and Canada was left appealing, rhetorically, for the development of an Atlantic Community that Kim Richard Nossal has observed was more attractive in the abstract than in reality.⁴⁶

NOTES

- ¹ John English, *The Worldly Years* (Toronto: Vintage Books of Canada, 1992), 15.
- ² Article 2 states that: "The Parties will contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by promoting conditions of stability and well-being. They will seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them."
- ³ English, *The World Years*, 14-16.
- ⁴ *Ibid*, 14.
- ⁵ National Archives of Canada [NAC], Records of the Department of External Affairs [DEA], Vol. 10064, file 20-1-2-1 pt 1. Paper prepared by European Division, *A Policy-Planning Paper on Relations Between Canada and Europe*, 1 November 1965.
- ⁶ Kim Richard Nossal, "A European Nation?: The Life and Times of Atlanticism in Canada," in John English and Norman Hillmer eds., *Making a Difference?* (Toronto: Lester Publishing Ltd., 1992), 87-96.
- ⁷ John Holmes, *The Shaping of Peace*, Volume 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 222-3.
- ⁸ NAC, DEA, Vol. 3280, file 6831-40 pt 1. Memorandum [Memo], Secretary of State for External Affairs [SSEA] to Prime Minister, 25 February 1955.
- ⁹ NAC, DEA, Vol. 4796, file 50102-N-40 pt 1. Memo, Under-secretary of State for External Affairs [USSEA] to SSEA, *Next Ministerial Atlantic Council Meeting and Article 2*, 9 April 1956.

- ¹⁰ NAC, DEA, Vol. 4796, file 50102-N-40 pt 1. Telegram [Tel] 325, LD Wilgress (NATO Paris) to External, 7 March 1956.
- ¹¹ NAC, DEA, Vol. 4796, file 50102-N-40 pt 2. Tel 688, SSEA (at NATO Paris) to External, *NATO Council Meeting – Restricted Session May 5*, 6 May 1956.
- ¹² NAC, DEA, Vol. 4796, file 50102-N-40 pt 2. Note for Cabinet Documents, G. Ignatieff, 10 May 1956.
- ¹³ John A. Munro and Alex I. Inglis eds., *Mike: the memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson*, Vol. 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 93 and English, *The Worldly Years*, 117.
- ¹⁴ NAC, DEA, Vol. 4796, file 50102-P-40 pt 1. Tel 366, Ritchie (Bonn) to External, *German Policy at the Forthcoming North Atlantic Council Meeting*, 26 November 1956.
- ¹⁵ NAC, DEA, Vol. 4796, file 50102-P-40 pt 1. Note, AR Crepault, *NATO Ministerial meeting – Paris, December 1956*, 11 January 1957.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷ Holmes, *The Shaping of Peace*, Vol. 2, 245.
- ¹⁸ NAC, DEA, Vol. 4797, file 50102-S-40 pt 3. Briefing Note for NATO Ministerial Meeting, December 1957, *Political consultation in NATO*.
- ¹⁹ NAC, DEA, Vol. 4881, file 50115-1-40 pt 1. Memo. USSEA to SSEA, *General de Gaulle's Letter re NATO*, 16 October 1958.
- ²⁰ NAC, DEA, Vol. 4881, file 50115-1-40 pt 1. Memo. RP Cameron, *France and NATO – M. Spaak's aide memoire*, 10 September 1959.
- ²¹ *Op cit.* Briefing Note for NATO Ministerial Meeting December 1957, *Political Consultation in NATO*.
- ²² This view was expressed by Jules Léger in NAC, DEA, Vol. 4800, file 50102-X-40 pt 1. Tel 1941, Léger (NATO Paris) to External, *Political Consultation in and out of NATO*, 9 October 1959.
- ²³ NAC, DEA, Vol. 4797, 50102-S-40 pt 1. Memo, Holmes to SSEA, *NATO Heads of Government Meeting in December*, 22 November 1957.
- ²⁴ *Op. cit.*, Briefing Note for NATO Ministerial Meeting December 1957, *Political Consultation in NATO*.
- ²⁵ Hume Wrong argued this perspective most forcefully during the North Atlantic negotiations in 1948 and 1949. See Escott Reid, *A Time of Fear and Hope* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977).
- ²⁶ Prior to the Ministerial Meeting in May of 1956, Wilgress enumerated five categories of political topics upon which the usefulness of political consultation within NATO varied widely. The categories were: 1) political subjects with an accent on the exchange of information between NATO governments, largely of an academic nature; 2) political disputes between two or several NATO members; 3) internal political developments in one NATO member having direct bearing on the alliance as a whole; 4) world policies in which NATO members are asked to take part in the elaboration of Big Powers policies; 5) specific political problems discussed with a view to co-ordinating executive action (e.g. the treatment of Soviet bloc diplomats by NATO countries). NAC, DEA, Vol. 4887, file 50115-J-40 pt 8. Tel 645, Wilgress (NATO Paris) to External, *Political Consultation within NATO*, 26 April 1956.
- ²⁷ NAC, DEA, Vol. 4796, file 50102-N-40 pt 1. Memo, USSEA to SSEA, *Cyprus and NATO*, 24 April 1956.
- ²⁸ NAC, DEA, Vol. 4796, file 50102-N-40 pt 1. Mes 117, SSEA to Wilgress (NATO Paris), *Cyprus and NATO*, 24 April 1956.
- ²⁹ NAC, DEA, Vol. 8387, file 11033-40 pt 1.3. Memo, CSA Ritchie to Acting USSEA, *Tunisia and the United Nations*, 22 April 1952.
- ³⁰ René Pleven, the French Foreign Minister, told the Canadian Ambassador to France, for example, that Franco-American relations would suffer greatly if the United States continued to support the nationalist movements in Tunisia and Morocco. NAC, DEA, Vol. 8387, file 11033-40 pt 2.1. Mes 482, Ambassador Paris to SSEA, 22 May 1952.

- ³¹ NAC, DEA, Vol. 8388, file 11033-40 pt 4.1. Memo, LD Wilgress to SSEA, *Tunisia*, 26 August 1952.
- ³² For a description of French policy in Algeria see Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954-1962* (New York: Penguin, 1987).
- ³³ For a complete discussion of Canadian policy towards the Algerian War for Independence, see Robin S. Gendron, "Tempered Sympathy: Canada's Reaction to the Independence Movement in Algeria, 1954-1962" in *The Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 1998, Vol. 9, 225-241.
- ³⁴ NAC, DEA, Vol. 7722, file 12177-40 pt 4. Tel S48, USSEA to SSEA (in New York), 28 January 1957 and NAC, DEA, Vol. 7722, file 12177-40 pt 4. Tel 402, SSEA (in New York) to USSEA, 29 January 1957.
- ³⁵ NAC, DEA, Vol. 4796, file 50102-N-40 pt 1. Message [Mes] DL-229, SSEA to Wilgress (NATO Paris), 14 March 1956.
- ³⁶ NAC, DEA, Vol. 4797, file 50102-S-40 pt 2. Memo. USSEA to SSEA, *NATO and the Uncommitted Countries*, 4 December 1957.
- ³⁷ NAC, DEA, Vol. 4796, file 50102-N-40 pt 1. Draft Report, *NATO Ministerial Meeting [May 1956]*, Undated.
- ³⁸ Smith commented that he was "skittish" about NATO involvement in the Middle East in NAC, DEA, Vol. 4797, file 50102-S-40 pt 1. Memo, John Holmes to SSEA, 22 November 1957.
- ³⁹ *Op. cit.*, Memo, Acting USSEA to SSEA, 10 May 1952.
- ⁴⁰ This view was expressed, for example in NAC, DEA, Vol. 8387, file 11033-40 pt 1.2. Memo, S. Morley Scott to Acting USSEA, *Tunisia and the United Nations*, 21 April 1952.
- ⁴¹ Pearson had taken great care to assure the Australian government during the North Atlantic negotiations, for example, that there would not be a 'NATO bloc' in international affairs. Holmes, Volume 2, 227.
- ⁴² See Gendron, "Tempered Sympathy."
- ⁴³ NAC, DEA, Vol. 6846, file 3618-C-40 pt 2.1. Draft Paper, MA Macpherson, *North Africa*, 23 April 1956.
- ⁴⁴ In 1957, for example, John Holmes concluded that "NATO and the Middle East do not mix. Arab states would resent intrusion of NATO into their internal affairs and joint policy [for the alliance] would damn it in Arab eyes." *Op. cit.* Memo, John Holmes to SSEA, 22 November 1957.
- ⁴⁵ Munro and Inglis, 95.
- ⁴⁶ Nossal, 96.

COLONIAL CUBS TO YANKEE CONDOTTIERI: THE EVOLUTION OF CANADIAN MILITARY CULTURE

Roman Johann Jarymowycz

During the Great War, *Punch* published a spirited work by its famous editorial cartoonist, Bernard Partridge. It is a clever exhortation for imperial *chutzpa*: Great Britain is drawn as the defiant Lion, guarding the Crown against the menacing Kaiser, at its feet were the **colonial Cubs**: Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and, Canada. No one actually protested against that condescending interpretation of the Dominion. We fell easily into the roll of cuddly progeny of the Lion King much the same way as we did for the Crown of France.

Canada and its Armies have fought in colonial wars for centuries: from lively attacks on Washington (now politically incorrect and better relegated to 1,812 footnotes) to fervent defences of Pittsburgh (Fort Duquesne), Detroit (De Troit), Louisbourg and Ticonderoga (Fort Carillon). Later, our jingo enthusiasm for a British war in South Africa inaugurated that well known political division that follows us from war to war: whether we ought to volunteer to do distant empires' work? Of course it may be argued that our new empire is not that distant, it is based on economics and its recent enemies, the Serbs, like the Boer Afrikaners, were "really asking for it."

In the late Renaissance there emerged Condottieri – efficient mercenaries: groups of professional adventurers, all volunteers who, like the later *legion étranger*, went where they were required and did their Machiavellian Prince's bidding, generally with little interest or emotional involvement. We are presently in a new Cybernetic Renaissance, which directs us as the first did: to a Greco-Roman inspired worship of things natural, logical, scientific and technical (the first effort eventually ended in The Age of Reason and the Enlightenment) I hesitate to guess where this renaissance takes, from cloned sheep to cloned thought. Still, in the new Millennium and new renaissance we continue to form condottieri: in saucy blue baretts.

There have been decent results from much of this: freeing Europe from the Nazis was an honourable thing. Our excursion into Somalia, despite one unfortunate incident was a successful life saving venture and an efficient operation. Our recent efforts in Serbia appeared to have stood up for the underdog and Canadian troops are still there, careful to be model citizens of the global village - patient, sober, ethical ambassadors of the United Nations. Yet we are sometimes seen as an unhappy host.

These are uneasy days for the Canadian Army – it is assaulted fm without and within, its generals attacked for a bevy of alleged failings, its soldiers behavior scrutinized with a zeal that would have won approval from De Torquemada. There has been much discussion regarding spending, equipment. Tiresome debates regarding monies, spending. The philosophical direction of the Army is being challenged: some blame the generals, a logical choice because they are in charge of a totalitarian regime. Others blame the government for forcing the totalitarian regime to become liberal,

democratic and forgiving, a gentler, kinder army. The answer may not be diabolic direction it may simply be the natural evolution of society.

I suggest it is time to take stock and assess our future. I don't mean to search for a technical solution – a *deus ex machina*. My question is simple and traditional and Canadian: are we doomed to be the constant colonial outpost? Will our military history feature continued sycophantic adulation of foreign empires? The answer appears to be *Yes!* – indeed we have taken measured steps to assure our military future and with a phalanx of Doctrinal precursors have prepared the path for easy transition. The coming of the saving dogma, the creation of a Western Military Catholicity.

The unimaginative, the nostalgic, will lament that after a brief golden age encompassing the two World Wars we are to be again acolytes to foreign doctrine. Remember that by doctrine I mean nothing more sophisticated than *How we do things* – they way *we* (and that I think is the vital word) *the way WE think and are likely to act in war*.

Academically our Army is admired, certainly noted, often cursed for a mountain of well written bilingual pamphlets containing what has been dubbed as “your incomprehensible system of official abbreviations.” Our peculiar methods and traditions have challenged and befuddled most visitors. I can recall a delighted US Army officer creating a personalized way of referring to our translation of Forward Edge of the Battle Area (LAZB: *la linge avancee de la zone de bataille*) as “th’ Lazy B;” One Marine major began a memorable Orders Group as acting Commander of Le Regt de la Chaudière with the words: “*Gentlemen, I am the C.O. of the Rawd de Chawd.*”

Still despite minor assaults on grammar, we have managed to keep an army that is both admired and universally welcomed anywhere in the world – as the new Jesuits bent on universal peace and conversion. Canadians are regarded as a remarkable symbiotic blend of ethnicity and doctrines and coveted additions to any staff: versed in at least two languages, at home in British, French or American cultures, well spoken, adroit in the *Power Point* presentation and, after a bevy of UN and NATO tours quite capable of resolving the ugliest of conflicts

The issue is language – a delicate subject in Canada and held in great value – what wonder therefore at the enthusiasm of the Military to abandon both doctrine and lexicon and adopt the manner and style of our American neighbours. Perhaps this is simply Classical history – American being the *lingua romana* of the new global empire, Carlisle and Leavenworth the new doctrinal Rome. We have become of no less import than slingers from the Billeric isles, pelltasts, Gallic horse or Spanish skirmishers were to the Marian Legion.

Perhaps we are to become that spunky group of cavalry that *Maximus Narcissus Meridas* (future *Gladiator* unto Caesar and Ridley Scott) led against rowdy Germanic locals in the *Schwartzwald* – who, not members of the Mediterranean G7, defied a Roman NATO. In the film, as the Legion got on with the business of *Attrition Warfare* with the pilum, onager, ballista and the gladius, Maximus took the regiment of *light horse* (no stirrups in those days: technological research delayed by Imperial budget cuts) and *Maneuvered* to win the battle “*Say*” gasped a cohort of desk bound DND military philosophers: “*now that’s real peace keeping.*”

My complaint may be best filed under “Lament” – which you will argue has already been made elsewhere by one of our foremost military historians, living currently in exile.

I am not making a case for numbers and equipment – these arguments have also been made elsewhere – I note the status quo *en passant* and bring it to your attention as my interpretation of our quickening evolution. The recent southern inspired debate between *attrition* and *maneuver* has tainted free thinking in our army although in fairness, it has even corrupted the English. I knew it was *all over* as I watched a British Admiral - **the** Royal Navy, the *senior service* – holding a press *Omeramagau* during the Serbian War and actually using words like *attritted*, *degraded*, *collateral damage* and *warfighting*.

The Key to all of this is understanding the American Army – a force that has embraced cyber technology and added it to its already excessive penchant for slick acronyms and weakness for over structured, over formularized solutions. Our communal difficulties (and I include NATO here) began with the American love-hate relationship of the German army resulting mysteriously in an almost sycophantic adulation of Germanic terms and manner. As I write American and now Canadian Staff Colleges student officers are striving to master terms such as *auftragstaktik*, *Befehlstaktik*, and that recent favourite, *fingerspitzengefuehl*. There is an *imprimatur* for any lecture that begins by quoting Clausewitz or Manstein or Manteuffel. This is particularly curious because the American Army has a rich and varied doctrinal history that should accommodate most neo classical theorists.

In the nineteen seventies, after the Pentagon funded Harvard translations of Soviet operational histories, our southern neighbours *discovered* the Russians and the *Operational Art* as defined by Triandilov and Tukhachevskii and practiced by the *Stavka* with devastating success against the Wehrmacht in 1944 and 45. Yet *Glubokii Boi* and *operational maneuver* have not reached the vogue status of Germanic terms. Instead, Slavic doctrine reappears carefully disguised as *AirLand Battle 2000*. Operational maneuver is *Maneuver Warfare* and has now actually reached (some would claim) philosophic status.

The exhalted status of American doctrine in the Canadian Army is confusing for it is not based on apparent success. Despite some tactical and operational coups in Grenada, Panama, Iraq and Serbia, a sober analysis will find those same campaigns produced incomplete and disappointing results. The vaunted *technical edge* increasingly diminishes as air strike results are validated under close scrutiny. As for *Maneuver warfare the doctrine* it is more interesting in the way it was **not** practiced in both wars. Still, too many of our captains and colonels have become dazzled converts and worse, missionaries, of a suspect dogma that, like a computer virus, eats away at our tribal soul.

I agree much of this is our own fault. The initial wave began in the late sixties when our army, in starry eyed admiration, began to emulate American light infantry and airmobile tactics. As Vietnam continued, American dress, style, slang began to appear. Of course we had Highland and Rifle Regiments in those days and a cultural line of defence based on hard won tradition and proven operational results. Later, as President Regan took on **The Threat** with a vigorous, splendidly equipped *new model army* we again began to fantasize about our southern neighbours – but this time the infection was both technical and cultural. It was not unusual for Canadian Directing Staff, armed with kudos as *Honour Graduates* from US War Colleges or upon completion of postings from the Fort Knox, Brag, Leavenworth or Carlisle, to breathlessly hastened to introduce and then ensure they completed a dogmatic conversion from **within**. Often well *before* our own Doctrine and Tactics soviet had agreed to consider it.

This can be seen as incredibly enlightened and far sighted or a impetuous, perhaps dangerous stampede to comply to American dogma at the expense of our own doctrine. Terms and procedural concepts such as *OPP* (Operational Planning Procedure), *ICAC*, *OPP*, *ISTAR* and the exotic *IPB* (Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield) – all part of our rush to be *au courant* in our doctrinal portfolios (alas, our officers don't only *adopt* the terms but actually effect the **style of speech**: striving to say “*Doctrynal*” – although they don't relieve themselves in the *Urynal*). I think this serious enough to propose a **Doctrinal Moratorium** until we define who we are.

This clearly begs the next obvious question: *what is Canadian doctrine?* And by that I mean *what is Canadian military culture?* – *is there a distinct way WE do things?* It has been argued we have a chameleon like identity that is multifaceted (some would say psychotic). I reject the implied suspicion that we have no actual autonomous doctrine and must feed off (in turn) the writings and dictums of British and neoGerman-Americans military thinkers in order to survive in the modern military world - what ever that means.

I recently wrote an article in the *Army Doctrine and Training Bulletin* drawing attention to this assault or better, the garroting of the Canadian Military Culture and an over eager adoption of other nations doctrine. In a published rebuttal, the former Chief of Staff of the CLFCSC took issue with my critique of one of our latest *plat du jour* Maneuver Warfare doctrine. This cavalry officer, wrote something that was bound to happen sooner or later in an era where Directors of Armour tell our regiments that “The armoured Corps has nothing to do with Tanks.” He wrote: “Maneuver Warfare has nothing to do with maneuver.” I thought: the conquest of the Cdn Military Intelligentsia (if it still exists) is now complete.

Is Doctrine Cultural?

The Militia Staff College at FF conducts a very international term every summer: hosting officer candidates, generally majors, most professionals, from Britain, Belize, Bermuda, France, Holland, New Zealand, South Africa, the US Marine Reserves, US National Guard, US Army Reserve and soon, from former Warsaw Pact countries. We attempt an eclectic curriculum but it is, nonetheless anchored in American doctrine.

In the midst of the 1997 tutorial, our top student, a major from the New Zealand Army, a PhD in business administration and president of his own company, posed the question: “*To what extent is doctrine a reflection of a national culture?*” I considered this and agreed *of course*, any doctrine – if it is to reflect the way *WE* do things, must reflect a national culture – the way we talk, think, interact and are likely to react. Well, said my wise student, if that is true, “*To what extent can **any** army adopt **another** army's doctrine?*”

I realized he was right. We don't understand the Germans and certainly not the Russians. Our chances of actually emulating *Auftragstaktik* is about as good as the Germans raising highland regiments, enjoying the Grey Cup or drinking *Molson's*. Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, attempting to explain *Auftragstaktik* wrote:

It has always been the particular forte of German leadership to grant wide scope to the self-dependence of subordinate commanders – to allot them tasks which leave execution to the discretion of the individual ... The German method is really rooted in the German character ... [which] finds a certain pleasure in taking risks.¹

Taking *Independent Risks* is the **last** thing our generals wants to see from his subordinates.

The American inability to apply *maneuver warfare* or *auftragstaktik* in Iraq is founded in their own military history and culture. US officers read Fuller and Liddel Hart well before the Second World War and were well aware of the “indirect approach” but simply declined to embrace it in Toto. John Wood, one of the finest divisional commanders in the war and certainly the American’s best tank general wrote: “*Fuller and Hart are contrary to the US Army tradition set by Grant: attrition – wear the enemy down.*”

The bad press attrition has been getting from American is unfortunate. There exists a clear doctrinal heresy that affects both armies. I believe the fixation with *maneuver* is in fact a rejection of the American and British way of war. The options are not just Maneuver or Attrition, but a military lifestyle. In the interests of NATO standardization we appear to have gone beyond the required minimum. While I understand the technical realities of an air force squadron’s quickly adopting technical standards – I suspect it is not required as much in an army – certainly not at the expense of something more valued.

We persist in adopting terms and organizations we have never seen and whose sizes we cannot match nor afford to match. And therefore have experienced difficulty duplicating within our rather small and dispersed army. Remember this is more Plato’s Cave – we are attempting to duplicate doctrine based on blurry cyber images from without.

Consider that *attrition warfare* is as American as cherry pie and, despite Vietnam (which did incorporate a heliborne renaissance of maneuver) is key to understanding how Americans fight. Of course it could be argued that the Yanks can do *both* because of pedigree – their army was bred on far ranging operations. Sherman’s march to the sea, or Lee’s attack into Pennsylvania were classic examples of operational maneuver and the “*Glubokii Boi.*” With traditions like that in their saddlebags, American generals (we now like to say “Warfighters”) should not require a Germanic imprimatur.

Nevertheless, it is *attrition* that best reflects American military culture. Americans may profess conversion to *auftragstaktik* however, examine the acme of American blood sports: the *Super Bowl* – a business enterprise, corporate group cohesion behind a recognizable authority figures – the coach and his staff. American football is *Befhelstaktik* – the plays are sent in from the bench headquarters on every *down*. There is no *Auftragstaktik*.

Baseball may be the romantic essence of American competition but football is their doctrinal heart. Canadians with a theoretically hockey nurtured pulse may argue they have a better chance. However, in modern war, as in the NFL and NHL, there are increasingly too many whistles and too many commercial breaks.

Those who spout MW Thinking as a Philosophy – must come to realize it is an incomplete discipline that ignores the *cornerstone* of British, American and Canadian military culture: the *leadership principle* and *attrition warfare* directed at the most decisive point. A serious study of the operational art will show **Attrition precedes Maneuver**. Maneuver, while applauded by the officer proletariat will always be terminated by the attritionist old guard – tactical Trotskyites are invariably cast out as revisionists by attritionist Stalinists. Maneuver may be the *vox populi* of staff college cadres but it unnerves their bosses.

We must appreciate that modern communications – the ability of political leaders and their war councils to examine screens fed by J Stars and satellites and watch in *real time* the movements of single tank or a division make *auftragstaktik* a practical impossibility in the 21st century. And, unless we are prepared for a complete intellectual purge and cleansing of our military culture (note I do not argue this may not be the solution) – it is time our futurists realized this.

Striking a Blow for Canadian Doctrine

Our Military Tradition is not founded on the business corporation and the OPP approach it was founded on Currey and Simonds sitting in their caravans by lamplight writing out the Appreciation for Vimy Ridge or *Totalize*. It is, as Keegan calls, the *Big Man principal* – the leader who takes charge and inspires the troop, squadron, regiment, division or corps or army. The Americans are practical and utilitarian – they also learn from the past. Exhausted, larger than life heroes have caused their government extensive embarrassment in recent times – I am thinking of Patton and MacArthur, both of whom were relieved by their presidents.

The OPP *committee solution* may be easier on the politicians but as Vietnam, *Desert Storm* and most recently, Serbia proved, it does **not** win wars. Preaching *Maneuver* but failing to practice it is not good enough. I know there are perfectly good reasons why Gen Franks heavy Corps did not maneuver and refused to fight at night. This caused an irreparable break with the commander, Gen Schwartzkopf. Trying to save a sinking ship by suggesting MW is really a philosophy and “has nothing to do with Maneuver” is a desperate attempt at obfuscation and only further confuses the Cdn military culture.

We must remember that despite some initial failure General Guy Simonds’s IInd Cdn Corps **did** acquire and direct *operational maneuver* after Falaise, conducted an *operational pursuit* from the *suisse normandie*, across the Seine and into Belgium – this was followed by some continued bold examples of amphibious maneuver towards the end of the Scheldt campaign.

There has been a call from Toronto’s eminent staff college for “*a holistic approach to our doctrinal problems*” – but I put it to you **that** is our modern problem. We are currently the victims of accepting the *totus porcus* of American dogma without pausing to reflect on the damage to our military culture. Pasting new lexicons over old methodology does not elevate it to a “philosophy.”

Will military history define Kosovo by suggesting that NATO *thought maneuver* and it came out: *air strikes and cruise missiles*? The net result of *maneuver warfare thinking* was the decision **not** to attack into Kosovo. If maneuver is only a *state of mind* then Tukhachevsky’s modern descendants practiced it on the intellectual **and** practical level as a BTR column suddenly appeared in Slatina Airport near Prestina and Moscow ending up with a better political deal – thereby allowing the Russians, not NATO to win the Clausewitz prize for War really being an *Instrument of Policy*.

Of course, I am only speaking of the **Army**. The real winners of the Serbian enterprise were sentient robots, computers and the Air Force. Any identified embarrassments were curtly dumped on human error while NATO maneuvered past ack-ack and battered the politicians into acquiescence – proving, at last, that Douhet, Harris and LeMay were right. The way to win wars is to assault the civilian populations until their terror and frustration forces a political capitulation to the attacker.

I suspect part of our problem is that our army has only **begun** to seriously examine Military History. We shut down our National Defence College – an institution that looked toward the **future** and replaced it with the *Lessons Learned Center*, a collection of self trained historians and artifact collectors obsessed with the **past**. Our academic disarray was well illustrated when both the now defunct Canadian Forces Defence College and RMC cast out our only *international* military historian, Lieutenant Colonel Doctor John English – only to have him eagerly and gratefully swept up by that *Oxford-on-the-Atlantic*, the US Naval War College. In an attempt to make up for lost ground the Army, via RMC’s War Studies Programme and Ottawa University has begun a desperate and questionable scheme to mass produce scholars in an attempt to create, if not *military philosophes*, then at least uniformed *literati*. Whether this will have positive affects remains to be seen - the question does arise whether we ought to first confirm what it is that stands as **the** Canadian Officer role model then recruit and educate toward that **initially**. We could always reconsider Professor Desmond Morton’s proposal to close RMC (“a pleasant community college on the banks of the Cataraqi”) and send our future military leaders to a proper university. RMC could be an excellent graduate school. After all, if one year at Mons or Sandhurst can produce generals and kings then a year at some sort of academic CTC would probably create the same type of polished, gentleman officer.

Of course what our own new model army requires, if it is to fulfill the demands of its politicians and generals, are some sort of Templar Knights – a military priest hood. The reintroduction of Black Robes will cleanse the Cdn Military at the spiritual and doctrinal level. The Jesuits, it may be argued, established Peace Making with militaristic fervor and zealous conviction. Their bravery, sense of adventure, and daring was matched by their devotion to duty and unwavering obedience to GHQ Vatican. Celibate, religious, sober and doctrinally perfect, they constituted the ideal role model for today’s Canadian Officer class, new Jedi Jesuits ready for the cyber future. The lives of Jogues, Lalment and Brebeuf will not only provide proper role models for military youth – their readiness to accept martyrdom for doctrinal purity will instantly appeal to our senior commanders.

Conclusion

The issue is complex in that there are several clearly recognizable *endstates* (another recently imposed American term): the first is the clear goal for what is dubbed “*interoperability*” with a NATO/UN led force which we now define, I think realistically, as American. Secondly, the need to protect our fading military culture. There must be a clear distinct between operational and tactical interoperability. It is unlikely Canada will field a full brigade let alone a corps for foreign service. Therefore this doctrinal conversion need not extend to the battalion or really brigade level where it corrupts most. I doubt whether a Marine MEF or US Army Corps would refuse a Ghurka, *Legion Étranger* or Australian battlegroup just because they are *different*. The question at the sharp end is always *Can they fight?* If we need to work with the NATO then we can continue to do what we have done before, train liaison officers and continue to partake of those growing career opportunities in the south. Today our condottieri teach, train and even Deputy Command in American field units, schools and colleges. A fitting alternative to DND imprisoned officers who cannot find a regular or (recently très fashionable) a Militia unit to command (and acquire promotion). The two solitudes of Regular and Reserve continue unabated save for the moment when careers may profit.

The global village is a stuff of Esperanto. As long as Americans accommodate a *Banana Republic* in Miami, a Mexican *barrio* in southern California and we recognize *First Immigrants* enclaves within Canadian territory, there is reason we to believe we have a good century of cultural diversity and individuality left to us before we become the *starship earth*. The rush toward interoperability is simply another *plat de jour*. Let us look after ourselves first for what we do not defend we do not own.

We are left with first principles: what is *Canadian military culture*? – is there a *distinct way WE do things*? I think there is – it is at once recognized whenever and wherever Canadian soldiers work together because of a shared understanding of tradition, the regimental system, military history, and **language**. That political football is one of the few things that does not cause confusion and suspicion for the army is one of few areas where bilingualism works, whether as the language of Moliere or Shakespeare, or battered *franglais* between two officers who instinctively, intuitively understand each other, can predict what the other will do, how he will act. For **that** is the essence of both *auftragstaktik* and *fingerspitzengefuehl* and it is not found in the reading lists, lexicons or procedures of Leavenworth or Monroe or Carlisle. It was earned in blood across thousands of miles by Canadians in the forests of the Adirondacks, the western plains, south Africa, the mud of Flanders, the rocks of the Apennines and the apple orchards of Normandy and you are quite mad if you really think this can be replaced by procedural interoperability or *business plans*.

Of all the maxims one can introduce here, from du Picq to Napoleon, I suspect we are safer with Polonius: “*To thy own self be true.*” I suggest we strive to correctly understand the *origins* of doctrinal terms in the context of past **and** recent international military history. I also suggest we strive with greater diligence, to understand **ourselves**. A comfortable familiarity with our cultural origins, the effect of British, American, German and Russian dogmas on our military culture and ethos will better predispose us to both educate our officer class as well as to better define our future needs. The regard given to Tukhachevskii, Manstein or Grant can easily oblige a thorough grounding in Dennison, Currey, Burns and Simonds. I recommend an awareness of who we were, warts and all.

Consider that the methods developed in 1st or 2nd Canadian Corps through both wars formed the basis, the doctrinal *first principles* of what we are today. There is nothing wrong with **us** – other that we are not **being us**. Our confidence and culture eroded by a misinterpretation of foreign doctrines and a naïve *readiness* to accept that others may be more professional than ourselves. This is not *completely* true now but soon may be. Caveat Emptor.

NOTE

¹ Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, *Verlorene Siege*, (Bonn: Athenaum-Verlag, 1955), 383.

CANADA AND THE POST-WAR REPARATIONS PROGRAMME¹

Steve Koerner

On the 15th of December 1945 a press conference sponsored by the Department of Reconstruction was held at the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa. Its purpose was to publicize the activities of the forty-five investigators, who had been sent over to Germany earlier that summer in order to examine science and technology which might come available to Canada through the reparations programme.

The investigators represented a variety of industries and government agencies and expressed great enthusiasm about what they had seen in Germany. It appeared that Canada was on the verge of acquiring a wide range of advanced technology covering everything from jet aircraft engines, textile machinery, chemical processes to a revolutionary butter-making machine. Importation of this equipment, the one hundred assembled press representatives were told, would not only help pay for the costs of the war but also strengthen Canadian industry as it made the transition from war to peace time production.

Yet, only a few weeks after this ebullient press conference, C.J. Mackenzie, President of the National Research Council and a key figure in the programme, confided in his diary that the whole question of reparations from Germany “has been very badly handled and we all have been negligent.” Indeed, the subsequent public record would seem to bear out Mackenzie’s pessimistic assessment. In a series of answers to questions put to Ministers C.D. Howe, Louis St. Laurent and Prime Minister Mackenzie-King in Parliament between 1945 and 1947 all three of them conceded that Canada had not gained much in the way of reparations from Germany.²

Indeed, their replies indicated that Canada had only received three German freighters that were later sold off for approximately \$1.5 million along with another \$11 million (German only) in seized external assets. Ottawa could have received greater reparations entitlements but had voluntarily agreed to reduce its rights at the 1945 Paris Peace Conference.

One should not be surprised, therefore, to discover that there is virtually no mention about Canada’s involvement in the post-war reparations programme in the relevant literature, reinforcing the view that it was essentially a disappointment.³

This contrasts with the literature covering the British and American involvement in the reparations programme. A growing body of work has examined the investigation and subsequent transfer from Germany of scientific, technological and industrial assets and emphasizes the spectacular gains made, especially for the USA in the case of German aviation and rocket technology. Because of restrictions imposed on researchers by the former Soviet Union, no contribution from Russia has yet appeared, at least in English translation.⁴

This paper will seek to explain why the early hopes for Canada and the reparations programme fell so short of expectations. It will also explain whether or not the public record tells the whole story about what happened. Was the benefit for Canada as minimal as the existing evidence suggests?

The Reparations Programme 1944 to 1950

Starting in the spring of 1944, a number of Canadians had been seconded to a joint Anglo-American agency, the Combined Intelligence Objectives Sub-Committee (CIOS), which had been created by Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) in order to ferret out German industrial plant and research establishments in the wake of advancing Allied armies after the D-Day landings. As the Allied armies closed in on Germany during early 1945, the pace picked up on the search for enemy science and technology.

In order to support the work of CIOS investigations so-called Consolidated Advance Field Teams (CAFT) and 'T' (Target) Forces, specialized British and American units, followed up immediately behind front line combat troops and located German industrial targets, securing them for later inspection. After V-E Day, the exploitation intensified, especially on the part of the Americans who had temporarily occupied key industrial areas in the eastern parts of Germany which were slated to become part of the Soviet Zone.

Amid all this frantic activity, reports arrived in Ottawa warning that, in the absence of any firm policy, Canada was going to lose out on the acquisition of potentially valuable German scientific and industrial assets. As High Commissioner Vincent Massey expressed it in a memo to the Secretary of State for External Affairs: "Whether we like it or not, a free-for-all is going on; and we must frankly face the alternatives either of joining in the scramble or of being left empty-handed." Some sort of action was essential.

In response to such pressure, the Inter-Departmental Committee on Reparations was created, chaired by Norman Robertson and including members such as J.E. Coyne (Bank of Canada) and George Ignatieff (External Affairs), to provide overall direction as well as to maintain liaison with Canadian industry.

By June 1945 two additional agencies were functioning; one, the Joint Committee on Enemy Science and Technology (JCEST), was based in Ottawa and the other, the Canadian Advisory Targets Committee (CATC), in London. They coordinated Canadian activities with CIOS and other related allied organizations and oversaw the teams of scientific and industrial investigators which were sent over to Germany.

These investigators were drawn from various government departments including the National Research Council (NRC) as well as from several universities. Specialists were also sent over by companies such as the Anglo-Canadian Pulp and Paper Company, Dominion Textiles and the Aluminium Company of Canada. Not everyone, however, was investigating 'hard' technological targets. Percival Price, for example, a professor of music, was sent over on a rather whimsical mission "to investigate the range and tonal qualities of carillon bells."

That summer a number of Canadians were seconded to the British Intelligence Objective Sub-Committee (BIOS), which had been set up in order to replace CIOS when it was disbanded. Indeed, several of the BIOS teams that visited the elite Herman Goering

aeronautical research institute at Volkenrode, arguably the finest in the world at that time, were made up of mostly Canadian personnel.

Canadian investigators soon ran up against a variety of problems. They discovered that their former war-time allies were sometimes reluctant to share their discoveries of advanced German science and technology. For example, when a Canadian team traveled down to Bavaria and located several boxcars full of V-2 rocket guidance equipment, the American guards present said that their SHAEF authorization passes were irrelevant and refused them access. Nor were the British always cooperative. In July 1946 High Commissioner Frederic Hudd lodged an official letter of protest with the Attlee government, alleging that Canada had not received its fair share of German reparations under British jurisdiction.

Another major problem turned on the definition between 'booty' and 'reparations', a distinction that had significant implications and which became a focus of negotiation at the Paris Peace Conference during December 1945. The conference also created the Inter-Allied Reparations Agency (IARA), a body which soon became a forum for acrimonious political wrangling and whose work only concluded in 1960.

The creation of the IARA complicated the task of acquiring German reparations. It created a convoluted process of bidding and allocations of industrial plant and equipment. The entire procedure was fraught with international rivalry as well as deep resentments on the part of smaller nations against the USA and Great Britain. This infighting frequently slowed the work of the IARA to a near standstill.

However, even this did not dampen the interest of some Canadians for obtaining German reparations. Minister of Reconstruction and Supply C.D. Howe, for example, was especially keen for Canada to acquire an aluminium rolling mill that he believed would aid production of much needed material for the post-war housing programme. Yet, what he thought would be a straight-forward acquisition soon became tangled up in IARA procedures.

In an effort to overcome such obstacles, Howe initiated the appointment of a special economic advisor, Roy Geddes, to the newly opened Canadian Military Mission to Berlin. Geddes arrived in Germany during early 1946 with a brief to assist Canadian firms locate and acquire desirable industrial plant and equipment.

Geddes soon identified a number of 'situations' which he believed could be of benefit to Canadian industry. However, his energetic activities antagonized the Head of the Mission, General Pope, who viewed him as acting as little more than a tout for private business, a role he thought was inconsistent with the duties of a public servant. Friction between the two soon became so intense that Geddes resigned his post after only several months on the job. He was never replaced.

Despite this setback, investigators continued to arrive in Germany to hunt down other industrial prospects that promised to assist Canadian firms create new industries or improve existing ones. Among others, investigators examined dental burr and toy manufacturing enterprises as well as a food processing factory. A representative from the Canadian Car and Foundry Company visited BMW to see whether or not its factory equipment could be used to found a Canadian motor cycle industry. In other instances, an investigator examined the German deep-sea fishery, and in light of an infestation of spruce bugs back in Canada, another two sought to discover more about German measures to deal with forest insects.

Along with assignments at the BIOS, a number of Canadians were also seconded to work with the British Element of the Field Intelligence Agency, Technical (FIAT), an Anglo-American organization based near Frankfurt. One of the FIAT investigations revealed a ghoulish side to the reparations programme. A Canadian army pathologist and a RCAF officer were asked to prepare a comprehensive report on German wartime medical science with particular reference to experiments on human beings in concentration camps. No account of their investigations is presently available.

Indeed, it is unclear from the surviving records just how successful many of the various investigators were and whether or not their reports were ever followed up. This situation is also complicated by the fact that a number of the reports are not easy to locate or are still classified.

What is clear, however, is that the progress of the reparations programme was stymied by a variety of factors. Not the least was the constant struggle between the big powers as to the future of Germany. For their part, the USA and Britain came to believe that the goals of the programme ran counter to their plans for German economic and political reconstruction. This resulted in a considerable slow-down of the programme of factory dismantling as fewer plants became available to the IARA. Factories that investigators wanted allocated to Canada increasingly became unavailable to anyone.

In some cases Canadian firms that were initially interested in certain German plant and equipment soon lost their enthusiasm when they discovered they would have to pay for them and also absorb the costs of shipping. Much German equipment was simply unsuitable for Canadian use because of differing gauges and the availability of spare parts as well as the lack of skilled labour to operate them. Furthermore, unlike the British and Americans, the Canadian government was reluctant to widely publicize the opportunities presented by the reparations programme to either Canadian industry or the public at large.

The investigators also found it more and more difficult to work in Germany during 1946 as the Canadian military began to repatriate its personnel. This often removed the logistical support which the three services provided and forced investigators to become dependent on the sometimes unreliable generosity of their allies for essentials such as transportation and accommodation.

A further complication was the policy flip-flop over the question of following the example of the Americans and British and importing German scientists and technicians to work in Canada. This was a matter of some dispute amongst policy makers so that the issue was not settled until later in 1946. Nonetheless, there are indications that a small number of German scientists and technicians subsequently entered the country in a scaled down Canadian version of the USA's 'Operation Paperclip'.

There was one notable success by Canadian industry acquiring German technology. During 1945 a team from Polymer, the Crown Corporation which ran a highly successful synthetic rubber plant in Sarnia Ontario, identified laboratory equipment at I.G. Farben's synthetic rubber factory at Leverkusen which they believed would be vitally important for their operations. After lengthy negotiations by Canadian delegates at the IARA, this equipment was finally released to Polymer and arrived at the Sarnia facility in 1950.

Conclusions

So what went wrong in terms of Canada's involvement with the reparations programme and why could not the early high expectations be realized?

This paper has highlighted a number of constraints placed on the programme administrators as well as the scientific and industrial investigators. Some of these constraints were self-imposed. Canadian efforts to secure reparations from Germany were thwarted by ambiguities amongst policy makers and administrators. As the friction between General Pope and economic advisor Roy Geddes at the Canadian Military Mission illustrates, there were wide differences of opinion about whether or not and to what extent the government should actively assist Canadian businesses locate and acquire German industrial plant and technology.

Furthermore, much of Canadian industry simply did not have the resources, either capital or technical expertise, to properly exploit the opportunities presented by the reparations programme. In part, this was a reflection on the branch plant nature of large sections of the Canadian economy, where decisions respecting investment and research and development were often made outside the country.

Was Canada's involvement in this programme, therefore, a failure or were the expectations for its success simply unrealistic under the circumstances?

Seen strictly from the perspective of material and personnel acquisitions, probably. Three merchant steamers, quantities of sundry military and scientific equipment along with bits and pieces of industrial factory and plant and possibly a dozen or so German scientists and technicians does seem a paltry return for years of effort, never mind the tens of thousands of Canadian lives lost during the war.⁵

Nor is it easy to evaluate the usefulness of the I.G. Farben synthetic rubber research equipment, very likely the most potentially valuable of all the materials that arrived in Canada from Germany.⁶ Ironically, only two years after the Mulroney government sold off Polysar (as Polymer subsequently became known) to the Nova Corporation in 1988, its rubber division was purchased by the Bayer Corporation, a former component of the I.G. Farben combine.

Other aspects of the programme are even harder to assess. No doubt much equipment was gathered under dubious circumstances (i.e. pilfering or 'pirating') in the months after the German capitulation. The quantity and ultimate disposition of these items is impossible to know with any certainty.

And the fact remains that many benefits of the reparations programme involve intangible factors. How, for example, to assess the importance of Canadian investigators, military and civilian alike, having the opportunity to work with top rank personnel from the US and Britain and to interrogate a wide range of German scientific and technical staff? How to measure the significance of the detailed inspections of advanced German industrial plant and research and development facilities? And, finally, how to judge the value of the tens of thousands of German patents which were opened to the public after 1945?

Indeed, this point was explicitly addressed in a memo written by H.R. Kemp, Director of Commercial Relations of the Department of Trade and Commerce to his Deputy Minister on 5 July 1945. As he explained, it might be "more important for us to find what the Germans know than to seize their material possessions."

This suggestion was to be vindicated by the vast number of reports published by CIOS, BIOS and FIAT that were later made available to interested individuals and companies by the National Research Council. Canadian industry found these of great interest and, according to NRC files, they were still being read as late as 1964.

Seen in this light, while the benefits of the post-war reparations programme may not have lived up to the optimism expressed by participants at the Chateau Laurier press conference, they were also probably a good deal better than the existing public record would lead one to believe.

NOTES

- ¹ This paper deals solely with reparations from Germany not Japan.
- ² See *Hansard* for 12 and 15 July 1946 and 30 January, 16 June and 7 July 1947.
- ³ Neither John Holmes, *Shaping the Peace: Canada and the Search for World Order, 1945-1957, Vol. I*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), the various contributions in Greg Donaghy (ed), *Uncertain Horizons. Canadians and their World in 1945*, (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1997) nor J.F. Hilliker, 'No Bread at the Peace Table: Canada and the European Settlement, 1943-7', *Canadian Historical Review*, LSI, 1, 1980 contain more than cursory references to the reparations programme.
- ⁴ On the British side, see Alec Cairncross, *The Price of War*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), Tom Bower, *The Paperclip Conspiracy*, (London: Paladin, 1987), John Farquharson, 'Governed or Exploited? The British Acquisition of German Technology, 1945-1948', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 32 (1) 1997 and Ian Locke, 'Post-War Germany – Britain's Lost Opportunity', *History Today*; August 1997. On the American side, see John Gimbel, *Science, Technology and Reparations. Exploitation and Plunder in Postwar Germany*, (Stanford, California, USA: University of Stanford University Press, 1990) which in turn generated a response from European scholars, see Matthias Judt and Burghard Ciesla (eds), *Technology Transfer out of Germany after 1945*, (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishing, 1996).
- ⁵ It should be noted that to date no full accounting of all the German industrial plant and equipment as well as military material sent to Canada after 1945 has been located at the National Archives.
- ⁶ There is no mention made of the acquisition of this research equipment in the official Polysar Company history, see *Fifty – 1942-1992*, (Sarnia, Ontario: Polysar Rubber Corporation, 1992).

WHITHERED ON THE VINE: THE POSTWAR RCAF AUXILIARY

Sandy Babcock

The 1950s have been referred to as the “Golden Years” for the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF).¹ During this period, the RCAF significantly increased in size, it assumed a wider range of responsibilities in the defence of Canada, and it helped integrate Canadian defensive efforts into multi- and bi-lateral military alliances. The creation of a Canada-wide system of air defence, with radar and interceptor stations reaching into almost every corner of the nation, gave the peacetime RCAF a public profile as never before. The 1950s may also be seen as the best of times for the RCAF Auxiliary.² Auxiliary squadrons filled a variety of roles, including air defence, tactical air and air control and warning, and were supported by their own intelligence, technical training and medical units. In 1952, there were 12 Auxiliary squadrons with a total strength of 6500 personnel.³ Seven years later, the Auxiliary had expanded to include 42 squadrons and units stretching across Canada from St John’s to Victoria, although the combined strength had been reduced to just over 4100 all ranks.⁴ However, things were to change from this organizational highpoint within the year, as the Auxiliary endured a series of reductions that culminated in 1964 with a final cutback to just six flying squadrons and less than 900 personnel that left it a mere shadow of its former self.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the factors surrounding the demise of the RCAF Auxiliary as a meaningful contributor to Canada’s defence. This will include examination of various policy and doctrine initiatives, the nature of the changing roles assigned to the Auxiliaries, financial considerations, technical issues, and personnel factors. As will be seen, these influences combined to seal the fate of an increasingly marginalized organization.

The first issue to be considered is how RCAF policy and doctrine changed during the postwar period and how these changes affected the roles assigned to the Auxiliary. In 1946, defence plans, influenced by the Government’s decision to have a small peacetime Regular air force, stated that the function of the Auxiliary was “to provide a first-line reserve of fully organized, manned and equipped squadrons, which [could] be mobilized on short notice into a tactical component.” There were to be 11 fighter squadrons, two light bomber squadrons and one squadron each in the fighter-bomber and reconnaissance roles. The Auxiliary establishment was capped at 4500 personnel.⁵ Since the Regular RCAF in 1946 had no fighter squadrons and only a single Fighter Reconnaissance Squadron,⁶ the responsibility for the defence of Canadian airspace rested squarely with the Auxiliary. The next RCAF plan, released in 1948, postponed the activation of five Auxiliary squadrons, and planned the phase out of the fighter-bomber and reconnaissance roles for the Auxiliary. Of the ten remaining Auxiliary Squadrons, eight were to be dedicated to the fighter role and the other two were to provide tactical air support.⁷ At the same time, the Regular RCAF received its initial postwar air defence tasking, with the formation of an interceptor fighter wing consisting of two squadrons.⁸

In 1949, in response to a perceived increase in the Soviet threat and ongoing Canada-United States negotiations related to the creation of a North American air defence system, defence planners called for an increase in the Auxiliary from ten to 13 flying squadrons and the formation of 17 air control and warning units by 1950-51. Also, the staffing level for the Auxiliary was amended upwards to a ceiling of 25,000 by 1953-54. Foreshadowing a shift in air defence responsibilities, this plan continued to identify a role for eight Auxiliary fighter squadrons, but also increased the number of Regular RCAF interceptor squadrons from two to nine.⁹ Importantly, in direct response to concerns of senior RCAF officers about the ability of the Auxiliaries to attain the requisite standard of operational preparedness,¹⁰ defence plans changed the Auxiliary's mobilization period from "short notice" to not later than 90 days.¹¹

The subsequent outbreak of the Korean Conflict, the Soviet explosion of an atomic bomb, and the decision to contribute Regular Force squadrons to NATO led to significant changes for the Auxiliary. In September 1950, the revised Plan "G" for the RCAF was the first to place an emphasis on the need for forces "in being,"¹² thereby beginning the move away from the idea that there would be time for national mobilization in advance of hostilities. Since all Regular RCAF fighter squadrons were "to be equipped and operationally trained for rapid movement overseas,"¹³ this meant that Auxiliary squadrons retained primary responsibility for domestic air defence. While the mobilization period identified for the Auxiliary remained at 90 days, Auxiliary air defence units were asked to work towards achieving a level of operational preparedness that would allow them to mobilize without delay.¹⁴ But there was doubt about how realistic this goal was. For instance, Plan "G" acknowledged that limitations on the number of aircraft and flying hours allocated to the Auxiliary meant that there would be difficulty in achieving such a standard.¹⁵ For another, given that the Auxiliary had trouble reaching full establishment strength, the plan revised the intended ceiling downwards to 10,800 personnel in the near term and to 14,500 by 1955.¹⁶

The August 1952 edition of Plan "H" went even further in embracing the "forces in being" concept. Based upon intelligence estimates that there would not be a preparation period before the next World War and that "NATO Forces must be prepared for immediate and sustained action both in Europe ... and North America," the plan called for continuous operational preparedness. However, the Auxiliary could not achieve this standard. For example, although the Auxiliary was intended to complete the Home Air Defence Force upon national mobilization,¹⁷ Plan "H" still identified a 90-day period for the Auxiliary to achieve a state of operational readiness.¹⁸

This disparity between the RCAF's adoption of formal "forces in being" policy and the Auxiliary's need for time to reach operational effectiveness was to concern RCAF leaders for a number of years. In September 1955, Air Marshal (AM) Roy Slemon, the Chief of Air Staff (CAS), argued to the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) that the Auxiliary was unable to reach operational status during peacetime on the modern, complex aircraft intended for the domestic air defence role, the Avro CF-100 Canuck. In view of this, he advocated changing the responsibilities of the Auxiliary to that of providing air transport crews and jet flying instructors. Any reduction in the number of Auxiliary air defence squadrons was to be matched by an increase in Regular RCAF fighter squadrons.¹⁹ In fact, this proposal already represented a compromise. As far as the Regular RCAF was concerned, the results of efforts to qualify Auxiliary personnel on modern fighter aircraft "were not commensurate with the capital investment and ...

expenditures on training.” Whereas the RCAF wanted to restrict Auxiliary squadrons to non-flying duties, it was specifically recognized that political considerations meant that a shift to a less demanding flying role should be put forward. The COSC supported this stance and recommended its adoption to the Minister of National Defence.²⁰ However, concerned about public reaction, the Minister would not support such a radical decrease in the Auxiliary’s role for air defence. Subsequently, in March 1956, a revised proposal went to the Cabinet Defence Committee that led to six Auxiliary squadrons being provided with the more easily maintained Canadair F-86 Sabre from the Air Division in Europe. These re-equipped squadrons continued in the air defence role and served as a pool of trained aircrew for European operations. Four other Auxiliary squadrons were to be provided with light transport aircraft and helicopters for use in the disaster assistance and search and rescue roles. The two tactical support squadrons were to remain unchanged for the time being.²¹

Still, the Regular RCAF continued to have concerns about the operational effectiveness of the Auxiliary in a world of nuclear weapons and increasingly rapid weapons delivery systems. By June 1957, the “forces in being” concept was fully embraced by the Regular RCAF. Air force mobilization policy was changed to anticipate that, in the event of war, there would be a furious exchange of thermonuclear weapons lasting as little as five to seven days which would be followed by a period of national recovery interrupted by sporadic additional nuclear strikes. Under such circumstances, a number of Auxiliary personnel would be used to augment the Regular RCAF during the initial phase of such a war, however the majority would be mobilized during the recovery period in training and air transport roles.²² Subsequently, in December 1957, the Regular RCAF recommended to the COSC that the Auxiliary’s six fighter squadrons and two tactical air support squadrons be re-equipped with the light transport Beechcraft C-45 Expeditor in order to provide relief assistance during time of civil emergency in peace and war.²³ This recommendation was accepted and AM Hugh Campbell, CAS, subsequently announced the new policy at a May 1958 conference of Auxiliary Commanding Officers.²⁴

Before proceeding with a review of policy and doctrine issues related to this new role, a quick synopsis of how tactical air support was provided to the Canadian Army during this period is in order. After World War II, the RCAF assigned this responsibility to Auxiliary squadrons located on the prairies, which were well situated to exercise with the Army at nearby training areas and at the Canadian Joint Air Training Centre (CJATC) at Rivers, Manitoba. Beginning in 1950, the main role of these light and fighter-bomber squadrons was to provide air support to the Mobile Striking Force in displacing any enemy lodgment that may be established on Canadian soil.²⁵ The fighter-bombers, North American P-51 Mustangs, were retired from service in 1954 without replacement,²⁶ leaving the two light bomber squadrons based in Saskatoon and Edmonton. However, RCAF commitment to support of the Army was, at best, limited. For instance, in 1954 the CAS acknowledged to the Chief of General Staff that a shortage of transport aircraft reduced the Mobile Striking Force’s ability to train, but argued that the Soviet threat was such that it would be inappropriate to divert resources from the air defence role.²⁷ Essentially, the RCAF’s short-war vision was at conflict with the conventional war scenario that the Mobile Striking Force had been designed to fight and, by June 1957, it was accepted by the COSC that there was little risk of an enemy lodgment in Canada. By that time, the RCAF’s light bomber, the North American B-25 Mitchell, was no longer cost-effective to maintain. Since the RCAF viewed tactical air support basically in terms

of Mobile Striking Force requirements, and this Force was no longer seen as necessary, the RCAF moved to discontinue the tactical air support role for the Auxiliaries. The Saskatoon and Edmonton squadrons were subsequently re-equipped for the emergency and search and rescue roles.²⁸

In examining the implementation of the emergency role for the Auxiliary, it is first useful to review what plans were in place when this role was first assigned in 1958. Since 1950, the employment of military forces in a national disaster was seen primarily as a Canadian Army responsibility with the RCAF giving support only when required. The Militia, the Reserve Force for the Canadian Army, was to be called out only in select circumstances – when, for example, time and cost considerations made deployment of the Army inappropriate.²⁹ An even more limited role was seen for the military in civil defence plans, with the Army once again tasked as the lead agency and the RCAF in reserve. Civil defence was seen as a secondary role for the military, with self-preservation being given greater priority.³⁰ Neither of these plans made specific mention of the RCAF Auxiliary.

It is evident that, when the emergency and search and rescue roles were announced at the May 1958 Auxiliary Officers' Conference, little forethought had gone into the actual implementation of this decision. The RCAF already had a search and rescue organization to which the Auxiliary could offer only enthusiastic, but limited, assistance. When questioned by Auxiliary Commanding Officers about how they were expected to operate in a target-area during an emergency, the CAS could only say that after broad guidance was provided by RCAF Headquarters (HQ) and the Auxiliary squadrons had the opportunity to exercise and train, they would be expected to develop their own Unit Emergency Defence Plan.³¹ The broad guidance, when it arrived, simply indicated that the Auxiliary role in emergencies was to provide transportation, search and rescue, and reconnaissance, with search and rescue de-emphasized and transportation emphasized in the event of war.³² In July 1959, a full 14 months after the new roles were assigned, the Auxiliary flying squadrons were still asking RCAF HQ to provide "detailed responsibilities and study guides [in order] to get on with it."³³ Another example of the lack of forethought was provided at a December 1958 meeting of the RCAF Air Council, at which it was realized that the Canadian Army had not been briefed as yet on the new extent of Auxiliary responsibilities in providing assistance to civil defence operations.³⁴

Military plans written after 1958 continued to identify little for the Auxiliary to do in civil emergency or survival operations. The report of a 1959 Ad Hoc Committee on Civil Defence failed to mention any role for the Auxiliary³⁵ and even the Prime Minister, John Diefenbaker, did not mention the RCAF Auxiliary when he discussed civil defence in the House of Commons during March of that year.³⁶ When, in 1960, the COSC defined the role of the Armed Forces in survival operations, the RCAF's role was still vague – the provision of general assistance to the Army "as necessary and practicable." Once again, no specific mention was made of the Auxiliary.³⁷ In August 1961, the RCAF Emergency Defence Plan finally articulated the Auxiliary role in survival operations, which included providing reconnaissance of ground zero, radiological aerial monitoring and transport of personnel and equipment as required.³⁸

This difficulty in articulating policy is reflective of an absence of a consistent higher policy regarding the Auxiliary. While it was evident that the role of the Auxiliary had been reduced between the late 1950s and early 1960s, the CAS during this period,

AM Hugh Campbell, repeatedly sent recommendations for the disbanding of Auxiliary units back for further study.³⁹ Events were to soon overtake this reluctance to act.

The 1963 Federal election that brought the Liberals to power sponsored further change for the Auxiliary. In February 1964, Minister of National Defence Paul Hellyer created the Ministerial Committee on the Royal Canadian Air Force Auxiliary to provide advice on the organization's future. But this was no far-reaching study. The committee had just two weeks to complete its work and the issue of costs was to be central to its review.⁴⁰ The Draper Report, as the findings of the committee came to be known, recommended that the Auxiliary be organized and equipped to provide mobility, tactical and logistics support to the Army. It also noted that there was no financial justification for the continued operation of the Medical and Technical Training Units.⁴¹ This report was subsequently considered by the Air Council, which noted that the "forces in being" concept worked against the assignment of a combat role to the Auxiliary and that the Canadian Army preferred that tactical air support be provided by the Regular RCAF. The Air Council forwarded the report to the Minister without its support.⁴²

The 1964 White Paper on Defence was released the following month. In the process of determining defence priorities, the White Paper ranked the requirements of the Reserve forces and mobilization potential last.⁴³ Moreover, while noting the Auxiliary's role in survival operations, the White Paper formally deferred initiatives in the civil defence field.⁴⁴ Following this reduction in mandate, the RCAF soon thereafter moved to disband all but six of the Auxiliary flying squadrons and their associated wing headquarters, which reduced the Auxiliary's strength from 2260 to just 860 personnel.⁴⁵ RCAF policy and doctrine no longer had a significant place for the Auxiliary.

Yet it would not be appropriate to reduce the demise of the Auxiliary to simple matters of policy and doctrine. Certainly financial considerations played a major role in determining the Auxiliary's fate. As already mentioned, the costs associated with outfitting the Auxiliary with the CF-100, which would have included runway extensions, hangar renovations and training, contributed to the RCAF's decision not to proceed.⁴⁶ In 1957, defence budgets were returned to the three services for reductions. The RCAF, as it had attempted to do in 1956 for functional reasons, recommended that all Auxiliary flying units be cut on fiscal grounds, thereby achieving savings of almost \$13 million. Once more, the Minister would agree only to a partial reduction to the Auxiliary, which provided a \$2.5 million savings.⁴⁷ Auxiliary personnel were informed in late 1957 that the RCAF was being subjected to a "tight money" policy and that the Auxiliary's role was being reassessed;⁴⁸ it was during May 1958 that the shift to Expeditors and the disaster assistance role was announced. Although the limitations of the Expeditor were acknowledged at that time, it was an inexpensive means of implementing the new policy since these aircraft were already in the RCAF inventory.

This issue of aircraft costs repeatedly affected the Auxiliary. During the 1950s, Mustangs, Mitchells, Vampires and Sabres were retired from service with the Auxiliary in part due to maintenance costs. The year 1958 alone was to see a large reduction in the RCAF's aircraft inventory, as Harvards, Chipmunks, Lancasters, Cansos, Mitchells and Sabre Vs were designated for eventual disposal.⁴⁹ Since the Regular RCAF was to be given priority for new aircraft procurement, it would take time before funding became available to re-equip the Auxiliary. For instance, while the limitations of the Expeditor were acknowledged to Auxiliary Commanding Officers in 1958 and there was discussion about it being replaced,⁵⁰ the aircraft would remain in service for another ten years.⁵¹ As

already mentioned, getting the best value for money spent was a main reason behind Hellyer's request for the Draper Report.

Another recurring theme related to the incremental reduction in the responsibilities of the Auxiliary is the role of technology. For instance, 1952's Plan "H" noted that "the Auxiliary Squadrons have never been able to even start to maintain their operational aircraft on the time Auxiliary tradesmen/women can be available for maintenance work."⁵² The technical sophistication of the equipment and the limited number of annual training days were such that personnel in some trades required five and a half years to reach a group 1 technical level. Given that the average annual attrition rate for Auxiliary airmen was about 40%, very few trainees attained journeyman status.⁵³ In fact, in 1956 Auxiliary tradesmen were able to contribute only 5-10% of the personnel in the maintenance programme helper category.⁵⁴ Moreover, in addition to these maintenance issues, there was a recurring problem with finding the time required to bring aircrew to operational status on increasingly complex aircraft.⁵⁵

From another perspective, technology was itself responsible for the disbanding of a segment of the Auxiliary. The 1961 introduction of the Semi-Automatic Ground Environment (SAGE) system eliminated the requirement for a manual air defence system, which led to the closure of all Auxiliary Air Control and Warning Squadrons.⁵⁶

The final factor to be considered in this review is personnel. While RCAF plans for the early 1950s called for an Auxiliary of 25,000 personnel, the highest total strength reached by the Auxiliary seems to have been about 6500.⁵⁷ The RCAF had hoped that aircrew on short service commissions not retained in the Regular RCAF would decide to serve with the Auxiliary, which would also have helped to reduce training costs, but this did not prove to be the case to any significant degree.⁵⁸ On the other hand, by the late 1950s, Auxiliary squadrons were turning away short service commission graduates in order to provide, in the face of fiscal restraints, adequate flying hours for their existing aircrew.⁵⁹ The late 1950s was also a time when some of the most valued members of the Auxiliary, those who had previously served during World War II, were reaching compulsory retirement age. Their knowledge and experience would be difficult to replace. Certainly the pay scale in 1959 did little to help attract new recruits; an airman made as little as 78 cents an hour and aircrew at the rank of Flying Officer made \$4.32 an hour. These calculations did not consider the number of hours spent studying at home in order to become rank or trade qualified.⁶⁰

In fact, the RCAF Auxiliary was losing people more quickly than it could recruit in the late 1950s. Although a vigorous recruiting campaign was mounted in this period, more people quit than joined after the survival role was announced in 1958, which was attributed, in part, to a continued uncertainty about the future of the Auxiliary.⁶¹ Morale suffered during this period, as shown when some Auxiliary officers expressed doubt that the Regular RCAF considered the Auxiliary to be of any significance and asked for a "frank expression of opinion."⁶² Apparently, such reassurance was not forthcoming from the Regular RCAF. Still, it remains that the Auxiliary during its postwar existence had difficulty recruiting, training and retaining personnel.

What, then, may be concluded from this review of the postwar Auxiliary? Foremost, it is evident that the marginalization of the Auxiliary may not be attributed to any single event or decision. Rather, it represents the culmination of a more or less uninterrupted campaign waged by the Regular RCAF over at least 15 years to reduce the Auxiliary's role. As early as 1948 RCAF leaders were expressing reservations about the Auxiliary's

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ability to become operationally effective⁶³ and by 1955 it was only political considerations that stopped the Regular RCAF from removing flying duties from the Auxiliary altogether.⁶⁴ Given that doctrine and plans before and after the 1958 decision to assign the emergency role identified little meaningful contribution for the Auxiliary, this should be viewed as nothing more than the politically acceptable strategy used to remove the Auxiliary from the air defence role. After that, it was only a matter of time before there were questions about the purpose and size of the Auxiliary.

However, rather than viewing these events as some Machiavellian plot on the part of the Regular RCAF, it is more appropriate to view them as part of the professionalization of air defence within Canada. The combination of a palpable Soviet threat, the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the subsequent adoption of a “forces in being” policy, and the increasingly technological sophistication of aircraft led to reasonable questions about the ability of the Auxiliary to do the job.

Certainly the Auxiliary was unable to dispel these concerns. Auxiliary squadrons could not maintain their own aircraft. They had difficulty in training aircrew to an operational standard. They could not attract sufficient personnel. While some of the blame for these difficulties rests with the Government and the Regular RCAF, as the result of such measures as the limits placed on the amount of training conducted at the squadron level, the Auxiliary itself must share some of the responsibility for shortcomings in these areas.

In the end, by 1964 the RCAF Auxiliary had been left to “wither on the vine.” Starved of resources and a meaningful mandate, it was an easy target for large reductions and, given the circumstances, this appears to have been a rational choice based upon purely functional criteria. However, what this review has not determined is whether the Regular RCAF was affected by the reductions in the Auxiliary. For instance, did public support for the RCAF decrease with the disappearance of Auxiliary units from communities across the country and did this, in turn, affect the RCAF?⁶⁵ These questions appear worthy of further study.

NOTES

¹ For instance, see Jeff Rankin-Lowe, *Golden Years: The Royal Canadian Air Force in the 1950s*, (London, Ontario: Sirius Productions, 1997) and Larry Milberry, ed., *Sixty Years: The RCAF and CF Air Command 1924-1984*, (Toronto: CANAV Books, 1984), chapter entitled “The Golden Years.”

² The Auxiliary was the functional component of the RCAF Reserves. There was also the RCAF Primary Reserve, which consisted of non-functional units such as the Reserve University Flights and Reserve Flying Instructors, the RCAF Supplementary Reserve, which included retired air force personnel, and the Royal Canadian Air Cadets. Plan “H” for the RCAF, 1st April 1951 edition, Section F, Orange Tab 2, pp. 1-2, Department of National Defence, Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH) 181.004 (D48), refers.

³ Plan “H” for the Royal Canadian Air Force, 1st August 1952 Edition, Section A, Green Tab 1, p. 1, DHH 181.004 (D51).

⁴ *The RCAF Auxiliary*, p. 4, Directorate of History, Canadian Forces Headquarters, Ottawa, 17 May 1972, DHH 72/275.

- ⁵ The number of squadrons listed represents figures forecasted following the 17 December 1946 amendment to the original plan, which called for seven fighter squadrons, two light bomber squadrons and six fighter-bomber squadrons. Post War Plan for the Royal Canadian Air Force (Plan B), April 1946, pp. 18-20, DHH 181.004 (D44).
- ⁶ *Ibid*, p. 10.
- ⁷ Royal Canadian Air Force Plan E, Amended to 19 Apr 48, Appendix A, Sheet 5, DHH 181.004 (D45).
- ⁸ *Ibid*, Appendix A, Sheet 1.
- ⁹ A Summary of Requirements and Estimates for Plan "F," Section A, pp. 1-4, DHH 181.004 (D46).
- ¹⁰ Correspondence from AVM C.R. Slemon, AMOT, to AVM E.E. Middleton, CAC, 150-64/0, dated 6 Nov [1948], National Archives of Canada (NAC) Record Group (RG) 24, Vol. 17826, 840-91, Vol. 1.
- ¹¹ A Summary of Requirements and Estimates for Plan "F," Section N, p. 1, DHH 181.004 (D46).
- ¹² Plan "G" for the Royal Canadian Air Force, 1 Sep 1950 revision, Section A, Green Tab 1, pp. 1-2 and Section A, Green Tab 2, p. 1, DHH 181.004 (D47).
- ¹³ CAS Directive Serial No. 4, dated 10 August 1950, amended by Serial No. 84, dated 11 August 1950, entitled "Implementation of Increase and Acceleration of Plan "G"," p. 6, enclosed in Plan "G," DHH 181.004 (D47).
- ¹⁴ Plan "G" for the Royal Canadian Air Force, 1 Sep 1950 revision, Section C, Pink Tab 2, p. 1 and p. 9, DHH 181.004 (D47).
- ¹⁵ *Ibid*, Section C, Pink Tab 2, pp. 5-6.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid*, Section C, Pink Tab 1, p. 1, and Section C, Pink Tab 2, p. 4.
- ¹⁷ Plan "H" for the RCAF, 1st August 1952 edition, Section B, Blue Tab 2, p. 9, DHH 181.004 (D51).
- ¹⁸ *Ibid*, Section E, Orange Tab 1, p. 151.
- ¹⁹ TS096-105-9 (CAS), dated 21 September 1955, DHH 193.009 (D53), Box 13.
- ²⁰ Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee Held on 23 September 1955, pp. 1-2, DHH 193.009 (D53), Box 13.
- ²¹ Memorandum to Cabinet Defence Committee, dated 29 February 1956, and Minutes of the 590th Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee Held on 5 March 1956, DHH 193.009 (D53), Box 13.
- ²² CSC: 5.11.9 TD: 3, dated 25 June 1957, pp. 1-8, presented at a Special Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee Held 26 June 1957, DHH 193.009 (D53), Box 13.
- ²³ C895-100-91/0 (CAS), dated 4 December 1957, entitled "Future Policy for the RCAF Auxiliary," presented at a Special Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee Held 3-4 December 1957, DHH 193.009 (D53), Box 13.
- ²⁴ 840-91, Auxiliary Commanding Officers' Conference Held at AFHQ at 0900 hrs, 31 May 1958, p. 2, NAC RG 24, Vol 17826, file 840-91, Vol 2. Squadrons also received DHC-3 Otters to fill this new role.
- ²⁵ CSC 5-11-12-1, dated 13 November 1950, pp. 5-6, DHH 193.009 (D53), Box 6.
- ²⁶ S096-104 TD 18 (DAPP), dated 25 March 1954, DHH 096-104-3, Vol. 1.
- ²⁷ S096-104 (CAS), dated 16 November 1954, DHH 096-104-3, Vol. 1.
- ²⁸ C895-100-91/0 (CAS), dated 4 December 1957, p. 2, DHH 193.009 (D53), Box 13.
- ²⁹ JPC 25-8, dated 10 August 1950, pp. 1-7, DHH 193.009 (D53), Box 6.
- ³⁰ CSC 5-11-1, dated 15 August 1950, p. 1, DHH 193.009 (D53), Box 6.
- ³¹ 840-91, Auxiliary Commanding Officers' Conference Held at AFHQ at 0900 hrs, 31 May 1958, pp. 2-3, NAC RG 24, Vol 17826, file 840-91, Vol. 2.
- ³² 846-14 (SASO), dated 19 January 1959, NAC RG 24, Vol. 17969, file 922-5-91.
- ³³ C840-100-91 (SORP), dated 29 July 1959, p. 1, NAC RG 24, Vol. 17827, file 840-100-91, Vol. 1.
- ³⁴ Minutes of Air Council Meeting 39/58, 10 December 1958, Item 196, DHH 76/264/1.

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- ³⁵ Draft Report – Ad Hoc Committee on Civil Defence (Second Revision), dated March 12, 1959, DHH 112.042 (D1), Vol. 1.
- ³⁶ HQC 1691-1 (PR), dated 23 March 1959, DHH 112.042 (D1), Vol. 1.
- ³⁷ CSC: 2121.1, dated 9 November 1960, p. 4, DHH 82/187.
- ³⁸ 096-18 TD 1228P (C Ops), dated 21 August 1961, NAC RG 24, Vol. 17969, file 922-5-1, provides a full listing of assigned Auxiliary roles in survival operations.
- ³⁹ Air Council Minutes, DHH 76/264/2 and 76/264/3 refers. See, for example, Campbell's reluctance to disband defunct Air Control and Warning Squadrons. Minutes of Air Council Meetings 4/60, 1 February 1960, and 8/60, 26 February 1960, refer.
- ⁴⁰ Minutes of Air Council Meeting 12/64, dated 1 April 1964, p. 5, DHH 76/264/3.
- ⁴¹ Report of the Ministerial Committee on the Royal Canadian Air Force Auxiliary, p. 4, DHH 73/702. The report was named after its chair, Group Captain J.W.P. Draper, Commanding Officer of 14 Wing Headquarters (Auxiliary) in Toronto.
- ⁴² Minutes of Air Council Meeting 7/64 Held in the Air Council Room at 1145 hrs 19 Feb 64, pp. 3-5, DHH 76/264/3.
- ⁴³ White Paper on Defence, March 1964 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1964), p. 24.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 25-26.
- ⁴⁵ Flight Lieutenant F.J. Hatch, "Salute to the Auxiliary," *Roundel*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (April 1964), p. 13. Subsequent cutbacks reducing the number of flying squadrons to two is outside the scope of this paper.
- ⁴⁶ Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee Held on 23 September 1955, pp. 1-2, DHH 193.009 (D53), Box 13.
- ⁴⁷ Report of Chiefs of Staff Meeting Held in the Minister's Office 19 August, 1957, p. 2, folder "Reduction of Defence Estimates Meetings of the Chiefs of Staff Committee Held on 16 Aug 57 and 19 Aug 57," DHH 193.009 (D53), Box 13.
- ⁴⁸ 61-09-02, Minutes of a Meeting of 19 Wing Branch Heads and Unit COs with Auxiliary Liaison Personnel from ADCHQ and AFHQ Held 2000 hrs 10 Oct 57 at 19 Wing HQ (Aux), Item 2, NAC RG 24, Vol 17826, file 840-91, Vol. 2.
- ⁴⁹ Minutes of Air Council Meeting 40/58, dated 12 December 1958, Item 202, DHH 76/264/1.
- ⁵⁰ 840-91, Auxiliary Commanding Officers' Conference Held at AFHQ at 0900 hrs, 31 May 1958, pp. 4-5, NAC RG 24, Vol. 17826, file 840-91, Vol. 2.
- ⁵¹ www.lexicon.ab.ca/~nanton/expeditor.html.
- ⁵² Plan "H" for the RCAF 1st August 1952 edition, Section B, Blue Tab 2, p. 10, DHH 181.004 (D51).
- ⁵³ 840-91 TD 5333, dated 20 February 1956, paras 9-10, NAC RG 24, Vol. 17826, file 840-91, Vol. 2.
- ⁵⁴ 840-91 TD 6261 (DAPC), dated 17 September 1956, para 4, NAC RG 24, Vol. 17826, file 840-91, Vol. 2.
- ⁵⁵ See, for example, Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee on 23 September 1955, p. 1, DHH 193.009 (D53), Box 13.
- ⁵⁶ PR 397 20 Sep, 201920Z Sep 60, DHH 181.009 (D3539).
- ⁵⁷ Plan "H" for the Royal Canadian Air Force, 1st August 1952 Edition, Section A, Green Tab 1, p. 1, DHH 181.004 (D51).
- ⁵⁸ Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, 23 September 1955, DHH 193.009 (D53), Box 13.
- ⁵⁹ C840-100-91 (SORP), dated 29 July 1959, p. 1, NAC RG 24, Vol. 17827, file 840-100-91, Vol. 1.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 1-4.
- ⁶¹ 840-91 (AMP), dated 15 December 1958, paras 4-6, NAC RG 24, Vol. 17826, file 840-91, Vol. 3.
- ⁶² 840-91 (C Train), dated 28 October 1960, para 2, NAC RG 24, Vol 17826, file 840-91, Vol. 3.

- ⁶³ Correspondence from AVM C.R. Slemon, AMOT, to AVM E.E. Middleton, CAC, 150-64/0, dated 6 Nov [1948], National Archives of Canada (NAC) Record Group (RG) 24, Vol. 17826, 840-91, Vol. 1.
- ⁶⁴ Extract from Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee Held on 23 September 1955, pp. 1-2, DHH 193.009 (D53), Box 13.
- ⁶⁵ Regarding the relationship between the Militia and Canadian society, see T.C. Willett, *Canada's Militia: A Heritage at Risk: The Canadian Militia as a Social Institution*, (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1987).

LE CANADA ET LES ARMES NUCLÉAIRES : AUTOPSIE D'UNE CONTROVERSE NATIONALE 1961-1963

François Fournier

Au cours des années 1950, il devient évident que l'arme nucléaire représente « l'avenir » dans un monde divisé par la guerre froide. Sa terrible efficacité en fait une arme dissuasive et persuasive particulièrement redoutable. Alors que même l'OTAN adopte officiellement les armes nucléaires, le Canada, quant à lui, éprouve de grandes réticences à acquérir ou même à entreposer de telles armes sur son territoire. Plutôt engagé dans la promotion du désarmement et des armes conventionnelles, le Canada tente de résister aux énormes pressions, émanant particulièrement des États-Unis, qui sont inquiets de voir l'accès nordique à leur territoire essentiellement non défendu.

Rapidement, la question des armes nucléaires prend, au Canada, l'allure d'une véritable controverse. D'abord un enjeu purement militaire, le débat envahit rapidement les sphères politique et diplomatique et mine les relations canado-américaines dans leur entier. C'est en quelque sorte à une autopsie de cette crise que nous vous convions par le biais de ce texte. D'un bout à l'autre des événements, des origines au dénouement spectaculaire, nous tenterons de cerner les enjeux profonds et véritables de la crise du nucléaire au Canada.

Les origines de la crise

En 1955, un rapport du Comité Consultatif sur la Science (« Science Advisory Committee ») des États-Unis recommande au Président Eisenhower de renforcer substantiellement les systèmes de défense américains et de mettre en place une défense continentale efficace. Pour ce faire, le comité recommande d'adopter les ogives nucléaires comme principal armement de la défense aérienne américaine¹, d'assurer une force de frappe massive aux États-Unis en déployant, dans les plus brefs délais, une quantité considérable d'armes nucléaires et d'entreprendre des négociations avec le Canada afin que les forces défensives américaines aient le plein pouvoir d'utiliser, sur-le-champ si nécessaire, des ogives nucléaires au-dessus du territoire canadien².

En 1957, les négociations canado-américaines débouchent sur la création d'un commandement conjoint pour assurer la défense mutuelle de l'espace aérien nord-américain : NORAD (*North American Air Defense Command*). Washington réoriente également sa stratégie de défense en favorisant le développement d'intercepteurs pouvant être armés d'armes nucléaires et en déployant, le long de la frontière canado-américaine, des escadrons de missiles à ogives nucléaires, les Bomarc.

À la fin des années 1950, les stratèges canadiens et américains estiment que l'URSS serait déjà en mesure d'attaquer l'Amérique du Nord avec des bombardiers supersoniques armés de bombes atomiques. Il devient donc impératif, tant pour les États-Unis que pour

le Canada, de se munir d'armes efficaces et appropriées afin de respecter les engagements mutuels contractés sous NORAD et de contrer une éventuelle menace soviétique³. Le problème est encore plus criant pour le Canada qui dispose de moyens limités et qui doit pourtant remplacer ses désuets intercepteurs CF-100. L'intercepteur supersonique développé à cette fin par la compagnie A.V. Roe Ltd, est, à la fin des années 1950, à la fine pointe de la technologie. Il devient néanmoins rapidement la cible de vives critiques. Les coûts astronomiques du projet sont vivement dénoncés et plusieurs craignent qu'avec les délais annoncés (la sortie du CF-105 est alors prévue pour 1961), l'avion ne soit périmé dès sa mise en service.

En effet, les tests de missiles intercontinentaux (ICBM) soviétiques en août 1957 et le lancement, par l'URSS, du Spoutnik 1 le 4 octobre de la même année, obligent le Canada, comme les États-Unis, à revoir leurs politiques de défense. Diefenbaker doit alors réévaluer l'efficacité d'un intercepteur comme l'Arrow devant la menace des ICBM. Pour contrer les coûts très élevés de la production des CF-105, Diefenbaker tente, en vain, d'intéresser la Grande-Bretagne à l'Arrow. Il se tourne alors vers les États-Unis.

En août 1958, les délégations des ministres de la Défense des deux pays se rencontrent et les Américains font alors comprendre à leurs homologues canadiens qu'ils ne sont nullement intéressés par l'Arrow et qu'ils préfèrent développer leur propre intercepteur, le F-108. Ils soutiennent même que le Canada n'a pas besoin de l'Arrow. Pour contrer la nouvelle menace des ICBM, des escadrons de missiles Bomarc seraient, à leur avis, beaucoup moins coûteux et bien plus efficaces. La délégation américaine propose donc aux Canadiens de leur vendre des ensembles Bomarc-SAGE (*Semi-Automatic Ground Environment*)⁴. Le Bomarc est un missile antiaérien terre-air conçu pour fonctionner en conjonction avec le système de radars et de guidage électronique SAGE. Aucune ogive explosive conventionnelle n'ayant été conçue pour les missiles Bomarc « B », ceux-ci doivent obligatoirement être munis d'ogives nucléaires pour être opérationnels, contrairement à ce que prétendra longtemps Diefenbaker⁵.

La proposition américaine est en fait une menace : si le Canada refuse les Bomarc, les États-Unis en placeront un escadron tout juste au sud des Grands-Lacs⁶. Pour les Canadiens, une telle situation est évidemment inacceptable, puisque si ces Bomarc devaient être utilisés, le combat nucléaire aérien se déroulerait au-dessus des régions de Toronto, de Montréal et de la capitale nationale, Ottawa. Par contre, si le Canada accepte les Bomarc, ceux-ci seront localisés dans des régions moins peuplées au nord des Grands Lacs (une base sera établie à North Bay, en Ontario, et une autre à La Macaza, au Québec). Pour Ottawa, il s'agit là du seul avantage qu'il peut retirer de la proposition américaine.

Pour les États-Unis, l'installation de Bomarc au Canada présente deux avantages. D'abord, leurs bases se retrouveraient en territoires plus isolés. De plus, si un combat aérien devait survenir, il se déroulerait à bonne distance de la frontière américaine. La proposition américaine comporte également deux choix possibles. Dans le premier cas, les États-Unis proposent d'installer, en sol canadien, des bases de Bomarc qui seront opérées et contrôlées par du personnel militaire américain. Dans le second cas, on propose de vendre les missiles au Canada selon un arrangement mutuellement satisfaisant du partage des coûts⁷.

Devant l'évidence qu'il ne peut refuser la proposition américaine, Diefenbaker annonce, le mois suivant cette rencontre, l'abandon du projet CF-105 Avro Arrow et le remplacement des intercepteurs par des ensembles américains Bomarc-SAGE⁸. Après un

débat de plusieurs mois, Diefenbaker annule officiellement et définitivement le projet Arrow le 20 février 1959. Cette décision plonge Diefenbaker dans l'eau bouillante. D'abord, celui-ci bafouille considérablement au sujet de l'acquisition des Bomarc et il tente de justifier l'annulation du projet Arrow en invoquant le coût trop élevé du projet, mais surtout en affirmant que le CF-105 n'est plus nécessaire, puisque inefficace contre les ICBM. Cet argument ne convainc personne puisque d'abord, les Bomarc, qui sont censés remplacer l'Arrow, sont également inefficaces contre les ICBM⁹, contrairement à ce que prétend Diefenbaker¹⁰. De plus, comme l'avenir le dira, la menace des missiles intercontinentaux n'efface pas celle des bombardiers pilotés, donc le besoin d'un intercepteur efficace. Finalement, les Bomarc apparaissent rapidement comme une arme techniquement douteuse et à l'efficacité discutable¹¹.

Mais surtout, la décision de doter le Canada d'escadrons de Bomarc soulève un vaste débat au sujet de l'acquisition d'armes nucléaires. En effet, après avoir accepté les Bomarc, la pression se fit très forte sur Diefenbaker pour qu'il les arme d'ogives nucléaires afin de les rendre opérationnels.

Tout au long du débat sur les armes nucléaires, l'attitude ambiguë de Diefenbaker aggrave la crise. En effet, il fait l'acquisition de Bomarc « B » et affirme qu'une étude conjointe avec les États-Unis est en cours afin d'acquérir les ogives nucléaires destinées à ces missiles¹². Ceci ne l'empêche toutefois pas de condamner, à plusieurs reprises, les essais nucléaires¹³ et d'affirmer que le Canada n'a pas l'intention de conclure un accord dans un futur immédiat en vue d'acquérir un tel armement¹⁴. Pourtant, le 9 novembre 1959, le ministre de la Défense, George Pearkes, avait bel et bien déclaré que des ogives nucléaires seraient entreposées aux bases de Bomarc canadiennes dès 1961¹⁵.

Pour ou contre les armes nucléaires au Canada ? Le débat s'engage...

Au Canada, le débat autour des armes nucléaires devient rapidement l'une des plus grandes controverses de l'histoire du pays¹⁶. D'abord, de plus en plus de Canadiens se demandent si les armes nucléaires sont vraiment utiles, étant donné la nature du rôle militaire joué par le Canada. De plus, certains remettent grandement en question la qualité de l'équipement acquis par le Canada. Évidemment, le débat soulève également des craintes quant à la possibilité de préserver la souveraineté canadienne tout en acceptant des ogives nucléaires américaines, sous contrôle américain, mais en sol canadien.

Pour d'autres, le problème des armes nucléaires est d'abord et avant tout moral. Quant au gouvernement Diefenbaker, il craint l'expansion des nations nucléaires et évalue que si le Canada joint leur rang, il perdra toute possibilité de promouvoir de façon crédible le désarmement, principale préoccupation du Premier ministre et de son ministre des Affaires Étrangères, Howard Green, en matière de politique étrangère¹⁷.

Le Canada acquiert pourtant des États-Unis, pour la défense continentale, des missiles Bomarc « B » en 1958 et des intercepteurs F101B « Voodoo » en 1961. Pour ses troupes en Europe, sous le commandement de l'OTAN, le Canada se procure également des Américains des missiles Honest John en 1960 et des avions de combat F104 « Starfighter » en 1961. Tous ces missiles et intercepteurs doivent être armés d'ogives nucléaires pour atteindre leur pleine efficacité. Bien que ne s'étant jamais engagé

formellement à acquérir les ogives nucléaires, le Canada doit, en 1961, se pencher sur la question, ces armements étant inefficaces sans les têtes nucléaires.

Le contrôle des ogives nucléaires américaines en sol canadien représente un autre volet important du débat. En effet, les lois américaines n'accordent aucun contrôle, même partiel, au Canada sur les missiles américains déployés sur son territoire¹⁸, ce qui n'est pas sans préoccuper grandement Ottawa. Accepter des armes nucléaires américaines, sous contrôle américain, mais en territoire canadien, serait donner beaucoup trop de pouvoir à Washington sur le Canada.

Une certaine ouverture dans le dossier se présente en juillet 1960 lorsque le Secrétaire américain de la Défense, M. McElroy, en visite à Ottawa, affirme qu'un contrôle conjoint des armes nucléaires américaines en territoire canadien pourrait être envisagé, bien que la décision d'employer ou non ces armes restera toujours entre les seules mains du Président américain¹⁹.

Un tournant dans la crise : l'élection de JFK

Lorsque John F. Kennedy arrive à la Maison-Blanche, en 1961, il fait du dossier de l'acquisition par le Canada d'armes nucléaires américaines et de l'entreposage de ces dernières sur son territoire sa principale préoccupation en matière de défense continentale.

Le Département d'État américain réitère d'ailleurs à Kennedy l'importance de la question pour la sécurité nationale américaine. Les États-Unis ont besoin d'un accès facile à l'espace aérien canadien, de bases américaines au Canada et de la contribution des Forces armées canadiennes. En temps de crise, la perte ou la diminution du contrôle américain sur ces trois aspects de la défense serait intolérable pour les États-Unis.

Ainsi, les principaux objectifs de Washington s'établissent comme suit : d'abord, le Président doit conclure un accord pour que le Canada accepte d'acquérir des ogives nucléaires américaines pour les Bomarc et la RCAF. À ce sujet, les États-Unis sont intéressés à négocier un accord pour un contrôle conjoint de ces armes. Ensuite, Washington doit obtenir l'autorisation d'entreposer des armes nucléaires sur les bases américaines en sol canadien « to gain advantage of Canada's proximity to the most likely source of hostile action against North America²⁰ ».

À Ottawa, Diefenbaker donne l'impression à Washington qu'il est sur le point de prendre une décision et que celle-ci sera en faveur de l'acquisition des ogives nucléaires. C'est du moins ce que les Américains ont conclu des propos du Premier ministre lors de ses rencontres avec le Président Kennedy au début de 1961. La décision de Diefenbaker tarde toutefois à venir. En septembre 1961, les bases canadiennes de Bomarc sont presque prêtes. De plus, l'URSS a rompu le moratoire sur les essais nucléaires, paralysant ainsi le processus international de désarmement. Finalement, la crise de Berlin, en août 1961, démontre une fois encore l'importance de la menace soviétique et l'urgence d'établir une défense continentale efficace. Ainsi, le 20 septembre 1961, Kennedy, qui s'impatiente de plus en plus²¹, téléphone à Diefenbaker pour l'encourager à prendre une décision le plus rapidement possible²².

L'annonce d'élections fédérales au Canada pour le printemps 1962 ralentit cependant une fois de plus les négociations. Espérant trouver le moyen de convaincre Diefenbaker de prendre rapidement une décision, Washington décide d'augmenter la pression sur le Premier ministre canadien. La conjoncture lui est d'ailleurs favorable.

D'abord, le Parti libéral modifie peu à peu sa position en regard des armes nucléaires, en faveur des intérêts américains. L'opposition exercera donc bientôt une plus grande pression sur Diefenbaker et Howard Green. De plus, le cabinet de Diefenbaker est fortement divisé sur la question du nucléaire. Green, qui exerce énormément d'influence sur le Premier ministre, est farouchement contre l'acquisition d'ogives nucléaires²³. Le ministre de la Défense, Douglas Harkness, est quant à lui tout à fait favorable²⁴. Il considère de plus que la question doit être réglée rapidement, puisque le Canada est vulnérable, son armement étant inefficace sans les têtes nucléaires²⁵.

Deux clans se forment donc au sein du cabinet ministériel. Quant à l'opinion publique canadienne, elle est, en 1961, généralement contre les armes nucléaires et il faut trouver un moyen de la modifier. Or, les rapports de l'ambassade américaine à Ottawa confirment la popularité de Kennedy au Canada²⁶. Washington mise donc sur cette sympathie des Canadiens pour le jeune Président. Afin de bousculer les événements tout en ménageant les susceptibilités canadiennes, les officiels américains décident d'agir par l'intermédiaire de l'OTAN et de NORAD²⁷. Ainsi, au début de 1962, une première campagne de « relations publiques » se déploie au Canada. Officiellement, elle n'est pas orchestrée par Washington, mais plutôt par un officier supérieur de la RCAF, le lieutenant-colonel Bill Lee. Celui-ci a cependant le support entier de ses supérieurs et l'aide de diplomates américains en poste au Canada²⁸. Divers représentants de NORAD courtisent quant à eux des journalistes, des professeurs, des hommes d'affaires, bref, tous ceux qui peuvent avoir une influence significative sur l'opinion publique canadienne, et les bombardent d'arguments pro-nucléaires²⁹.

En février 1962, c'est Diefenbaker lui-même qui déclenche une crise diplomatique en affirmant qu'en cas d'urgence, les ogives nucléaires entreposées aux États-Unis, près de la frontière canado-américaine, pourraient être transportées au Canada et installées sur les Bomarc et les roquettes des intercepteurs en moins d'une heure. Les officiels américains s'insurgent contre ces propos du Premier ministre canadien³⁰. D'abord, selon le Pentagone, il faudrait au moins quinze heures pour transporter les ogives au Canada et armer les Bomarc et les intercepteurs. De plus, il n'existe aucun accord à ce sujet entre le Canada et les États-Unis³¹. Diefenbaker prétend également qu'il serait prêt à considérer un contrôle conjoint des armes nucléaires, mais que celui-ci est impossible en vertu des lois américaines.

Washington est renversé par les propos du Premier ministre. Le Secrétaire d'État américain, Dean Rusk, réplique publiquement à Diefenbaker lors d'une conférence de presse le 1^{er} mars 1962. La déclaration de Rusk laisse sous-entendre que Diefenbaker ment au public, ou du moins, qu'il déforme la réalité. Rusk annonce alors que Washington est prêt à négocier un contrôle conjoint des armes nucléaires et qu'un tel accord, entre le Canada et les États-Unis, n'entraînerait pas une prolifération des « nations nucléaires » et ne serait donc pas incompatible avec les efforts de désarmement du gouvernement canadien³². Ce geste de Washington retire de précieux arguments à Diefenbaker et à Green.

À la suite de la campagne de « relations publiques » du lieutenant-colonel Lee et de NORAD, ainsi qu'à la déclaration de Rusk, l'opinion publique canadienne commence à se modifier. Au mois de mars, Lester B. Pearson fait également un pas de plus vers le changement de la position libérale en matière d'armement nucléaire. Il attaque vivement Diefenbaker qui, selon lui, n'honore pas les engagements contractés par le Canada auprès des États-Unis³³.

La pression s'accroît : Diefenbaker en péril

Le 18 juin 1962, les élections fédérales canadiennes reportent Diefenbaker au pouvoir, mais avec un gouvernement minoritaire et de plus en plus divisé sur la question des armes nucléaires. Discrètement, le ministre de la Défense, Douglas Harkness, tente de rallier les membres du cabinet à sa position. Selon lui, le Canada s'est engagé auprès des États-Unis, la plupart des Canadiens approuveraient l'acquisition des ogives nucléaires et, finalement, les Bomarc et les intercepteurs ne sont pas inutiles puisque la plus grande menace demeure les bombardiers soviétiques et non les missiles intercontinentaux (ICBM)³⁴.

La crise des missiles de Cuba, à la fin octobre 1962³⁵, contribue, quant à elle, à faire basculer l'opinion publique canadienne en faveur de l'acquisition des armes nucléaires³⁶. Devant la pression publique, le cabinet de Diefenbaker adopte unanimement, le 30 octobre 1962, une résolution demandant la réouverture des discussions avec Washington. Cependant, Diefenbaker et Green cherchent encore à gagner du temps et leurs propositions, irréalistes et inefficaces, mènent rapidement les négociations à une impasse et Washington renonce à conclure une entente avec Diefenbaker.

À la fin de 1962, Washington décide d'accroître encore davantage la pression extérieure sur Diefenbaker, sachant pertinemment que le cabinet ministériel est fortement divisé sur la question, que l'opinion publique est de plus en plus favorable à l'acquisition des ogives nucléaires et que l'effritement du support politique à Diefenbaker s'accélère continuellement. Le 2 janvier 1963, Kennedy annonce, avec une allusion claire au Canada, qu'il exercera désormais un rôle de leadership plus fort à la tête de l'alliance occidentale, même au risque d'offenser certains alliés plus sensibles. C'est, selon lui, une des leçons qu'il a retenues de la crise des missiles de Cuba³⁷.

Le lendemain, le commandant en chef de l'OTAN, le général américain Lauris Norstad, effectue une visite à Ottawa prétextant une tournée d'adieu avant sa retraite. La conférence de presse de Norstad tourne en véritable débat sur la question du nucléaire. Le général affirme, entre autres, que le Canada ne remplit pas ses engagements au sein de l'OTAN en refusant les armes nucléaires. Il rassure également les gens en soulignant l'efficacité du contrôle conjoint des ogives nucléaires américaines entreposées sous le commandement de l'OTAN. Finalement, il encourage la conclusion rapide d'un accord bilatéral entre le Canada et les États-Unis, sans lequel les Forces canadiennes de l'OTAN ne peuvent être équipées d'armes nucléaires, même en situation de crise, et ne peuvent être entraînées aux tactiques nucléaires³⁸.

À peine quelques jours plus tard, c'est au tour du commandant en chef de NORAD, le général John Gerhart, de visiter la base de Bomarc de North Bay. En conférence de presse, il déclare que l'absence d'ogives nucléaires pour les Bomarc « canadiens » représente une « fissure dans le bouclier polaire nord-américain³⁹ ». Officiellement, Washington n'est pas impliqué dans ces deux visites. Toutefois, suite à celles-ci, le vent tourne définitivement en faveur des intérêts américains au Canada et les événements se précipitent. L'opposition libérale, Pearson en tête, affirme maintenant que le Canada s'est engagé auprès de l'OTAN et de NORAD à acquérir les armes nucléaires et qu'il doit respecter cet engagement. Quant au Parti progressiste-conservateur, il est dramatiquement divisé.

La chute du gouvernement Diefenbaker

À la fin de janvier 1963, Diefenbaker tient des propos devant la Chambre des Communes qui précipitent sa chute. Lors des débats, il s'étend sur la rencontre de Nassau à laquelle il a assisté et sur l'accord, portant sur les armements conventionnels, qui y fut conclu entre Kennedy et le Premier ministre britannique. Diefenbaker dévoile alors des détails confidentiels et secrets de l'accord. De plus, il interprète et dénature considérablement celui-ci en affirmant qu'il est l'aveu même, de la part de Kennedy, qu'il faut limiter l'élargissement du club des nations nucléaires et mettre désormais l'accent sur les armes conventionnelles plutôt que nucléaires⁴⁰.

Les réactions aux propos de Diefenbaker ne tardent pas. Son propre ministre de la Défense est le premier à dénoncer vigoureusement cette interprétation de l'accord de Nassau. Le cabinet, quant à lui, rédige un rapport prouvant l'engagement canadien envers les États-Unis et demande à Diefenbaker d'accepter les ogives nucléaires⁴¹. La dénonciation la plus violente vient cependant de Washington, qui pose un geste sans précédent. Le 30 janvier, un communiqué de presse est émis par le Département d'État. Le texte clarifie la situation au sujet de l'accord de Nassau et des négociations entre le Canada et les États-Unis concernant les armes nucléaires. Mais surtout, il met nettement en lumière que le Premier ministre Diefenbaker s'est engagé, par l'acquisition des Bomarc B, des Voodoo, des Starfighter et des Honest John, à acquérir les ogives nucléaires rendant opérationnels. Il précise également que la menace des bombardiers soviétiques est toujours présente et qu'une défense continentale commune et solide est nécessaire. Les États-Unis, affirme le communiqué, sont prêts à établir un contrôle conjoint des ogives nucléaires pour le Canada qui serait entièrement compatible avec la souveraineté nationale canadienne⁴².

Dans son essence, le communiqué de presse du Département d'État contredit largement les propos tenus par Diefenbaker sur de nombreux points, dont la question des armes nucléaires, le statut des négociations entre le Canada et les États-Unis et la signification de l'accord de Nassau. Ce faisant, le Premier ministre apparaît, devant le public canadien, comme un homme qui leur a considérablement menti, depuis des années, sur des questions vitales pour la sécurité canadienne. En fait, que cela ait été voulu ou non, le geste posé par le Département d'État américain précipite la chute du gouvernement Diefenbaker.

Croyant détenir, dans le geste de Washington, qu'il qualifie d'intrusion dans les affaires internes du Canada⁴³, l'objet de sa réélection, Diefenbaker annonce à son cabinet son désir de déclencher immédiatement des élections et de mener une campagne à saveur antiaméricaine, ce que le cabinet lui déconseille fortement⁴⁴. Les jours qui suivent donnent d'ailleurs raison au cabinet, puisque la controverse autour du communiqué du Département d'État s'estompe rapidement pour plutôt laisser ressurgir les critiques envers l'indécision de Diefenbaker et le non respect des engagements qu'il a contractés⁴⁵.

Ne pouvant plus accepter la position de Diefenbaker sur les armes nucléaires, le ministre de la Défense, Douglas Harkness, remet sa démission le 4 février 1963⁴⁶. Le lendemain, une motion de non confiance, déposée par les Libéraux, est adoptée par la Chambre des Communes⁴⁷ et de nouvelles élections sont annoncées. L'entêtement de Diefenbaker à mener une campagne antiaméricaine provoque la démission de plusieurs ministres de son cabinet. Au terme de la campagne, les Libéraux de Lester B. Pearson

défont, en avril 1963, les Conservateurs de John G. Diefenbaker et forment le nouveau gouvernement.

Les lendemains de l'élection de 1963

Le gouvernement minoritaire de Pearson, jugé beaucoup plus « coopératif » par Washington⁴⁸, a tôt fait d'apaiser les tensions concernant la défense continentale entre les deux pays. Au début du mois de mai 1963, le Premier ministre libéral rencontre le Président Kennedy à sa résidence de Hyannis Port et annonce l'intention de son gouvernement d'entreprendre des négociations avec Washington en vue d'honorer les engagements contractés par le Canada envers l'OTAN et NORAD. Le 16 août suivant, Pearson annonce qu'il a conclu un accord avec Washington. Le Canada acquiert les ogives nucléaires américaines, sous contrôle conjoint avec les États-Unis, pour les Bomarc B, les intercepteurs Voodoo, les missiles Honest John et les avions de combat Starfighter⁴⁹.

Le débat sur le nucléaire a provoqué, au Canada, une controverse majeure dans laquelle s'est enlisé le Premier ministre canadien John G. Diefenbaker. Déchiré entre son nationalisme et la dure réalité de l'incapacité du Canada à assurer sa propre défense devant la menace soviétique, le chef conservateur a tenté de réaliser l'impossible, c'est-à-dire freiner la continentalisation des systèmes de défense américains tout en continuant à profiter de la sécurité procurée par l'alliance avec les États-Unis.

Mais la crise aura surtout démontré hors de tout doute certaines dures réalités que les Canadiens auraient peut-être préféré ignorer. D'abord, dans le climat de guerre froide qui prévaut au début des années 1960, il est désormais impossible pour le gouvernement canadien de revenir en arrière et de renier les engagements qu'il a contractés envers les États-Unis, par le biais de NORAD et envers les autres puissances européennes par le biais de l'OTAN.

De plus, il apparaît maintenant clair que le Canada n'a pas les moyens de ses ambitions. Il ne dispose pas des ressources financières, techniques et militaires pour assurer efficacement la défense de son propre territoire, qui est donc très vulnérable devant la puissante armée soviétique. Étant donné la position géographique stratégique du Canada, cette vulnérabilité est totalement inacceptable. Ottawa n'a donc d'autres choix que de s'en remettre aux États-Unis pour assurer sa sécurité et ainsi sacrifier un peu de sa souveraineté.

Finalement, autre constat majeur, un vieux rêve de la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale prend abruptement fin à l'issue de la crise. Il devient alors évident que le Canada n'est pas et ne sera pas à court ou à moyen terme, un acteur de premier plan sur la scène internationale. Le vieux rêve de Diefenbaker et de ses nationalistes s'écroule.

NOTES

- ¹ « Report by the Technological Capabilities Panel of the Science Advisory Committee, Washington, February 14, 1955 », in U.S. Department of State, « National Security Policy », *Foreign Relations of the United States : 1955-1957*, vol. XIX, Washington (D.C.), Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, 1990, pp. 43- 47.
- ² *Ibid.*, p. 49.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 61.
- ⁴ Jon B. McLin, *Canada's Changing Defense Policy : 1957-1963*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1967, p. 73-74.
- ⁵ U.S. Department of State, « U.S. State Department Press Release on U.S. and Canadian Negotiations Regarding Nuclear Weapons », *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. XLVIII, Washington (D.C.), Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, 18 février 1963, p. 243-244.
- ⁶ J.B. McLin, *Canada's Changing Defense Policy : 1957-1963*, pp. 86-87.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 87.
- ⁸ « Projectiles "Bomarc" pour le Canada : la construction de l'intercepteur Arrow serait abandonnée », *La Presse* (Montréal), 24 septembre 1958, p. 1 et 12.
- ⁹ Canada, Chambre des Communes, *Débats de la Chambre des Communes*, 1960, Vol. III, p. 2618.
- ¹⁰ Canada, Chambre des Communes, *Débats de la Chambre des Communes*, 1959, Vol. II, p. 1279-1280.
- ¹¹ Canada, Chambre des Communes, *Débats de la Chambre des Communes*, 1960, Vol. I, p. 575-576.
- ¹² Canada, Chambre des Communes, *Débats de la Chambre des Communes*, 1959, Vol. II, p. 1281.
- ¹³ Canada, Chambre des Communes, *Débats de la Chambre des Communes*, 1960, Vol. I, p. 912.
- ¹⁴ Trevor Lloyd, *Canada in World Affairs : 1957-1959*, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 54.
- ¹⁵ « Sous contrôle canado-américain : des ogives nucléaires seront entreposées au Canada en 1961 », *La Presse* (Montréal), 10 novembre 1959, p. 1 et « Des ogives nucléaires au Canada », *Le Devoir* (Montréal), 11 novembre 1959, p. 1 et 8.
- ¹⁶ Peyton V. Lyon, *Canada in World Affairs : 1961-1963*, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 76.
- ¹⁷ JFK Library, P.O.F., 113, 9, Canada, Security, JFK Trip to Ottawa 5/61 (B), doc. 4, « Trends in Canadian Foreign Policy », 2 mai 1961, p. 8.
- ¹⁸ Richard A. Preston, *Canada in World Affairs : 1959-1961*, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 63.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.
- ²⁰ JFK Library, P.O.F., 113, 4, Canada, Security, 1961, doc. 2a, Rusk à Kennedy, 17 février 1961, p. 4 à 6.
- ²¹ JFK Library, N.S.F., 18, Canada, 10/61-1/62, doc. 16a, Transcription de conversation entre Merchant et Kennedy, 10 novembre 1961.
- ²² JFK Library, N.S.F., 18, Canada, General, 6/61-9/61, doc. 21, Ambassade américaine d'Ottawa à Rusk, 21 septembre 1961.
- ²³ JFK Library, P.O.F., 113, 4, Canada, Security, 1961, doc. 2a, Rusk à Kennedy, 17 février 1961, p. 6.
- ²⁴ JFK Library, P.O.F., 113, 9, Canada, Security, JFK Trip to Ottawa 5/61 (B), doc. 12, « Continental Defense : Background Paper », 4 mai 1961, p. 1.

- ²⁵ Canada, Chambre des Communes, *Débats de la Chambre des Communes*, 1960-1961, Vol. VIII, p. 8722-8746.
- ²⁶ JFK Library, N.S.F., 18, Canada, General, 5/15/61-5/30/61, doc. 9, Merchant à Rusk, 19 mai 1961.
- ²⁷ JFK Library, N.S.F., 18, Canada, General, 6/61-9/61, doc. 19, Rusk à Merchant, septembre 1961 et P.O.F., 113, 9, Canada Security, JFK Trip to Ottawa 5/61 (B), doc. 4, « Trends in Canadian Foreign Policy », 2 mai 1961, p. 8.
- ²⁸ Knowlton Nash, *Kennedy and Diefenbaker: Fear and Loathing Across the Undefended Border*, Toronto, McClelland & Stewart, 1990, p. 146.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 144-145.
- ³⁰ JFK Library, N.S.F., 18, Canada, General, 2/62-3/62, doc. 8, Merchant à Rusk, 27 février 1962.
- ³¹ P.V. Lyon, *Canada in World Affairs: 1961-1963*, p. 106-108.
- ³² Tiré d'un texte du United States Information Service : « Secretary of State Rusk: Nuclear Weapons and Canada » cité dans *ibid.*, p. 109-110.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, p. 110-112.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 176-177.
- ³⁵ Les limites de cet article ne nous permettent pas d'aborder le rôle joué par NORAD lors de la crise des missiles de Cuba. Notons toutefois que celle-ci sera grandement responsable de l'élargissement du fossé entre Kennedy et Diefenbaker et du durcissement de la politique américaine à l'endroit du Canada : « The Cuban missile crisis snapped American patience on the unresolved issue of nuclear weapons for Canada. » (John Herd Thompson et Stephen J. Randall, *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies*, Montréal et Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994, p. 225). Devant les hésitations de Diefenbaker, le Président américain mobilise et place en état d'alerte les effectifs de NORAD et ses composantes canadiennes sans même en aviser le Premier ministre canadien. Ce geste, qui va à l'encontre des dispositions de NORAD, confirme alors la mainmise totale de Washington sur la défense continentale. À ce sujet, voir notamment : P.V. Lyon, *Canada in World Affairs: 1961-1963*, *passim* ; K. Nash, *Kennedy and Diefenbaker*, *passim* ; Peter Newman, *Renegade in Power: The Diefenbaker Years*, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1973, 414 p.
- ³⁶ P.V. Lyon, *Canada in World Affairs: 1961-1963*, p. 89.
- ³⁷ K. Nash, *Kennedy and Diefenbaker*, p. 222.
- ³⁸ P.V. Lyon, *Canada in World Affairs: 1961-1963*, p. 130-135.
- ³⁹ Traduction libre de la phrase du général Gerhart : « a chink in the North American polar shield ». Cité dans *ibid.*, p. 136.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 143-144 et 155-156.
- ⁴¹ K. Nash, *Kennedy and Diefenbaker*, p. 234.
- ⁴² U.S. Department of State, « United States and Canadian Negotiations Regarding Nuclear Weapons » [Press Release n° 59], Washington (D.C.), Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, 30 janvier 1963.
- ⁴³ Canada, Chambre des Communes, *Débats de la Chambre des Communes*, 1962-1963, Vol. III, p. 3445.
- ⁴⁴ P.V. Lyon, *Canada in World Affairs: 1961-1963*, p. 177.
- ⁴⁵ JFK Library, P.O.F., 113, 3, Canada, General, 1963, doc. 2, Butterworth à Rusk, 2 février 1963.
- ⁴⁶ P.V. Lyon, *Canada in World Affairs: 1961-1963*, p. 174.
- ⁴⁷ Canada, Chambre des Communes, *Débats de la Chambre des Communes*, 1962-1963, Vol. III, p. 3598-3625.
- ⁴⁸ JFK Library, N.S.F., 18, Canada, General, 4/1/63-5/3/63, doc. 3, Département d'État à McGeorge Bundy, 11 avril 1963.
- ⁴⁹ J.B. McLin, *Canada's Changing Defense Policy: 1957-1963*, p. 166-167.

MAINTAINING ARMY EQUIPMENT A CENTURY OF EVOLUTION

Murray Johnston

“It was very largely the high efficiency of the repair and recovery organization which enabled us to retain our superiority through the fighting.”

General Viscount Alexander – after the battle of El Alamein.¹

At the beginning of the 20th century, armies had simple equipment to help soldiers fight. Equipment maintenance organizations were rudimentary. Throughout the century rapid advances in science have continually changed army equipment. The effects have been profound – often having a direct affect on the outcome of battles. The 20th century ended with armies heavily dependent on expensive, technically advanced, powerful equipment.

One key to an army’s success is having all of its equipment fit and available for operations. As a result equipment maintenance has become an important battlefield function which, in the Canadian Army, brings the servicing, repair, overhaul, recovery and, to a limited extent, modification and manufacture of army equipment right into the front lines.

The evolution of equipment maintenance beginning in the late 19th century has continued through World War One, between World Wars, World War Two, the Cold War and the Post-Cold War. In each period new directions in the design or use of military equipment have led to changes in maintenance organizations, equipment and methods.

The Beginnings²

After the Crimean War, investigation of the scandals connected with the supply and maintenance of equipment resulted in several reforms in the British Army. These included making the Commander-in-Chief responsible for the maintenance of his equipment and forming two new technical corps. The Corps of Armourer Sergeants was formed in 1858 to inspect and repair small arms. The Corps of Ordnance Artificers was formed in 1882 to inspect and repair of artillery. The work of these two corps complemented the work of unit armourers and artificers who remained part of their regiments. In addition, three qualified engineers were given special commissions in 1885 in the Royal Artillery as Inspectors of Ordnance Machinery (IOM). They maintained coastal defence guns.

To reduce the number of agencies maintaining equipment, the two technical corps were combined with the Ordnance Stores Department in 1896 to form the Army Ordnance Corps which was responsible for the storage and maintenance of equipment.

The first ordnance workshop to take part in a campaign operated in South Africa in 1899-1902. Although army equipment was relatively simple, there was a need for making

good the wear and tear on small arms, guns, wagons, etc. The workshop fully justified itself and demonstrated the need and practicality of mobile workshops.

On 1 July 1903 the Canadian Stores Department was formed based on the British model. The total establishment was 106 and included 10 armourers and 3 artificers. In 1907 the Canadian Stores Department was renamed the Canadian Ordnance Corps.³ There was one Ordnance detachment for each Military District. Some of these detachments had small workshop sections.

At the turn of the 20th century, hydraulically-buffered recoil mechanisms were introduced into gun design. The new buffers greatly improved accuracy, flexibility and rate of gunfire but required increased maintenance resources – as soon became apparent.

World War One⁴

World War One began with attacks by cavalry and foot soldiers over open ground. These were the tactics which the British army had used successfully for a century of brushfire wars against poorly armed opponents. However, Germany had and used machine guns which lead to appalling British losses.

To save lives, Colonel A.G.L. McNaughton introduced mathematically-calculated artillery barrages. His *rolling barrages* moved ahead of advancing soldiers, giving them a better measure of protection. The availability and accuracy of guns to fire these barrages became a decisive matter in the outcome of battle. So a regular schedule of buffer maintenance and barrel bore measurements was required. This work had to be done close to battery locations because backloading guns for maintenance kept them out of action too long. Hence workshop trucks and artificers were stationed near battery locations.

Working in the forward locations showed the valour of craftsmen in repairing guns under fire. For example, in November 1917 Armament Staff-Sergeant A.E. Davis's battery was heavily shelled and five guns put out of action. After several hours of work under fire he succeeded in getting four guns back into action. During this time the gun officer and four men were wounded and two were killed. Staff-Sergeant Davis was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty.⁵

Bore Measurements. In World War One the role of maintenance was primarily the inspection, modification and repair to artillery equipment. In addition, the guns became bigger, more complicated and developed a host of defects which needed engineering analysis in the field. For example, in 1917 to help improve gun design and more accurately forecast gun replacements, 34,000 bore measurements were made.

Mobile Workshops. This led to the formation of mobile workshops. Each comprised IOMs, artificers, armourers as well as workshop and stores trucks. The first was formed in Halifax in October 1915. Others soon followed.⁶

These workshops were a valuable target. For example, in November 1918, Captain H. Durling's workshop was bombed by enemy aircraft. A stores tent and an ammunition dump were set on fire. Although in danger from fire and enemy bombs, he removed the fuel and workshop van to a safe place. He was awarded the Military Cross.⁷

Salvage. By 1915 there was a shortage of equipment, particularly rifles, due to war wastage and the fact that industry had not yet completed its conversion to war production.

Hence, frontline salvage operations were started on a divisional basis. Working closely together on this were the ordnance workshops and unit armourers.

Divisional Workshops. Unit armourers working individually were limited to light repairs. However, by organizing them and their tools into impromptu divisional workshops they were able to repair machine guns and bicycles, replace helmet rivets and manufacture some parts. By repairing salvaged equipment and supplying spare parts through cannibalization and reclamation these workshops made their divisions self-supporting.

Mechanization. With the introduction of motor cars and trucks, a Motor Transport Section of the Canadian Army Service Corps was created with workshops at brigade and higher headquarters. Initially these Service Corps workshops did light repairs to vehicles while Ordnance did heavy repairs and overhaul. This split-responsibility system did not work. Service Corps kept vehicles forward and running as long as possible by patching. When a vehicle was backloaded to Ordnance, it was a stripped derelict. Hence in January 1915, responsibility for all vehicle repairs went to the Service Corps.

Maintenance Principles. World War One saw the start of many of the maintenance principles used to-day; distinct levels of repair, a technical staff, a technical corps and, maintenance in forward areas. However, there was a problem. Each main user of technical equipment – artillery, engineers, armour and service corps – created its own repair system. This led to duplication in tools and tradesmen. There were recommendations for the formation of a corps of maintenance engineers⁸ – but that waited until another war.

Between World Wars^{9, 10}

Mobility of Soldiers. During the 20-year interwar period, the small size of the Canada's Armed Forces, severely limited improvements in equipment design. Improvements – such as they were – were aimed at increasing the mobility of soldiers.

For example, in the late-1930s the wooden wheels on field artillery were replaced by pneumatic tires and there were trials of experimental military truck designs. No vehicles got beyond the prototype stage, but the experience gained was useful when war started.

Field Workshops. During this time there were six Ordnance garrison workshops across Canada. There were no workshops capable of operating in the field. In the opinion of the Chief Ordnance Mechanical Engineer at the time, Lieutenant-Colonel N.C. Sherman, there had to be field workshops, in order to cope with the increasing mechanization of the army and with the shortage of equipment. He used the re-organization of the army reserve in 1936 to introduce his idea.

The reorganized reserve included seven divisions. Each was to have an Army Field Workshop organized into a main workshop, three recovery sections and a number of Light Aid Detachments (LAD).¹¹ The LADs could be attached out to units. The design of these workshops was based on the successful workshop vans of World War One. None of the new field workshops got beyond the stage of initial recruiting.¹² However, the experience gained in setting them up helped during mobilization when war was declared. 2 Army Field Workshop was mobilized and overseas by early 1940.

Eve of World War Two. On the eve of World War Two, Canada, like many of her allies, tried to make up for years of neglect. Re-equipment, mechanization and mobilization were in progress. However, the basic concept for maintenance of army

equipment was still geared for World War One style warfare, i.e. low degree of mechanization, a repair system based on backloading to the rear and battlefield salvage for spare parts. The German *Blitzkrieg* of 1939/40 changed all that.

World War Two

Blitzkrieg – El Alamein. Mobility, fire power and availability of equipment were keys to the success of the German *Blitzkrieg*. Availability of equipment was increased by having repair and recovery of equipment in the forward areas. The British Army adopted this concept in 1942 and used it successfully at the Battle of El Alamein.

During that battle, half of the damaged British tanks were repaired by front-line LADs.¹³ The value of this is exemplified by the award of the Military Cross to Lieutenant David Holmsted. In signing his citation General B.L. Montgomery noted, “His coolness and complete disregard for his personal safety, not only saved a valuable vehicle from falling into the hands of the enemy, but set to all ranks the highest example of courage and devotion to duty.” The tank was back in action in a couple of days.

Maintenance Re-organization. The Canadian army reorganized its maintenance in three stages. In 1941 Army Field Workshops became Divisional Ordnance Workshops. LADs were made separate units permanently attached to the units they supported. In 1942 corps- and army-level workshops were added. In 1943 the British maintenance system of repair forward was adopted. Large formation exercises helped formulate maintenance doctrine.¹⁴

Four-level System of Workshops and Repairs. The new maintenance doctrine led to a four-level system of workshops and repairs which is still used to-day. All major units and formation headquarters, i.e. brigade, division, etc., had LADs for light repairs, e.g. adjustments and small component exchanges. Work beyond that level was backloaded to brigade and divisional troops workshops for heavier repairs, e.g. engine changes. Each division also had a workshop for medium repairs on a semi-production line basis - very important between battles when the workshops were swamped with work. Behind these on the basis of one per corps were semi-static advanced base workshops doing overhaul programs on fleets of equipment and limited manufacturing.¹⁵

Formation of RCEME. In the British Army a separate maintenance engineering corps, the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers was formed on October 1, 1942.¹⁶ This was the result of a series of enquiries going back to before World War Two. One of these committees recommended that *there should be established a Corps of Mechanical Engineers. ... Until the Army gives to mechanical and electrical engineers their appropriate place and influence in the Army system there is a danger that they will be misused by men whose main interests and duties lie in other fields.*¹⁷

The Canadian Army adopted the British maintenance organization in January 1943 and formed the Corps of Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers on May 15, 1944. The US Army Ordnance Corps on the other hand still has both the supply and maintenance functions which in to-day's context has interoperability implications.

Providing battlefield repair and recovery gave RCEME a strong will to ensure that equipment was always ready for action – no matter the time, danger or difficulty – as reflected by the following examples of frontline maintenance.

Frontline Maintenance. During the advance to Ortona, Captain J.C. Armstrong commanding the Three Rivers Regiment's LAD recovered six tanks in the minefield well forward of the front line and exposed to enemy fire. He was awarded the Military Cross.¹⁸

On the final day of the battle for Ortona, the main body of 3 Brigade Workshop was in San Vito (four miles south) and was on three hours notice to move forward. Its Advanced Workshop Detachment had already moved forward. The recovery section was in Ortona, the gunshop was in the divisional artillery lines and the small arms section had set up a production line to work on equipment modifications. With almost no warning enemy planes suddenly strafed the workshop, causing 22 casualties of whom 9 died.¹⁹

In the Ontario Regiment the armourer, Sergeant F.A. Ouimet, moved right behind the tanks in order to carry out immediate repairs to tank machine guns – barrels often needed replacement because of high rates of fire. In one incident, he changed a machine-gun barrel on a tank while it was under enemy fire and was engaging targets near Monte Cassino. He was Mentioned in Dispatches.²⁰

On 25 October 1944, Corporal W.O. Pearson of Governor-General's Foot Guards' LAD performed a welding job on the regimental command tank. He worked for two hours in the open, under fire, while the tank remained in action directing the regiment in its part of the Battle of the Scheldt. He was awarded the Bronze Cross of the Netherlands.²¹

Production – a Proud Record. By the end of the war the repair and recovery organization of the Canadian Army overseas had 11,000 men.²² Their record for the eleven months from D-Day to VE-Day included repairs to 14,000 AFVs, 56,000 trucks, 6,500 guns, 128,000 small arms and machine guns, 61,000 instruments, 28,000 radios and over a dozen awards for valour in maintaining equipment on the battlefield. It was production – a proud record.²³

World War Two ended at the threshold of nuclear war. Vast armies returned to civilian life and much equipment was destroyed or left to rot. But peace was not to be.

The Cold War

The world was soon caught up in the Cold War and a continuing series of small wars. Canada was called upon to provide troops for a continuing series of peacekeeping operations. A new arms race started which led to rapid improvements in weapons systems using the latest technology. Keeping pace with new developments lead to radical changes in tactics, equipment and maintenance.

Soldier-Technician. By 1960 NATO tactics, under a very real nuclear threat, required wider dispersion, better control and more flexibility on the battlefield. Defence from attack by helicopter-borne soldiers in the Communications Zone became a major consideration for support units. Maintainers could not be mere technicians. They had to be soldier-technicians – ready to fight as well as to keep equipment fit for battle.

Brigade Workshops to Service Battalion Maintenance Companies. The demands for dispersion, control and flexibility also prompted a series of trials 1960-68 which tested the validity of grouping all service support units into one service support unit. In 1968-69 Service Battalions were formed based on one per Brigade and one per Militia District. Brigade workshops became service battalion maintenance companies. The aim was to give brigade commanders simplicity of command as well as improved planning,

flexibility and speed of administrative support. However, it has effectively removed equipment maintenance from the direct oversight of brigade group commanders and their staffs. Combat Service Support is usually briefly noted in ORBATs and operation orders with no direct reference to its components, maintenance, supply or transport.

LADs to Unit Maintenance Platoons. After the Second World War, the policy of providing first line support to units remained in place. Unit technicians were assisted by LADs permanently attached to the units. In 1953 all unit mechanics were transferred to the LADs. In 1963 the LADs became maintenance platoons in the units. Unit commanding officers became directly responsible for the maintenance of their equipment. The US Army on the other hand still has unit mechanics at unit level for servicing and light repairs with heavier work being backloaded to Army Ordnance Corps workshops in rear areas.

Technical Control. During World War Two, the senior maintenance staff officer at formation (brigade, division, etc.) headquarters controlled the maintenance of the formation's equipment. He could re-assign all of the formation's maintenance resources to ensure that the commander's priorities were met. Note that during World War Two brigades operated with no embedded artillery or armour. These were provided from divisional or corps resources. Technical control of maintenance was unified under one person who was directly responsible to the commander.

This worked well in an era when the level of technology was not as advanced as today, when only armoured, engineer and artillery units has large numbers of technicians and when most first-line technicians were unit mechanics. Formation maintenance staffs really controlled second-and third-line maintenance resources. To-day staffs and units must deal with an ever-increasing amounts of equipment employing the latest advances in technology.

When Service Battalions and Maintenance Platoons were formed, technical control of maintenance became dispersed among the commanding officers of the service battalion and of combat units. To-day many people are responsible to the commander for the maintenance of his equipment. In addition, maintenance staffs of formation headquarters have been reduced and many of their functions passed down to maintenance commanders at service battalion and unit levels.

Forward Repair Platoon to Forward Repair Group. Since World War Two there has been a continuing evolution of the idea of repair *in situ*. In the 1960s a Forward Repair Platoon was established in the Field Workshop in Germany. All armoured fighting vehicles, command and control vehicles and ambulances were repaired *in situ* on a priority basis by the platoon. By the 1980s this had become the norm. The Forward Repair Platoon became the major portion of the Maintenance Company and was re-named Forward Repair Group.

Mobile Repair Team (MRT) Vehicles. The key to the success of the repair forward concept is the MRT vehicle. The Forward Repair Platoon of the 1960s used medium trucks with 1-ton cranes. To-day it has specially equipped heavy trucks with 5-ton cranes which can lift and carry tank engines and transmissions.

In addition, many MRT vehicles are armoured. Maintainers can repair and recover equipment – anywhere, any time, under any conditions – under fire if necessary. If anything has revolutionized the maintenance of equipment in the Canadian Army over the past thirty years, it is the developments in MRT vehicles. They have literally put our

maintainers in the front line. In view of the trend to inter-operability this is a point worth considering, since the US army maintenance system is different from Canada's.

Post-Cold War

The end of the Cold War in 1991 brought widespread public demand for reductions in Defence. At the same time there were demands for peacekeepers to stabilize wars in the Gulf, Somalia, Rwanda, Yugoslavia, etc. These two conflicting demands have put the Canadian Forces in a continuing dilemma – reduce size and costs yet increase activity and capability.²⁴ When Canada withdrew its brigade from NATO and reduced its field force, it embarked on many more peacekeeping missions.

The growing dependence on equipment has caused another dilemma. The cost of buying or updating equipment and the cost of equipment maintenance is an ever-increasing portion of the defence budget. There is a risk that operational choices may be unduly influenced by the reality of what equipment can be made available, i.e. bought and maintained.

Service Battalions to CS Service Battalions and GS Battalions. Developments in equipment and tactics have increased a brigade's area of operations beyond the scope of its service battalion which is being divided into a Close Support (CS) Service Battalion and a General Support (GS) Battalion. The CS Service Battalion is located forward and is based mainly on the Forward Repair Group of the old service battalion maintenance company. The GS Battalion is located in the rear area and has the remainder of the old service battalion. This means that in forward areas priority equipment, e.g. guns and AFVs, will be repaired *in situ* while all other equipment will be backloaded to GS battalions.

Although repair in rear areas can allow for faster, cheaper production-line repair methods and will also give more manoeuvre room in the forward areas, there is a risk that too much will be backloaded causing delays in repairs which may adversely affect operations.

When Service Battalions were formed in the late 1960s, forward repair was in its infancy and backloading of equipment for medium repairs was very much the norm. There was a similarity in supply, transport and maintenance in that they were essentially rear area functions. To-day with the preponderance of equipment being repaired by MRTs in unit lines this similarity is no longer valid. Maintenance is more of a forward area function while supply and transport remain essentially rear area functions. Yet the three are still considered just CSS. There may still be an implied homogeneity which is no longer valid.

Peacekeeping in near-war conditions. When Canadian troops went to Yugoslavia in 1992, only 3% were maintainers. Because all equipment was heavily used, they were soon swamped with work. Within a year 8% of the contingent were maintainers. As well, additional maintainers were sent over periodically to help clean up the repair backlogs. When the NATO forces were set up the 8% ratio was kept. To-day most second-line repairs are done *in situ* in battle-group locations by MRTs from contingent support elements. While working on front line jobs in peacekeeping missions, maintainers have come under fire too. They must be soldiers as well as technicians as the following examples illustrate.

In June 1992 a platoon of the 1R22eR made a reconnaissance to the Sarajevo airport to open it for humanitarian relief flights. After three days they were ordered to return. Soon they came under mortar attack. A jeep received a direct hit and its three-man crew were wounded. Corporal J.J. Boudreault, was travelling at the end of the convoy with a jeep on tow, After recovering the disabled jeep and assisting the wounded, he repaired both jeeps using parts from a nearby destroyed Volkswagen Golf. He was awarded a Chief of the Defence Staff Commendation.²⁵

In 1993, while it was in Somalia, the Airborne Regiment loaned a 10KW generator to the Hospital in Belet Uen as a gesture of humanitarian assistance. Master-Corporal D.W. Atkinson, Fire Control Systems Technician, was servicing the generator one day when a violent demonstration erupted outside the hospital gates, which were open. A grenade was thrown and shots were fired. While a Canadian Medical Assistant radioed the camp for assistance, he helped a nurse get to cover inside of the hospital, closed the gates and had the Somali hospital guards disarmed. After briefing the Canadian surgeon in the hospital, he let in the injured through the foot gate, then stood guard until the Canadian Response team arrived. He was Mentioned in Dispatches.²⁶

Summary

Up until the end of the 19th century wars were fought *man-to-man*. Equipment was relatively simple and did not require a major maintenance effort. Today many soldiers fight by serving weapons. Armies are very dependent on scarce, highly technical equipment much of which has been kept in service for a long time. Hence, armies require significant maintenance resources. Having this equipment fit and available is a prime requirement for operations and should be an important consideration in operational planning. Soldiers dedicated to maintaining this equipment are needed in the front lines.

Maintenance is technology driven. As technology has advanced so has there been a continual change in maintenance organization, technical skills, numbers of people and repair methods. Consequently, change has been – and will continue to be – a constant factor for maintenance organizations, technicians and way of doing business.

Maintaining Army Equipment has been a Century of Evolution.

NOTES

¹ *Craftsmen of the Army – the Story of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers*; Leo Cooper Ltd, London, 1970, p. 100.

² Colonel M.C. Johnston, *Canada's Craftsmen at 50! – The Story of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering in the Canadian Forces*; (The EME Branch Fund, CFB Borden, 1997), pp. 19-21.

³ In 1919 in recognition of services rendered in World War One, it was renamed the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps.

⁴ Johnston, pp. 21-23.

⁵ David K. Riddle and Donald G. Mitchell; *The Distinguished Conduct Medal to the Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1920*; (The Kirby-Marlton Press, Winnipeg).

- ⁶ LCol R.A. Hodgson, *The Corps of RCEME – a History to 1 Oct 1946*; unpublished DND report, 1963; p. 400.
- ⁷ Riddle and Mitchell, *The Military Cross to the Canadian Expeditionary Force 1915-1921*; (The Kirby-Marlton Press, Winnipeg), p. 94.
- ⁸ Hodgson, p. 367.
- ⁹ Johnston, pp. 23-27 and p. 349.
- ¹⁰ LCol J.K. Bradford, *Twenty Five All Ranks*; unpublished article, 1980; p. 4 as cited in Johnston, p. 24.
- ¹¹ LADs were small 20-men workshops. Each was specially designed (tools, equipment and type of tradesmen etc) for the type of unit (armoured, artillery, engineer etc.) it was to support.
- ¹² Col G.W. Beecroft, transcript of interview with LCol R.A. Hodgson, 1962 and as amended with Colonel M.C. Johnston, 1978; p. 1 as cited in Johnston, p. 26.
- ¹³ *Craftsmen of the Army*, p. 96.
- ¹⁴ Johnston, p. 51.
- ¹⁵ Johnston, p. 96.
- ¹⁶ Army Council Instructions 1605 and 1606, August 1, 1942 as cited in Hodgson, pp. 372-373 and Johnston p. 382.
- ¹⁷ Sir W.H. Beveridge, *Committee on Skilled Men in the Services*, second report October 31, 1941, HM Stationery Office 1942, p. 18 as cited in Hodgson, pp. 371 and 394 and Johnston, p. 381.
- ¹⁸ Captain Armstrong's citations as cited in Johnston, p. 65. (Photo shows LGen Sir Oliver Leese, Commander 8th Army awarding him his Military Cross. The ceremony probably was in Rome.)
- ¹⁹ Maj R. Scott, telephone interview with the author, 1995 as cited in Johnston, p. 68.
- ²⁰ Capt F.A. Ouimet, taped interview with the author, 1983 and cited in Johnston p. 64.
- ²¹ Corporal Pearson's citation as cited in Johnston, p. 84.
- ²² 5,500 in front-line LADs or divisional workshops. 1,500 in third-line workshops, 1,000 in fourth-line advanced base workshops and 3,000 in the rear area workshops, specialist workshops or the three recovery companies. Controlling all of this was a staff of 80 thinly spread out through all formation headquarters.
- ²³ Johnston, p. 115. AFV = Armoured Fighting Vehicle.
- ²⁴ Johnston, p. 449.
- ²⁵ Johnston, pp. 245-246.
- ²⁶ Johnston, p. 176.

Peacekeeping

Maintien de la paix

LE MÛRISSEMENT DU MAINTIEN DE LA PAIX : QUELQUES PRÉCÉDENTS ENTRE 1948 ET 1956

Yves Tremblay

« It was Bunche ... who in effect invented United Nations peacekeeping. »

The Economist

Dans sa forme classique, le maintien de la paix aurait vu le jour lors de la crise de Suez en 1956; Lester B. Pearson (1897-1972) l'aurait inventé pour désamorcer la grave crise provoquée par la nationalisation du canal de Suez. Cette force internationale devait séparer les belligérants et donner un répit dont pourraient profiter les diplomates pour concocter une solution politique à la crise. Pour son idée et ses efforts, Pearson reçut le prix Nobel de la paix l'année suivante.

Cette version officielle canadienne laisse songeur l'historien habitué à inscrire dans la moyenne et longue durée l'événement et à être particulièrement méfiant vis-à-vis de l'histoire politique s'écrivant en majuscules.

Pearson, qui fut d'abord un historien avant de devenir diplomate de carrière, puis ministre des Affaires extérieures, avait un capital culturel personnel construit sur les expériences collectives de la première moitié du XX^e siècle – la Première Guerre mondiale, l'échec de la Société des Nations, les épreuves de la Seconde Guerre mondiale et les tensions du début de la Guerre froide – capital qu'il pouvait mettre à profit. Des précédents historiques proches ou lointains pouvaient également l'inspirer. D'autres acteurs de la crise de Suez, aussi sinon plus expérimentés que lui, Canadiens et étrangers, ont pu ajouter leur sel. J'estime donc que la question de l'origine des forces de maintien de la paix ne peut être ramenée aux faits et gestes d'un seul homme, aussi éminent fut-il. Il faut revenir sur la question pour éviter de perpétuer ce qui ressemble à première vue à un mythe pour l'édification du public canadien.

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Avant de poursuivre, il convient préciser en quoi consiste le maintien de la paix. L'expression a fini par recouvrir un si large spectre d'opérations internationales qu'on risque de créer de la confusion sur les origines, les emplois, les mérites et les limites de ce type d'opération. Mieux vaut d'abord préciser le vocabulaire. Les soldats d'une force

internationale peuvent accomplir des tâches allant de l'enquête ou de l'observation à la pacification par la force en passant par l'interposition armée. À l'intérieur de ce spectre, si l'on écarte l'usage de « maintien de la paix » pour désigner l'ensemble des variantes, on peut le réserver pour qualifier les opérations de la variété 1956. Le maintien de la paix consiste alors à séparer des belligérants à l'aide de contingents de soldats provenant généralement de plusieurs pays, sous commandement international, avec pour finalité de favoriser un règlement pacifique du différend. Les troupes de maintien de la paix doivent être suffisamment nombreuses et bien équipées, y compris un armement léger, pour assumer leur travail de séparation physique avec efficacité.

On voit mieux ainsi ce qui fait l'originalité du maintien de la paix : d'une part, il se distingue des missions d'enquête et d'observation pratiquées depuis fort longtemps et, d'autre part, des opérations de pacification ou de rétablissement d'un *statu quo ante* nécessitant l'usage soutenu de la force, du genre des opérations menées en Corée de 1950 à 1953 ou dans le Golfe Persique en 1990-1991¹. Ces dernières étant de véritables opérations de guerre multinationales pour lesquelles il existe des précédents depuis au moins le XIX^e siècle.

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En histoire des idées comme en histoire des techniques, on considère que les idées et les inventions naissent et se développent dans des contextes particuliers qu'il faut prendre soin de décrire. Il arrive souvent que, plutôt que l'éclair de génie, on mette en évidence la mobilisation plus ou moins concertée de personnes tâtonnantes à la recherche de solutions à des problèmes ardu.

Si l'on penche pour ce type d'approche de l'histoire, on doit se demander d'où Pearson a tiré le concept de maintien de la paix, ou encore quelles expériences antérieures ont pu favoriser l'éclosion de l'idée, ou bien quelles relations personnelles ont pu amener Pearson à formuler sa proposition. C'est une enquête bien vaste à mener et, dans cette communication, je me limiterai aux précédents liés à l'ONU elle-même, et singulièrement à quelques-uns de ceux qui suivent l'instauration de l'Organisation pour la surveillance de la trêve, dans la Palestine de 1948, juqu'à la veille de la crise de Suez en février 1956 (c'est-à-dire le lancement de la Force d'urgence des Nations unies I ou FUNU I).

Quelques mots sur les sources. Dans ce qui suit, j'évite délibérément de citer les mémoires de Pearson ou les travaux de ces biographes, John English en particulier, car il faudrait procéder à une critique exhaustive qui dépasse les limites de cet exposé. Dans une étude plus fouillée, j'espère aborder cet aspect de la question. Je me servirai donc d'information provenant de témoins moins connus du public canadien que Pearson, mais stratégiquement placés pour observer les événements entre 1948 et 1956. Je ferai aussi appel à des documents originaux tirés des archives canadiennes et britanniques.

Bien évidemment, l'ONU avait déjà en 1956 quelques années d'expérience en observation de trêves. On imagine aisément que l'observation pouvait conduire par extension au maintien de la paix. Cette hypothèse peut être supportée par quelques exemples.

L'Organisation des Nations unies pour la surveillance de la trêve ou ONUST (en anglais *United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation* ou UNTSO), à la porte même du

théâtre des événements de 1956, peut être vue comme un cas d'espèce suggérant le maintien de la paix.

L'arrivée de l'ONU en Palestine se présentait sous de mauvais augures. À la suite de l'attentat meurtrier de la rue Yehuda à Jérusalem (22 février 1948), qui s'ajoutait à des mois de tensions inter-ethniques et qui ne manquait pas de provoquer des représailles, le secrétaire général des Nations unies, Trygve Lie (1896-1968), demandait à Ralph Bunche, l'un de ses fonctionnaires les plus doués, de préparer une proposition à soumettre au Conseil de sécurité, proposition visant à l'établissement d'une force des Nations unies de maintien de l'ordre en Palestine. À cause de l'opposition des États-Unis – les décideurs américains se tiraillaient alors sur la position à prendre en Palestine, le texte de Bunche fut rangée sur une tablette. Encore en avril, la commission de l'ONU chargé d'assurer la transition entre le mandat finissant des Britanniques et la partition en États juif et arabe avait déploré que le Conseil de sécurité lui refusait l'« assistance armée nécessaire » pour éviter le chaos en Palestine².

Les violences inter-ethniques continuellement et, à l'été 1948, le médiateur spécial que l'ONU avait nommé, le comte Folke Bernadotte, tentait d'obtenir un cessez-le-feu entre Israéliens et Arabes. On arrivait difficilement à déterminer une ligne de cessez-le-feu et des provocations de part et d'autre, quelquefois meurtrières, minaient les efforts du médiateur. Bernadotte avait présenté en juin 1948 un plan inspiré du projet de partition voté par l'Assemblée générale à l'automne 1947. Le plan de Bernadotte prévoyait deux États, l'un juif et l'autre arabe, les deux dans les mêmes frontières, celle de la Palestine britannique de 1922, avec des juridictions séparées en immigration et un Conseil de l'Union réunissant, outre les deux nouveaux États, la Transjordanie, c'est-à-dire la Jordanie actuelle. Toutefois, le Néguev devait relever exclusivement des Arabes et la Galilée exclusivement des Juifs; Jérusalem serait arabe, mais avec une sorte d'autonomie municipale pour la communauté juive³. Fruit de compromis moins imaginatifs qu'imaginaires, ce plan bizarre n'allait nulle part.

Fin août, Bernadotte modifia son plan et dépêcha son adjoint, l'habile Ralph Bunche (1904-1971), auprès des autorités britanniques et américaines pour obtenir leur soutien. En fait, le plan Bernadotte révisé avait été préparé par Bunche. Comme en juin, les frontières étaient celles de l'ancienne Palestine, mais toute référence à une chimérique union juive et arabe était éliminée. Plutôt que de donner Jérusalem aux Arabes, Bunche voulait l'internationaliser. Quant à la Transjordanie, elle absorberait la Palestine arabe. Plus simple parce qu'il tentait de séparer clairement en deux États deux communautés refusant de vivre ensemble, ce nouveau plan avait pourtant une grande faiblesse, celle justement de joindre les deux communautés hostiles à l'intérieur de Jérusalem. Là, le nombre d'observateur prévu pour l'ONUST paraissait nettement insuffisant compte tenu du climat explosif.

C'est alors que l'idée d'une force de maintien de l'ordre refit surface. Dans une allocution prononcée à l'Université Harvard le 10 juin 1948, Trygve Lie suggérait la création d'une force de gardes ayant pour devoir de surveiller les plébiscites sous la responsabilité de l'ONU, d'administrer les trêves conclues sous l'égide de l'ONU et de servir de force constabulaire dans les zones sous administration internationale. Lie considérait qu'il était difficile à de simples observateurs désarmés de remplir leurs mandats et citait les problèmes survenus dans les Balkans, en Indonésie, en Corée et ceux se déroulant en Palestine pour justifier son projet. Dépêché par Bernadotte aux États-Unis, Bunche chercha donc à obtenir, en sus de l'appui américain pour le nouveau plan

de Bernadotte, une grande force de police des Nations unies. Bunche demanda à Washington 1 000 ou, selon d'autres sources, peut-être jusqu'à 5 000 ou 6 000 soldats bien armés et bien entraînés. Mais le secrétaire d'État, le général George Marshall, refusa catégoriquement⁴.

Devant ce refus, une « seconde meilleure solution » fut proposée. Maintenant, on pensait plutôt à 335 soldats, toujours des Américains, dont la mission principale seraient de séparer physiquement les zones israéliennes et jordaniennes à Jérusalem⁵. Cette proposition a continué à naviguer dans les limbes onusiennes pendant quelque temps et fut même étudiée par le cabinet britannique au début de décembre 1948. Entre-temps, on l'avait édulcorée pour la rendre plus acceptable. Les gardes de l'ONU devenaient des « non militaires », à la fois gardes du corps et gardiens des lieux sous protection de l'ONU. Washington, cette fois, soutint timidement le projet, mais le cabinet britannique ne fut pas dupe de la manœuvre : les ministres britanniques craignaient que la nouvelle proposition du secrétaire général ne soit qu'une étape sur le chemin d'une grande force de police, idée à laquelle le ministère britannique était alors résolument hostile⁶.

Des événements dramatiques causèrent la mise au rancart pour quelques semaines aussi bien de l'idée d'une force pour l'ONU que des efforts de Bunche pour un cessez-le-feu permanent : Bernadotte fut assassiné par des terroristes israéliens et la poudre tonna à nouveau. Lorsque Bunche, reprenant le mandat de Bernadotte, présida les nouveaux pourparlers pour un cessez-le-feu permanent, il imposa l'idée de séparer complètement les forces des belligérants par une zone démilitarisée sous contrôle de l'ONU le long de la ligne de démarcation, des observateurs impartiaux assurant le respect de la zone. Selon Bunche, cette dernière formule trouvait son origine dans une conversation qu'il avait eue avec le conseiller légal du secrétariat, Constantin Stavropoulos. Il ne manquait que des soldats armés en grand nombre plutôt que des observateurs pour arriver au concept du maintien de la paix, ce qui a fait dire au biographe de Bunche que celui-ci a inventé la technique du maintien de la paix⁷. Notons que Bunche reçut le Prix Nobel de la Paix en 1950 pour son travail en Palestine.

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Un détour par l'Asie s'impose avant de poursuivre notre récit sur l'ONUST. Un deuxième cas de force d'observation onusienne est celui de l'*United Nations Commission for Indonesia* (UNCI). Cette mission a été créée en janvier 1949 pour superviser la fin des hostilités entre les Néerlandais et la guérilla indonésienne, surveiller la tenue d'une élection générale et finalement observer le retrait des troupes étrangères d'Indonésie. En décembre 1948, les Hollandais venaient de rompre la trêve convenue auparavant et avaient repris les opérations contre la guérilla. Après une épreuve de force diplomatique dans laquelle les Néerlandais n'avaient l'appui d'aucune grande puissance, ils durent abandonner la partie et retirer leurs troupes. Au cours du retrait, pour éviter des incidents entre les forces rebelles et l'armée coloniale, les observateurs de l'UNCI furent groupés en équipes pour s'interposer entre les ex-belligérants. Puis on a augmenté les effectifs pour faciliter la supervision du cessez-le-feu et surveiller le retrait des troupes néerlandaises. Cette expérience est parfois citée à titre de précédent, par exemple par l'Indien Indar Jit Rikhye⁸, personnalité importante de l'ONU dans les années 1960 et 1970. On pourrait donc voir les observateurs de l'UNCI comme des prédécesseurs des Casques bleus de 1956.

La guerre de Corée a également pu inspirer l'invention du maintien de la paix, non pas comme précédent, mais comme repoussoir. Il fallait donner la possibilité à l'ONU d'intervenir dans des conflits plus significativement qu'avec des observateurs, tout en demeurant en-deçà de la guerre. Ici se pose le problème de la Charte des Nations unies qui ne prévoit pas explicitement le maintien de la paix. On a beaucoup écrit sur l'inadéquation du chapitre VII sur la sécurité collective – en fait des opérations de guerre visant à affirmer le droit international – au contexte de la guerre froide et au blocage quasi automatique de toute tentative d'intervention de l'ONU par les vetos des membres permanents du Conseil de sécurité. Dans le but de contourner les vetos, l'Assemblée générale adopta en novembre 1950 une résolution dite d'« Unité pour la paix » qui proclamait le droit de l'Assemblée générale d'intervenir dans des questions de sécurité, jusque-là l'apanage du Conseil de sécurité⁹. On invoquera justement cette résolution d'« Unité pour la paix » en 1956 lorsqu'il sera nécessaire de contourner les vetos britanniques et français. Après l'expérience traumatisante pour l'ONU que fut la Corée et avec le retour de la menace des vetos systématiques des Soviétiques, un moyen moins compromettant de s'impliquer dans les crises internationales devenait nécessaire si les Nations unies voulaient continuer à assurer leur fonction de gardiens de la paix.

Bref, en tirant les leçons des expériences récentes, la bureaucratie onusienne, à travers un Ralph Bunche par exemple, aurait pu concevoir le maintien de la paix et attendre l'occasion d'une crise future pour le proposer au monde.

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Venons aux Canadiens. Un assistant de Pearson en 1956, John W. Holmes, fait un récit des événements de Suez qui revêt une importance capitale parce qu'il mentionne deux précédents, le premier impliquant le lieutenant général canadien E.L.M. Burns, alors chef d'état-major de l'ONUST, le second à l'occasion d'un débat à la Chambre des Communes¹⁰. Comme Holmes le souligne, ce débat est lié à des discussions entre Britanniques et Canadiens à propos d'un projet de force de maintien de la paix pour le Proche-Orient. Holmes décrit ainsi comment les Britanniques avaient, au début de 1956, semé l'idée chez les Canadiens :

En février 1956, Sir Anthony Eden, le nouveau premier ministre britannique, et Selwynn Lloyd, secrétaire aux Affaires étrangères, ont visité Ottawa. Ils ont exprimé leur profonde inquiétude à propos des intentions de Nasser et indiqué que Lloyd se rendrait au Caire pour y avoir une discussion franche. Malgré tout, ils semblaient encore plus inquiets de la conduite des Israéliens, surtout lorsqu'il commencerait à construire leur canal à la frontière avec la Syrie. Il espéraient que les Américains seraient fermes sur la question de l'exportation d'armes vers Israël parce qu'il ne voulaient pas pousser les Arabes dans les bras des Russes. Lorsque Pearson a suggéré qu'il était difficile d'espérer que les Israéliens se comportent pacifiquement alors qu'ils étaient entourés de voisins voués à leur destruction, Eden a mentionné des assurances que Nasser lui avait données [on est avant la nationalisation]. Lloyd a alors souligné l'attrait qu'il y aurait à policer la région – non pas avec une force de police devant prévenir une agression, chose impossible, mais en accroissant l'effectif de la force d'observation [c'est-à-dire l'ONUST] jusqu'à 1 000 hommes si

nécessaire. Sa manière de dissuader l'émergence de problèmes sur les frontières n'est pas sans rappeler ce que deviendra la FUNU¹¹.

Précisons que les Britanniques terminaient à Ottawa un périple nord-américain. Ils avaient auparavant fait escale à Washington, où ils avaient eu des échanges avec les Américains sur l'ONUST. Un long communiqué américano-britannique, communiqué dit de Washington, fut émis le 1^{er} février 1956. Dans la section 2 de ce communiqué, on évoquait les tensions grandissantes au Moyen-Orient et on proposait le renforcement de l'ONUST en soulignant les efforts que le général Burns avait faits en ce sens¹².

Dans la foulée de la visite d'Eden et de Lloyd, Pearson fut donc interrogé par le chef de l'Opposition officielle, John Diefenbaker. Dans une intervention aux Communes le 31 janvier 1956, Diefenbaker demandait qu'on considère l'envoi d'une force internationale pour garder les frontières entre Israël et ses voisins, assurant de la sorte la survie d'Israël et diminuant les risques d'un nouveau conflit israélo-arabe¹³. Il insistait pour connaître la position du ministre canadien des Affaires étrangères sur la crise au Proche-Orient et dénonçait l'inaction du gouvernement. Le lendemain, Pearson a répondu aux critiques de l'Opposition en employant un langage semblable à celui utilisé la veille par Diefenbaker :

[J'] ai eu des discussions avec les chefs des gouvernements arabes et israélien, de même qu'avec le général Burns lors de mon séjour aux Nations unies. Je pense qu'on pourrait dire bien des choses à propos des efforts faits pour former une telle force de police rapidement dans cette région trouble à titre de mesure provisoire destinée à séparer les armées tandis que la paix est négociée et conclue. Si cette proposition était faite, et je sais que le secrétaire général y pense et que cela a été discuté à Washington, comme mon honorable ami y a référé en citant un communiqué de presse, et que si les Nations unies la prenait en considération, je vous assure que ce pays et d'autres feront ce qu'ils peuvent pour l'implanter¹⁴.

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J'ai mentionné à deux reprises le nom du lieutenant général E. L. M. Burns (1897-1985). En effet, on comprend mieux ces diverses allusions au renforcement de l'ONUST en se référant à celui qui était devenu le véritable porteur de l'idée, le général Burns. En 1962, il a rapporté une conversation avec Anthony Nutting presque un an avant Suez, conversation au cours de laquelle les Britanniques ont testé sur lui l'idée d'une force de maintien de la paix en renforçant sa mission d'observateurs. Voici comment Burns se rappelle cette entrevue :

À Londres [le 4 novembre 1955], on m'a demandé de me présenter auprès de monsieur Anthony Nutting, ministre d'État aux Affaires étrangères, et des experts sur le Moyen-Orient [du Foreign Office]. Ils pensaient alors que rien ne pourrait avancer au Conseil de sécurité, ce parce que les États-Unis étaient réticents à prendre des mesures énergiques à l'endroit d'Israël, tandis qu'on pouvait s'attendre à ce que les Soviétiques bloquent toute mesure désagréable aux Égyptiens. J'ai noté dans mon journal que nous avons alors discuté la possibilité d'insérer des troupes des Nations unies entre les forces armées des parties. J'ai répondu qu'il faudrait des pressions extraordinaires pour que les Israéliens quittent la zone d'El Auja, et que l'on n'amènerait pas des troupes de

l'ONU sans une intervention militaire préliminaire des grandes puissances. C'était une bien bonne prédiction¹⁵.

Le lendemain de la rencontre avec Nutting, Burns a reçu une invitation surprise à déjeuner avec le premier ministre Eden. Au cours du repas, les mêmes points furent à nouveau abordés¹⁶.

Il est important d'ajouter que quelques jours avant les discussions avec Nutting et Eden, Burns avait prononcé une conférence devant le Club Rotary de Tel Aviv. Il avait alors évoqué la possibilité de masquer la frontière internationale avec des soldats de l'ONU afin d'éviter des incidents. Ce même jour (le 20 octobre 1955), il a informé le secrétaire-général de sa proposition. Dag Hammarskjöld, qui a entre-temps remplacé Trygve Lie, lui a demandé d'élaborer plus avant son projet.

Malheureusement, Burns n'a pu terminer une version préliminaire de son rapport sur la transformation de la force d'observateurs avant février 1956. Le moment semblait propice, car Burns venait de lire le communiqué de Washington dans lequel il était mentionné que, dans les mots de Burns, « tout accroissement nécessaire de l'ONUST, toute amélioration de ses capacités, seront considérés favorablement¹⁷ ».

Alors que Burns terminait son rapport, dont la teneur n'était pas un secret, certaines chancelleries occidentales échangeaient des messages avec leurs gouvernements pour évaluer la réception qu'on ferait à ses propositions. Par exemple, les Italiens, qui essayaient à cette époque de se poser en intermédiaire pour la solution des problèmes en Méditerranée, étaient favorables à l'établissement, le long de la ligne de démarcation entre Israël et ses voisins, d'une zone neutralisée confiée à la surveillance d'un ou plusieurs pays. Les Français connaissaient le point de vue italien¹⁸.

Finalement, Burns a soumis son projet aux Israéliens, mais leur réaction n'a pas été à la hauteur de ses espoirs. Moshe Sharett lui a signifié verbalement le refus israélien le 29 février 1956 et un mémorandum du ministère israélien des Affaires étrangères a confirmé le refus le 3 mars¹⁹. Le jour même, Burns pouvait lire dans le *Jerusalem Post*, organe officieux du pouvoir hébreux, les lignes suivantes qu'il rapporte dans son livre de 1962 :

À propos de la suggestion d'accroître l'Organisation de supervision de la trêve, [cela] « est interprété comme un vaste plan d'accroissement du nombre d'observateurs de l'ONU, observateurs armés pour combattre les infiltrations, et comme la création d'une zone démilitarisée d'un kilomètre de chaque côté de la frontière. C'est véritablement la création d'une force de l'ONU. Si c'est bien cela, c'est irréaliste et inacceptable. Israël peuple son désert et a des établissements le long des frontières. La tentative de décréter qu'un kilomètre de territoire devient une zone neutre signifie le désarmement des colons et peut-être la réapparition des fouilles et des inspections comme aux derniers temps du mandat [britannique], ce qui rendraient les colons à nouveau sans défense. Ce n'est pas une proposition qu'un État souverain puisse accepter²⁰ ».

Pour le *Jerusalem Post* donc, il n'y avait pas de doute que les tentatives du chef d'état-major de l'ONUST menait à une force du même type que celle qu'on introduira finalement à l'automne 1956. Devant la rebuffade israélienne, l'idée de transformer l'ONUST a été abandonnée. On peut conclure de l'épisode Burns que, d'une certaine manière, la crise de Suez n'a été que l'occasion trouvée pour mettre en pratique une idée formulée un an auparavant.

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Qu'on me permette deux remarques avant de terminer. La proposition Burns de 1955-1956 n'était pas la première tentative de renforcer l'ONUST. On a déjà évoqué plus haut les efforts de Ralph Bunche en 1948. Les archives britanniques montrent aussi qu'un projet antérieur s'était retrouvé sur le bureau du secrétaire général Hammarskjöld en 1953²¹, à la suggestion du lieutenant général William E. Riley, USMC, chef d'état-major de l'ONUST de 1948 à 1953, l'un des prédécesseurs de Burns à la tête de cet organisme.

Dernière remarque : il est curieux que l'influent *Globe and Mail*, dans son édition du 3 novembre 1956, donc dès l'annonce de la fameuse proposition de Pearson, ne se soit pas laissé entraîner dans la voie de la consécration d'un sauveur de la paix internationale, comme on pouvait le sentir dans certains reportages simplificateurs qui déjà circulaient. Dans un éditorial (non signé) très critique du ministre canadien des Affaires extérieures, on peut lire ceci :

N'est-ce pas comme si l'idée d'une force de police pour le Moyen-Orient avait illuminé soudainement l'esprit de monsieur Pearson [...] ? Il l'a proposée lui-même – l'a-t-il oublié ? – lors d'une allocution à la Chambre des Communes en février dernier, déclarant alors, de la même manière qu'il vient de le faire à l'ONU cette semaine, que le Canada est prêt à collaborer à une telle force. Et d'ailleurs ce journal a souvent fait des pressions en faveur d'une force pour le Moyen-Orient au cours des cinq dernières années.

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Bref, plusieurs sources canadiennes et étrangères mentionnent la proposition d'une force armée pour séparer des belligérants bien avant que Pearson n'amène l'idée sur le plancher de l'ONU dans les premiers jours de novembre 1956. Dès 1948, Trygve Lie et Ralph Bunche avaient fait plusieurs tentatives en ce sens, suivies en 1953 par le général américain Riley, suivi du général Burns, suivi de deux ministres britanniques, Selwyn Lloyd et Anthony Nutting, du premier ministre Eden, d'Eisenhower et Dulles à travers le communiqué de Washington, sans compter tous les hauts fonctionnaires travaillant auprès de ces hommes importants, suivi enfin de Diefenbaker, sans compter l'équipe de journalistes du *Globe and Mail*. L'idée était dans l'air du temps.

Il faut en conclure que le maintien de la paix est une innovation qui s'est développée lentement. C'est le produit d'une époque, le résultat des efforts de plusieurs diplomates et militaires. Suez n'est que l'incident déclencheur permettant l'épanouissement d'un concept lentement mûri. Les hommes et le cadre institutionnel étaient en place depuis suffisamment longtemps pour faire une synthèse des précédents, évaluer les limites des missions en cours et tirer des leçons pour l'avenir lorsque la crise de Suez a éclaté et a fourni l'occasion d'implanter le concept de maintien de la paix.

NOTES

- ¹ Pour une typologie simple et fonctionnelle du maintien de la paix, voir John Hillen, *Blue Helmets : the strategy of UN military operations*, Washington (D.C.), Brassey's, 1998, chap. 1. Hillen distingue non pas trois mais quatre types de missions de paix : l'observation, le maintien de la paix traditionnel, le maintien de la paix de seconde génération et l'imposition de la paix. Ce qui distingue le maintien de la paix traditionnel du maintien de la paix de seconde génération, selon Hillen, c'est un environnement plus ou moins trouble et le degré de coopération des régions hôtes. Les premières seraient tranquilles, comme l'UNFICYP, les secondes animées, comme le Congo. Mais je ne vois pas bien pourquoi Hillen distingue l'UNIFIL, considérée du type II, de l'UNMIH, du type III. C'est que l'évaluation de l'hostilité de l'environnement et du degré de coopération fait appel à trop de subjectivité qu'on peut éviter en s'en tenant à la trilogie observation/maintien de la paix/imposition de la paix, trilogie facilement maîtrisable par un néophyte. En définitive, la dénomination « seconde génération » m'apparaît inutile si ce n'est pour qualifier la multiplication des missions de paix après la chute de l'URSS.
- ² Voir Brian Urquhart, *Ralph Bunche: an American life*, New York, W. W. Norton, 1998 (1^{re} éd. 1993), p. 155-157. Traduction libre.
- ³ Le plan de Bernadotte est le fruit d'une synthèse d'éléments apportés par ses conseillers (Ralph Bunche, Constantin Stavropoulos, John Reedman, Henri Vigier et Paul Mohn), mais la rédaction incombe à Bunche. Voir B. Urquhart, *Ralph Bunche*, p. 163-164.
- ⁴ Folke Bernadotte, *To Jerusalem*, Londres, Hodder and Stoughton, 1951, p. 195; Dan Kurzman, *Genesis 1948 : the first Arab-Israeli war*, New York, Da Capo Press, 1992 (1^{re} éd. 1970), pp. 495 et 554-555 ; David G. Wainhouse et al., *International peacekeeping at the crossroads : national support-experience and prospects*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973, p. 47. Kurzman, qui a interviewé la plupart des acteurs encore vivants, attribue l'idée d'une force de 5 000 à 6 000 à Bunche. B. Urquhart (*Ralph Bunche*, p. 161-162) indique au contraire que Bunche avait certaines réserves sur l'idée de Lie et pensait plutôt à 1 000 « soldats de la paix ».
- ⁵ F. Bernadotte, *To Jerusalem*, p. 207; D. G. Wainhouse et al., *International peacekeeping at the crossroads*, p. 39. Notons que jusqu'à 327 Américains feront partis de l'ONUST en 1949, mais ce sont des observateurs *non armés* (*ibid*, p. 32 et 40).
- ⁶ Public Record Office, CAB 130/44. Au procès-verbal du cabinet s'ajoutent trois annexes donnant les détails du projet de Lie.
- ⁷ B. Urquhart, *Ralph Bunche*, p. 161-162, 169-170, 227-228, 285, 297 et 330. Voir en particulier la déclaration que fait Bunche au Conseil de sécurité le 28 octobre 1948, qui conduira à une résolution du Conseil le 9 novembre suivant (*ibid*, p. 189).
- ⁸ Indar Jit Rikhye, « Peacekeeping and peacemaking », dans Henry Wiseman, dir., *Peacekeeping: appraisals and proposals*, Londres, Pergamon Press, 1983, p. 10. Avis partagé par David W. Wainhouse et al., *International peace observation : a history and forecast*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966, p. 317.
- ⁹ Alan James, *The politics of peace-keeping*, Londres, Chatto & Windus, 1969, p. 1-2.
- ¹⁰ John W. Holmes, *The shaping of peace, volume 2 : Canada and the search for world order 1943-1957*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1982, p. 357.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 353. Traduction libre. L'ONUST a eu à un certain moment un effectif de 677 hommes, mais en avait habituellement moins (David W. Wainhouse, dir., *International peacekeeping at the crossroads*, p. 34).

- ¹² On peut trouver le texte complet du communiqué de Washington dans Foreign Office, Librarian Department, *British and foreign State papers 1955-56*, Londres, HMSO, vol. 162, p. 705-708.
- ¹³ Canada, *House of Commons Debates. Official Report*, Vol. I (1956), 22^e Parlement, 3^e session, 31 janvier 1956, p. 723.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 777. Traduction libre.
- ¹⁵ Burns rapporte cette conversation avec Nutting dans son livre *Between Arab and Israeli*, Toronto, Clarke Irwin & Company, 1962, p. 98. Répétons que l'augmentation des effectifs d'une force d'observation n'est pas en soit un précédent, comme on l'a vu avec l'UNCI.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷ Voir le journal de Burns conservé aux Archives nationales du Canada (MG31, G6, Vol. 7) pour les 20 et 31 octobre 1955, les 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 et 15 février 1956. Ce qui inquiétait alors particulièrement Burns, c'était la multiplication des incidents entre Israéliens et Égyptiens à El Auja. Le cabinet britannique fut continuellement tenu au courant des efforts de Burns. Voir PRO, FO 800/731, folios 161-162.
- ¹⁸ D'après une dépêche de l'ambassadeur de France en Italie à Christian Pineau, ministre des Affaires étrangères, 10 février 1956, citée par Maurice Vaïsse, « Les relations franco-italiennes et la crise de Suez », dans M. Vaïsse, dir., *La France et l'opération de Suez*, Paris, ADDIM, 1997, p. 86.
- ¹⁹ Journal de Burns, ANC, MG31, G6, vol. 7.
- ²⁰ E.L.M. Burns, *Between Arab and Israeli*, p. 138. Le livre de Burns est moins précis que le journal pour le mois de février 1956, ce qui fait que les échanges entre lui-même, Hammarskjöld, A. Cordier et le lieutenant-colonel canadien J.-P. Castonguay, président de la *Mixed Armistice Commission* entre Israël et la Syrie, au sujet de la transformation d'une force d'observateurs en une force de maintien de la paix avec l'agrément des parties concernées, sont moins mis en évidence. À lire le journal, on ne peut manquer de sentir que l'origine de l'UNEF se trouve dans les discussions entre Burns, son état-major, le bureau du secrétaire-général à New York et le Foreign Office. Notons que Pearson n'est à peu près jamais mentionné dans le journal de Burns.
- ²¹ PRO, FO 800/834, folio 22. Riley, qui sera plus tard ministre des États-Unis en Turquie, avait des dons de diplomates. Il a joué un rôle décisif auprès de Ralph Bunche alors que celui-ci tentait d'arracher aux Israéliens un cessez-le-feu en novembre 1948 (D. Kurzman, *Genesis 1948*, p. 636).

THE HISTORY OF TRAINING FOR PEACEKEEPING IN THE CANADIAN FORCES 1956-1998

Trista Grant

There is a significant gap in the historiography of Canadian participation in peacekeeping. The question of how Canada produces quality peacekeepers is seldom mentioned in the literature. Scholars offer generalizations like the professionalism of the Canadian Forces (CF) and the international reputation of the country to explain why Canadians are considered good peacekeepers, but few ask if Canadian Forces personnel have received special training or possess particular qualifications or peacekeeping skills. Academics have not examined this nation's peacekeeping history at its most basic level to determine how the preparation of Canada's soldiers transformed them into peacekeepers.

In the first decades of Canada's involvement in international peacekeeping following the Second World War, the Canadian military held fast to the belief that the best peacekeepers were well-trained general-purpose soldiers. In the post-Cold War era this belief gradually changed to reflect the fact that peacekeeping situations began to demand more of peacekeepers than traditional military skills. The Canadian Forces have come to the realization that, in addition to being combat-capable, multi-purpose soldiers, peacekeepers need "contact skills." Major David Last and Dr. Ken Eyre, in their 1997 article "Combat and Contact Skills in Peacekeeping: Surveying Recent Canadian Experience in UNPROFOR¹," defined "contact skills," as inter-personal ones such as negotiation and mediation techniques, general knowledge of the workings and mandate of the United Nations, a thorough knowledge of the Rules of Engagement, humanitarian aid and human rights issues, public relations, civil-military cooperation and mission-specific knowledge such as local customs, culture and language.² These skills are needed in addition to, not in place of, traditional "combat skills." The attitudes of the CF toward peacekeeping duty and actual training for peacekeeping have evolved in response to a dynamic new agenda in modern international peacekeeping, in order to incorporate skills that fall outside the spectrum of traditional military training. The realization that training standards and procedures needed to be reviewed and changed has been reached in the face of requests for Canadian peacekeepers to participate in peacekeeping missions in increasingly complex and dangerous theatres around the globe.

The CF's traditional posture, and one that governed peacekeeping training for almost fifty years, is best summarized by a 1989 quotation from then Chief of Defence Staff Paul Manson:

Canadian soldiers are trained as "soldiers first;" that means that Canadian contingents can be deployed in peacekeeping roles as integrated, self-sustaining units capable of dealing with the widest range of potential military contingencies. The determination to deploy only fully-trained military

personnel in what can be, potentially, a very dangerous role, bears witness to Canada's unwillingness to put the lives of those who serve in Canadian peacekeeping contingents at unnecessary risk.³

Admiral John Anderson, another Chief of Defence Staff, echoed this sentiment in 1993 when he claimed that "[t]he best trained peacekeeper is still a well trained and well-equipped member of the military."⁴ This "soldiers first" approach is apparent in both documentary and oral history sources, and has persisted over time.

Throughout the Cold War period, peacekeeping was treated as an offshoot of war, and was prepared for as such. Well trained soldiers were, in the opinion of the CF, the best people to put into a peacekeeping situation. The dearth of relevant documentation for this period makes a point: peacekeeping was not the priority from the 1950s to the 1980s that it would become in the 1990s, and as a result little specialized training for peacekeeping took place. A 1966 Department of National Defence document, entitled *Canadian Operations in Support of the United Nations*, addressed peacekeeping training, but it was only intended as a "general background paper on peacekeeping operations" and was not expected to take the place of standard armed forces training manuals.⁵ This paper asserted that

the UN representative must have the military training that will equip him to act calmly and efficiently under the warlike conditions that sometimes prevail in such operations. Further, military units have a recognized degree of self-sufficiency that enables them to exist under the most adverse living conditions
...⁶

This is a statement of the need for flexibility and adaptability in peacekeeping situations, but mainly it is an early declaration of the conviction of the CF that, in peacekeeping, military training is not only necessary, but also the single most crucial ingredient.

When peacekeeping training did occur, it was sporadic and varied from unit to unit. Soldiers themselves held differing views about how peacekeeping duty fit into their chosen profession, and what type and amount of additional training they thought was required. Retired Major Bud Dion, in describing the training he went through in preparation for four missions to Cyprus between the 1960s and 1980s, said that he received extensive training in all four cases, including background research and information on the changing Rules of Engagement. He also received refresher training in standard military skills such as driving, equipment familiarity and riot control. Retired Sergeant Ray St. Louis similarly remembered being involved in training exercises for peacekeeping in the early 1960s. He recalled a base-wide exercise in which soldiers role-played as peacekeepers and combatants in various geographical locations.⁷ Yet, of the former peacekeepers interviewed for this study, only these two recalled any type of in-depth training for peacekeeping before the late 1980s. Although many received some basic information about the geography and population of peacekeeping destinations, that information was often the extent of their pre-deployment training.

Some soldiers had some difficulty adapting to the rules of engagement in peacekeeping. Retired Sergeant John O'Neil said that he was "trained basically for war ... confrontations where you would shoot first and ask questions later." Although he knew the rules of engagement and how he was to conduct himself as a peacekeeper, the United Nations operation in Cyprus in 1966 was clearly an adjustment for him, and as to

the status of peacekeepers in theatre, he revealed frustration in saying that, "... on UN peacekeeping we were taught to try to negotiate long before the shooting ever started ... we were there to be the public whipping boy, if they wanted to talk that way to us." Yet he, like several others, stated that he thought the rules of engagement, as he understood them, were reasonable for the situation he was in, and in fact he only had to load ammunition into his weapon twice, and never discharged it at all. On his first peacekeeping tour he was part of the fourth regiment into Cyprus, and he stated that, in subsequent missions, he felt that the soldiers were better trained, partly because of the knowledge of previous tours that had been communicated to them. He did not receive any type of de-briefing, and made the interesting comment that "I had never seen any of our guys go through the stress they all talk about nowadays. Stress put on them by not knowing what's going on, or not being kept in the picture." O'Neil also stated that, having served in peacekeeping missions over thirty years right up to the recent past, there was never much preparation involved, and in fact because he went to Cyprus in 1966 as a fill-in, he got only ten days of pre-deployment training instead of the recommended six weeks.⁸

The end of the Cold War revolutionized the international situation, and resulted in an increasing demand for peacekeepers and the proliferation of tasks involved in peace support operations. This produced a whole new dilemma for Canadian peacekeepers, as CF resources were stretched to the breaking point and Canadian soldiers were in demand and being tested as never before in their role as Blue Berets. A major factor in this dilemma was that, as the United Nations' Brian Urquhart stated, the ideal peacekeeper would have to be "trained in the techniques of peacekeeping and negotiation as well as the more bloody business of fighting."⁹ These requirements were not new, but it was finally becoming apparent to policy makers, and the CF, that peacekeepers required training tailored to the challenges of both classical peacekeeping and the new multi-faceted peace support operations.

Some, like Rick Siddons, a retired Sergeant of the Royal Canadian Air Force, did not believe that any additional training was required for peacekeeping duty. He was a member of the aircrew on flights bringing humanitarian aid into several camps in peacekeeping theatres in the early 1990s. He felt that no extra training for peacekeeping was required in his case, and did not get any apart from a briefing about the particulars of the operations, because his duties as a member of a peacekeeping operation were not drastically different from his regular duties.¹⁰ This is an exceptional case. In the post-1990 era, the peacekeeping ethic of the Canadian Forces has evolved, and as peacekeeping has come to be seen as taking over a larger part of the resources of the CF, and peacekeeping missions themselves have become more dangerous and demanding, the CF has put more emphasis on training for peacekeeping. There is much evidence that skills beyond basic military and occupational skills have always been required in peacekeeping situations, but the CF has only attempted to institutionalize the learning of such skills since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Major Dan Drew believed that the early-1990s peacekeeping mission in Bosnia was "a totally new picture for all of us," and that it was different from traditional peacekeeping, in that there was little peace already in place to keep. He stated that, in preparation for deployment with a largely reservist battalion, he "beat the guts out of them" over three months of training in order to prepare them mentally and physically, because there was equal need to harden their bodies and minds.¹¹ This requirement for

mental and physical toughness was not new for military personnel, but underlines the need for strong combat skills in more recent peacekeeping operations. A quote from another peacekeeper highlights the number and variety of skills that training for the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia required. Colonel Gordon Grant, in commenting about the peacekeeping role NATO undertook in Bosnia, put forth that the aims of the peacekeepers were to "... go there and stop the atrocities, stop the ethnic cleansing and establish some stability, however apprehensive the people were, however tenuous – NATO was to go there with all possible force and ability to re-establish some stability in the country." He believes that these objectives were met by NATO's multinational force, yet pointedly asks, when considering the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions in the long-term, "How do you resolve a conflict that's based on deep-seated hatred over hundred, if not thousands of years?"¹² Some, like Colonel Kevin McLeod, who served in Cyprus in 1993 and 1994, and in Bosnia in 1995, believe that democracy is the answer to this question.¹³ This, in turn, makes election supervision a task of peacekeepers and UN observers, which adds to the roster of combat and contact skills required by peacekeepers.

To fully prepare soldiers for their roles in modern and multi-faceted peace support operations, the CF has institutionalized the previously informal practice of bringing in "vets" to brief future peacekeepers, as is done at the Peace Support Training Centre. Luiz Araujo, Chief Instructor at the PSTC, acknowledges that "you can never be prepared for what you're going to face in theatre ... [you] are not prepared to deal with horrors of war until you physically are there and see what you are dealing with."¹⁴ But the worth of informal "talking sessions" has been recognized and seized upon as a useful training tool to transmit the knowledge and experience of seasoned peacekeepers, in order to supplement specific skill-oriented training.

Virtually without exception, Canadian soldiers extol the professionalism of the Canadian Forces. When speaking about the conduct of Canadian peacekeepers in their interaction with belligerents in Bosnia, Major Drew asserted that "Canadian soldiers reacted extremely professionally to any situation; less seasoned soldiers would have caused an international incident." Yet international incidents have occurred, such as the events in Somalia which transpired during Canada's participation in the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM), which included the shooting of Somali intruders at the Canadian compound in Belet Huen, the beating death of a teenager in the custody of soldiers from 2 Commando of the Canadian Airborne Regiment, and an apparent suicide attempt by one of these soldiers. The legacy of the most recent Balkan conflicts and the failed United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) include equally disheartening details, as recent press about the poisoning of Canadian peacekeepers in Croatia and the scape-goating of UNAMIR Force Commander Lieutenant-General Romeo Dallaire has shown. There is promising evidence, however, that the CF and the federal government have taken a lesson from years of accumulated peacekeeping knowledge, as well as discerning the nature of new types of peacekeeping and has embarked upon a serious re-evaluation of its training practices over the past decade.

In the period after 1989 the number of documents pertaining to CF training for peacekeeping grew as the activity took on a new complexity and importance. In addition, more attention was paid to the multiplicity of peacekeeping roles. As Peter Langille pointed out in *The Ottawa Citizen* in 1995,

... the requirements for peacekeeping have changed. Our officers, professional soldiers and reserves need advance training for increasingly sophisticated UN missions; general training in how to manage and defuse a crisis; courses in how to conduct themselves with new partners in larger multi-dimensional missions, as well as specialized training in their assigned roles and responsibilities... Moreover, it can't come as any real surprise to some military leaders that soldiers who have been trained to react with force and to pursue victory aggressively have, on occasion, found it difficult to adjust to the equally demanding requirements of peaceful third-party intervention.¹⁵

Three government reports drew attention to the fact that, although Canadian peacekeepers had effectively functioned in peace support operations by relying on their basic military training and occupational skills in the past, there was a growing need for additional skills. The March 1993 Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Meeting New Challenges: Canada's Response to a New Generation of Peacekeeping*, the June 1993 Report of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans' Affairs, *The Dilemmas of a Committed Peacekeeper: Canada and the Renewal of Peacekeeping*, and the 1996 *A Report on a Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff Study to Determine Training Requirements for Canadian Peacekeepers* all basically pointed to the need for training reform. The Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (DCDS) study, the most recent of the three, drew upon existing information as well as its own research to conclude that, although the CF never wavered from its conviction that the best core training for peacekeeping duties was general purpose military training, there was room for improvement and certain additional skills and knowledge would be assets in peace support operations. In the case of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, impatience was expressed with the CF's insistence that the best trained peacekeeper was still a well equipped member of the military; while this was acknowledged as true, the denial of the need of any additional skills outside the scope of traditional military training was starting to infuriate those who read headlines about the war-like situations into which Canadian soldiers were being sent.

The 1990s has seen an attempt to maintain the standard of military training that is evident in the Canadian Forces, and which is so crucial to success in peacekeeping operations, while also preparing peacekeepers in less conventional areas. Intra-state conflicts with few clear cut boundaries between combatants have muddied the waters of international peacekeeping, and soldiers are finding themselves less and less prepared for the realities of peace support operations. The CF started putting its new peacekeeping ethic into writing in the mid-1990s, through a series of DCDS "Instructions" issued by National Defence Headquarters on the training and screening processes for peacekeepers. While still agreeing that core military training was the best preparation for peacekeepers, these new directives decided it was better to err on the side of caution and recommended additional training in areas like mediation and conflict resolution techniques; an introduction to the UN system and the UN Charter; UN command and control structures; an overview of peacekeeping activities; mission security and defence; emergency procedures; the proper conduct of a Canadian soldier in a multinational force; the importance of the roles of civilians in "peacebuilding" initiatives; humanitarian aid; impartiality; and cultural sensitivity and mission-specific topics such as the history, tradition and culture of the country to which they were being sent. Also included in this list was a recommendation for the establishment of a Canadian peacekeeping centre to contribute to the standardization of the quality and duration of training for peacekeeping.

Documents like the *NDHQ Instruction DCDS 4/96. Screening Preparation and Training of Individuals for Peace Support Operations*, which dealt with pre-deployment training, gave voice to DND's attempt to resolve the soldier/peacekeeper quandary. It began with a familiar refrain, but with a new twist:

The best core training for peace support operations is general purpose military training with emphasis on basic combat and occupational skills. Prior to deployment, refresher training may be required to ensure currency and proficiency in these skills. There is also a requirement to augment them with additional, mission-specific knowledge and to ensure that deploying personnel are thoroughly briefed on operational and administrative aspects.¹⁶

This Instruction carefully sets out the criteria for prerequisite training and qualifications in detail, as well as the required mission-specific training. Mandatory refresher or prerequisite training for any UN peace support operations posting must include: weapons handling; NBCD (nuclear, biological, chemical disarmament); first aid; physical fitness; and driving. The entire scope of pre-deployment training must also encompass the following mission specific subjects, if they are applicable to the peace support operation: mine awareness; routine personal survival skills; enhanced first aid; preventive medicine measures; operation and maintenance of equipment; intervention between hostile factions; equipment recognition; conduct of investigations; monitoring for violations; operation of communications equipment; navigation; media relations; relationships with governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in peace support operations; stress management; and use of force. These categories are repeated in DCDS 5/96. The articulation of a decisive agenda for peace support operations training was an important step in beginning the standardization of this training. Equally important were the initiatives to begin addressing relatively new issues in peacekeeping, such as civil-military cooperation, peacekeeping training centres, and stress-awareness training.

The 1997 Report of the Somalia Inquiry, which was produced in the aftermath of the misbehaviour of CF peacekeepers in Somalia in 1993, also highlighted pre-deployment and in-theatre training as key aspects of preparing CF personnel for peacekeeping. Its conclusions stated that:

Training is the bedrock of discipline and the foundation for the professional image of the armed forces. Fundamental to the operational readiness of a unit is the question of whether troops are well trained to perform all aspects of the specific mission for which the unit was being deployed. In this report, we have striven to answer the question of whether the soldiers who were deployed to Somalia were properly trained for their mission. This involved an assessment of the nature and adequacy of the actual training received and the policies underlying the training, together with an examination of whether the performance of our soldiers could have been improved or enhanced if they had been exposed to additional, more focused and sophisticated training. Our conclusion regarding mission-specific training is that on almost every count the Somalia mission must rate as a significant failure.¹⁷

The rhetoric of shame was employed throughout this report, and it made several recommendations for improvement. The CF has adapted to these recommendations for change by further underlining the "soldiers first" attitude, while also stressing the need for contact skills.

Interviews with peacekeepers who have served in more recent peacekeeping operations like Bosnia support the idea that there are specific, identifiable skills that should be taught to prospective peacekeepers. The conflicts in the Balkans, Somalia, and Rwanda are the missions that seem to have had the greatest impact on peacekeeping training in the CF. Over the last forty years the Canadian Forces have shown a gradual willingness to adapt and change in response to the demands placed upon them for peacekeepers. This is evident in the increase in the number of federal government and National Defence documents that deal with peacekeeping training. Years of accumulated peacekeeping knowledge and experience have resulted in the realization by the CF that the nature of peacekeeping is that it requires combat and contact skills, which has led to new training standards and practices. The uniform implementation of these is not yet a reality, however, at the heart of the new peacekeeping ethos in the CF is the desire to produce capable, professional soldiers who will be protected from harm, both physical and psychological, by the training they receive.

NOTES

- ¹ UNPROFOR was the United Nations Protection Force in Former Yugoslavia.
- ² Major David Last and Dr. Ken Eyre, "Combat and Contact Skills in Peacekeeping: Surveying Recent Canadian Experience in UNPROFOR," *Peacekeeping and International Relations*, 26, No. 4-5 (July/October 1997), 8.
- ³ General Paul D. Manson, "Peacekeeping in Canadian Foreign and Defence Policy," *Canadian Defence Quarterly* 19, No. 1 (Summer 1989), 8.
- ⁴ Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans' Affairs, *The Dilemmas of a Committed Peacekeeper: Canada and the Renewal of Peacekeeping* (Ottawa: Report of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans' Affairs, June 1993), 22.
- ⁵ Department of National Defence, *Canadian Operations in support of the United Nations* (1966).
- ⁶ *Canadian Operations in support of the United Nations*, introduction.
- ⁷ Ray St. Louis, Retired Sergeant of the Canadian Forces, *Interview by Author*, 29 July 1999, Ottawa, Tape Recording, University of Ottawa.
- ⁸ John O'Neil, Retired Sergeant of the Canadian Forces, *Interview by Author*, 19 July 1999, Ottawa, Tape Recording, University of Ottawa.
- ⁹ Brian Urquhart, "Keeping the Peace: The Argument for a United Nations Volunteer Military Force," *Social Education*, 58, No. 7 (November/December 1994), 410.
- ¹⁰ Rick Siddons, former member of the Canadian Forces, *Interview by Author*, 2 August 1999, Ottawa, Tape Recording, University of Ottawa.
- ¹¹ Major Dan Drew, 2PPCLI, of the Canadian Forces, *Telephone Interview with Author*, 27 July 1999, University of Ottawa.
- ¹² Colonel Gordon Grant of the Canadian Forces, *Interview by Author*, 23 November 1997, Petawawa, University of Ottawa.
- ¹³ Colonel Kevin McLeod of the Canadian Forces, *Interview by Author*, 23 November 1997, Petawawa, University of Ottawa.
- ¹⁴ Major Luiz Araujo, Chief Instructor at the Canadian Forces Peace Support Training Centre, *Telephone Interview with author*, 5 August 1999, Ottawa/Kingston, University of Ottawa.
- ¹⁵ Peter Langille, "Focus on combat training ignores other crucial skills," *The Ottawa Citizen* (12 February 1995).

- ¹⁶ Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff, *NDHQ Instruction DCDS 4/96. Screening Preparation and Training of Individuals for Peace Support Operations*, (National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa: Issued on authority of the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff, 6 December 1996), 3.
- ¹⁷ Somalia Commission of Inquiry, *Report of the Somalia Commission of Inquiry* (Canada: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997), conclusion.

ENTRE LA GUERRE ET LA PAIX : RÉFLEXIONS SUR LES ATTITUDES ET COMPORTEMENTS MILITAIRES DANS LES OPÉRATIONS DE PAIX

Richard Carrier

Depuis la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, le Canada a joué un rôle important dans des opérations de rétablissement ou de maintien de la paix. Certains ont invoqué que le soldat s'était transformé en travailleur humanitaire et que la guerre, la vraie, était disparue. Le rôle traditionnel d'une force armée, celui de se préparer à la guerre ou de la faire, ferait partie du passé. Je conteste ces deux propositions. Depuis quelques années, les troupes canadiennes et celles d'autres pays ont été à plusieurs reprises employées, dans le cadre de l'ONU ou de l'OTAN, dans des opérations de paix à caractère militaire. On a ainsi redécouvert, par nécessité, le besoin d'un *fighting power*¹ même là où la préservation ou le rétablissement de la paix sont les objectifs recherchés. Mais la réflexion sur les attitudes et comportements militaires qui permettent de mener à bien les missions et de maintenir un haut niveau d'efficacité semble avoir été négligée. A-t-on oublié que la discipline, la cohésion, le moral, l'initiative, le courage et même l'acceptation de la mort sont encore des attributs fondamentaux qui permettent à une unité d'être opérationnelle et efficace ? Peu importe la mission confiée, le succès repose sur le niveau de *fighting power* déployé par les hommes et les femmes sur le terrain. Cette réalité demeurera, pour l'essentiel, inchangée dans le futur.

Les propos contenus dans les pages qui suivent n'ont pas de prétention. J'espère par contre qu'ils susciteront une réflexion, car malgré le ton, le sujet abordé est grave et mérite toute notre attention. Les pages suivantes ne traitent pas des choix politiques et stratégiques faits par le Canada et le ministère de la Défense nationale. Les incidents survenus dans la dernière décennie ne constituent rien d'autre qu'un point de réflexion. Le seul but de ce texte est de réfléchir aux problèmes liés au *fighting power* que les Forces canadiennes ont déployé et déploieront dans les prochaines années lors d'opérations de paix.

Depuis la fin de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, le rôle joué par le Canada et son institution militaire sur la scène internationale est important. Dans un après-guerre caractérisé par une guerre froide qui semblait ne pas vouloir se terminer, le Canada, en tant que membre de l'OTAN, a participé, fièrement mais humblement, à la défense collective de l'Europe occidentale et de l'Amérique du Nord. Mais ce que la plupart des gens retiennent depuis 1945, c'est la présence incontournable et remarquée du Canada dans des missions de paix sous l'égide des Nations unies. Depuis les premières participations canadiennes jusqu'au début des années 1960, le bérêt bleu canadien est devenu le symbole « par excellence » du Canada dans le monde.

Bien avant que ne prenne fin la grande rivalité est-ouest, certains avaient imaginé une société internationale transformée. Deux idées reçues, largement fausses ou

exagérées, se sont, avec plus ou moins de succès, répandues. D'abord, l'idée simple que la guerre était en train de disparaître, ou tellement en voie de se modifier, qu'elle allait perdre ce qui en faisait son essence. Or, cette manière de voir ne traduit rien d'autre que l'idée aronienne de la « guerre caméléon ». La guerre, selon les époques, change de forme, d'intensité et de méthodes. Durant la guerre froide, on a vu ses transformations. Mais Aron n'a jamais pensé que la guerre perdrait ce qui faisait d'elle une activité sociale à part : un choc violent entre des entités plus ou moins organisées². Ensuite, une seconde idée est apparue. Puisque la guerre se transforme tellement, il en ira de même avec l'institution militaire et le soldat. Bien sûr, les plus lucides ont compris que les armes nucléaires, loin de faire disparaître le rôle et l'importance traditionnels du soldat, l'ont augmentés. En marge de la confrontation nucléaire, des conflits violents de type conventionnel se sont multipliés et ont nécessité des interventions internationales sous l'égide des Nations unies³. C'est dans cette perspective que certains ont imaginé que le « béret bleu » pouvait ou devrait peut-être devenir un « béret blanc », en fait, un travailleur humanitaire avec des aptitudes physiques et des capacités organisationnelles de type militaire, mais sans l'orientation naturelle du guerrier, celle de faire la guerre.

Plus d'un demi-siècle après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, la guerre se porte encore très bien et la transformation du soldat, imaginée ou anticipée, ne s'est pas produite. À l'inverse, deux tendances sont apparues avec force depuis quelques décennies : la présence de plus en plus nécessaire de forces militaires dans les missions de paix de l'ONU et la constatation, navrante, que la force et la détermination des professionnels de la guerre sont souvent parmi les facteurs qui empêchent la violence de se perpétuer. Ainsi, peut-être mieux que quiconque, les Forces canadiennes ont exprimé ces deux réalités avec un niveau inégalé de compétence et de professionnalisme que l'on oublie trop souvent.

Les années 1990 ont considérablement changé la nature des problèmes liés au maintien de la paix. La Somalie et le démembrement de la Yougoslavie ont démontré les problèmes et les limites inhérents des opérations d'interposition, d'imposition et de maintien de la paix. Les récents déploiements de forces militaires dans le monde afin de participer à des opérations de paix ont été ardues. Les séquelles pour les forces armées des pays membres de ces missions ont été importantes. Le cas canadien en Somalie est un exemple parmi d'autres⁴.

Loin de s'éloigner des opérations de paix, le soldat, en tant que militaire, s'en est rapproché plus que jamais depuis les cinquante dernières années. Avec les premiers déploiements en Somalie et en ex-Yougoslavie, on constate que le caractère militaire des opérations de paix semble de plus en plus présent. Les propos de Allen Sans résument cette tendance : « L'aspect militaire du maintien de la paix s'accroît. Les opérations de maintien de la paix font davantage jouer la menace du recours à la force⁵. » Pourtant, je crois que l'on s'est très peu interrogé sur la formation des hommes que l'on envoie dans les environnements hostiles et où ils risquent, souvent malgré eux, d'être considérés comme des acteurs du conflit et d'y laisser leur vie. Suite à l'expérience somalienne, Berel Rodal souligne :

Une autre leçon pertinente est la suivante : il est extrêmement important de s'assurer que les forces armées sont dûment préparées et structurées en vue des opérations de paix, et de considérer la sélection et l'entraînement du personnel à cette fin comme étant aussi importants, sinon plus, que celles qui précèdent les opérations militaires classiques⁶.

Cette citation traduit une nouvelle tendance, celle à l'instruction militaire non traditionnelle⁷. L'idée est d'offrir aux militaires une formation complémentaire à celle qu'ils reçoivent en tant que soldat; elle pourrait ainsi mieux les préparer aux défis différents des opérations de paix. Je crois cette idée nécessaire et excellente. Par contre, si cette formation non traditionnelle détrône celle dite traditionnelle, il s'agira d'une erreur. De plus, ces opérations de paix peuvent avoir lieu à l'extérieur du cadre formel des Nations unies, donc avec des règles de déploiement et des objectifs politiques différents. Dans ces contextes nouveaux, la menace de l'utilisation de la force va se manifester de plus en plus.

Ma réflexion s'alimente d'une idée simple : les militaires canadiens risquent d'évoluer de plus en plus dans un environnement de combat et de participer à des opérations de paix à caractère militaire. Il leur faudra démontrer des attitudes et comportements militaires adéquats et, en bout de ligne, efficaces. En septembre 1993, pendant une semaine, des troupes canadiennes ont été en situation de combat contre des troupes croates. Pour sauver des Serbes du nettoyage ethnique, des soldats canadiens ont combattu et risqué leur vie. Au Canada, l'épisode de la « poche de Medak » est pratiquement passé sous silence, et on a oublié qu'il s'agissait de la plus importante bataille à laquelle ont pris part des militaires canadiens depuis la Corée. Dans les futures opérations de paix où les probabilités d'engagements violents seront présentes, l'efficacité des unités canadiennes reposera sur un haut niveau de *fighting power* ou de capacité de combat⁸.

Utilisé par l'historien Martin van Creveld pour réfléchir sur deux armées durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, le concept de *fighting power* est la réponse au problème central de l'efficacité militaire des armées. Un haut niveau de puissance combative est le moyen le plus sûr d'atteindre un niveau correspondant d'efficacité militaire. Pour van Creveld, la puissance combative est « the sum total of mental qualities that make armies fight⁹ ». Plus une force terrestre sera capable de créer et de maintenir le *fighting power*, plus elle sera efficace. Pour lui, ses manifestations sont : la discipline, la cohésion, le moral, l'initiative, le courage, la ténacité, la volonté de se battre et l'acceptation de la mort. Pour des unités dont le mandat est le combat et la victoire sur l'ennemi en temps de guerre, ces éléments semblent naturels. Il n'en est rien. Bien des armées ont compté, pour arriver à leurs fins, avant tout sur leur supériorité en armement, négligeant ainsi la puissance combative¹⁰. Des cas importants de désintégration (l'armée française en 1940) et d'inefficacité (l'armée américaine au Vietnam) nous rappellent qu'un effondrement militaire trouve souvent ses causes dans des facteurs non matériels.

Quelle est la pertinence de réfléchir sur la puissance combative d'une force terrestre alors qu'elle semble dédiée, depuis plus de cinquante ans, à des opérations de paix ? Le cas du Canada est instructif. Depuis la fin de la guerre de Corée, les troupes canadiennes n'ont plus été engagées dans des combats, à l'exception de l'épisode de la « poche de Medak ». Pourtant, les engagements de l'armée canadienne dans des opérations de paix n'ont à peu près pas cessé depuis la fin des années quarante. Les soldats et officiers canadiens ont été déployés partout où la situation le demandait et ils ont, le plus souvent, accompli leur mission remarquablement. Il est difficile de ne pas partager l'idée que « [l]es Forces canadiennes jouissent d'une renommée internationale dans le domaine du maintien de la paix, surtout en raison de leur professionnalisme et de leur entraînement général au combat¹¹ ».

Mais il est clair que depuis la Somalie, l'ex-Yougoslavie et le Rwanda, la nature des engagements a beaucoup changé. Parmi les opérations de paix, celles à caractère militaire se sont multipliées. La nécessaire réflexion sur l'instruction militaire non traditionnelle à dispenser aux soldats canadiens a noyé la réflexion sur la puissance combattive des unités que l'on a déployées, particulièrement dans les Balkans depuis 1992. À mon avis, les événements survenus en Somalie doivent aussi nous faire réfléchir sur les éléments de la puissance combattive et de l'efficacité militaire, comme ils l'ont fait sur le racisme et la xénophobie prévalant au sein d'une partie du personnel des Forces canadiennes¹². Lorsque Winslow démontre comment le stress a pu jouer sur l'efficacité opérationnelle du Régiment aéroporté du Canada en Somalie, elle contribue indirectement à une réflexion sur la puissance combattive d'une unité en environnement hostile, même si sa mission n'est pas de se battre¹³. Étudier les manifestations de la puissance combattive et par conséquent de l'efficacité militaire, c'est aussi réfléchir sur les aspects qui font qu'une unité peut résister à l'usure et à la désintégration causées par son emploi dans une situation de combat ou de guerre. Or, depuis le début des années 1990, les soldats canadiens ont été, à répétition, envoyés dans des endroits où les valeurs humaines individuelles et collectives ainsi que les valeurs militaires les plus traditionnelles furent durement mises à l'épreuve.

Les soldats canadiens ne se gênent pas pour parler, en privé, de leurs aventures. Les images fortes ne manquent pas afin d'exprimer le désarroi individuel ou collectif. On se rappelle tous cette image du soldat canadien enchaîné, utilisé comme bouclier humain contre des frappes aériennes ; on se rappelle aussi les soldats canadiens qui ont perdu la vie dans des accidents en ex-Yougoslavie et enfin, il y a tous ceux qui ont été directement dans la mire d'un tireur d'élite pour qui un homme d'une force multinationale ne représente rien d'autre que l'impérialisme de la société occidentale ou internationale. Et c'est sans oublier ceux du Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry de la « poche de Medak », qui ont compris que leur vie ne tenait qu'à la puissance combattive et à leur efficacité. La discipline, la cohésion, le moral, l'initiative, le courage et la ténacité, la volonté de se battre et surtout l'acceptation de la mort, ont fait partie de la vie de tous les jours. Si le principe de « responsabilité illimitée » fait sourire certains, pour ceux qui le vivent pleinement pendant des semaines dans un environnement hostile, il prend une signification réelle. La vingtaine de soldats canadiens morts à Chypre pendant toute la durée du mandat canadien sont là pour le rappeler.

La formation militaire traditionnelle offerte dans l'armée canadienne a permis, depuis la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, une efficacité et un professionnalisme remarquables dans les opérations de paix. Mais les dernières années nous ont démontré des carences au niveau des manifestations de la puissance combattive qui laissent entrevoir des problèmes organisationnels graves. L'accueil fait au nouvel ombudsman des Forces par les militaires déployés dans les Balkans laisse songeur¹⁴. Les distinctions et les séparations traditionnellement acceptées entre les hommes du rang, les sous-officiers, les officiers juniors et les officiers supérieurs trahissent de plus en plus un mépris institutionnalisé réciproque auquel aucune organisation militaire sérieuse ne peut penser survivre. Les problèmes liés au *leadership* dans les Forces, largement soulevés par le Rapport de la Commission d'enquête sur le déploiement des Forces canadiennes en Somalie¹⁵, sont si criants que les tentatives pour les résorber prennent l'allure d'une croisade sans que personne ne sache vraiment par où commencer et vers quoi aller¹⁶.

Pour créer et maintenir un haut niveau de puissance de combat au sein des Forces canadiennes dans l'avenir, il faudra réfléchir à des éléments qui dépassent de loin le simple entraînement militaire traditionnel. Le « modèle van Creveld » appliqué à des armées en guerre, est en fait un examen exhaustif des facteurs qui, selon lui, permettent de créer et de maintenir la puissance de combat. En voici la liste¹⁷ :

- le rôle du caractère national ;
- les relations entre les forces armées et la société ;
- la doctrine et la perception de la guerre ;
- les principes de commandement ;
- l'organisation de l'armée ;
- l'administration du personnel ;
- le maintien de l'efficacité au combat ;
- les récompenses et les peines ;
- les sous-officiers ;
- le corps d'officiers et le *leadership*.

C'est à l'aide de ces éléments que l'historien en arrive à expliquer le très haut niveau de puissance combative offert par l'armée allemande entre 1939 et 1945. L'aspect mécanique et technique de ces éléments d'analyse est trompeur; trop souvent on oublie que des dispositions administratives ou organisationnelles peuvent jouer un rôle crucial sur les attitudes et les comportements militaires du soldat en opération. Van Creveld démontre, entre autres choses, comment le judicieux système de remplacement des pertes de l'armée allemande a permis à cette dernière de garder, jusqu'à la toute fin, une forte cohésion dans les unités.

Le modèle du *fighting power* est très utile pour réfléchir sur l'efficacité des armées en guerre. Je crois qu'il peut offrir beaucoup plus et nous aider à comprendre les comportements et attitudes des hommes en opération de paix. La transposition et l'application de ce modèle d'analyse à une armée comme celle du Canada m'apparaissent non seulement séduisantes, mais peut-être essentielles. Depuis quelques années, un vent de réformes souffle sur les Forces canadiennes¹⁸. Cependant, il semble que ces réformes soient ponctuelles et il n'est pas évident qu'elles s'inscrivent dans une démarche globale où l'efficacité militaire est la pierre angulaire de la réflexion. Les déploiements continuels dans les opérations de paix dans le monde sont l'une des raisons d'être des Forces canadiennes. Dans ces opérations, les manifestations de la puissance combative (la discipline, la cohésion, le moral, l'initiative, le courage, la ténacité, la volonté de se battre et surtout l'acceptation de la mort) demeureront les meilleurs critères d'évaluation de l'efficacité militaire. Or, on sait que ces attitudes et comportements militaires ont beaucoup souffert dans les années 1990. Des militaires canadiens ont dérogé à leurs plus élémentaires devoirs de soldat souvent parce que l'institution a failli dans ses tâches. D'autres ont été pris comme cible militaire sans pouvoir se défendre. On oublie trop souvent que les militaires que l'on envoie en missions sont confrontés quotidiennement aux hasards de la guerre et aux pires atrocités¹⁹. Je crois que ce qui leur permet de survivre et d'être efficaces est justement cette « somme de qualités mentales ». Celles-ci reposent sur une série d'éléments qui doivent retenir toute notre attention au cours des

prochaines années. Un examen exhaustif et systématique des facteurs (voir l'annexe) qui créent et maintiennent la capacité de combat doit être à l'ordre du jour. Les réactions et les réajustements conjoncturels et *ad hoc* ne suffiront pas à sauver les Forces canadiennes. Un salaire plus décent ou un meilleur équipement ne vont pas régler toutes les déficiences organisationnelles et administratives ou briser les résistances traditionnelles de ceux qui croient que le passé est garant de l'avenir !

Il y a déjà fort longtemps, Alfred Vagts nous offrait l'une des plus fondamentales dichotomies de la sociologie militaire :

Every war is fought, every army is maintained in a military way and in a militaristic way. The distinction is fundamental and fateful. The military way is marked by a primary concentration of men and materials on winning specific objectives of power with the utmost efficiency, that is with the least expenditure of blood and treasure. It is limited in scope, confined to one function, and scientific in its essential qualities. Militarism, on the other hand, presents a vast array of customs, interests, prestige, actions, and thought associated with armies and wars and yet transcending true military purposes. Indeed, militarism is so constituted that it may hamper and defeat the purposes of the military way. Rejecting the scientific character of the military way, militarism displays the qualities of cast and cult, authority and belief²⁰.

Le Canada n'est pas un État en guerre. Par contre, une partie non négligeable de ses Forces armées est déployée dans des opérations de paix où la guerre fait rage. Le premier devoir et souci des Forces armées canadiennes devrait être de réfléchir à la création et au maintien de toutes les qualités intellectuelles et mentales requises qui permettent à ces militaires de mener à bien leurs missions. Toute autre préoccupation qui passerait à l'avant-plan aurait comme conséquence de rejeter l'institution militaire dans la « militaristic way ».

Annexe

Les éléments et les sous-éléments qui expliquent le *fighting power* des armées en guerre selon Martin van Creveld sont :

- le rôle du caractère national ;
- les relations entre les forces armées et la société :
 - le statut social de l'armée ;
 - la structure sociale de l'armée ;
 - l'armée comme véhicule de mobilité sociale ;
- la doctrine et la perception de la guerre ;
- les principes de commandement ;
- l'organisation de l'armée :
 - les principes généraux ;
 - les structures des commandements et des états-majors ;
 - la structure des divisions ;
- l'administration du personnel :
 - les principes généraux ;
 - la classification et l'affectation du personnel ;
 - l'entraînement ;
 - les remplacements ;
- le maintien de l'efficacité au combat :
 - l'endoctrinement des troupes ;
 - la rotation des unités ;
 - les pertes psychiatriques ;
 - les services médicaux ;
- les récompenses et les peines :
 - la paye ;
 - les permissions ;
 - les décorations ;
 - la justice militaire ;
 - les plaintes des soldats ;
- le *leadership*, le corps des officiers et les sous-officiers :
 - l'image et la position ;
 - la sélection ;
 - l'entraînement ;
 - la promotion.

Le lecteur aura compris que ces éléments peuvent être modifiés selon les situations. Appliqué aux Forces armées canadiennes, ce modèle d'analyse nous révélerait, dans une perspective systématique et globale, ce qui doit être fait pour rétablir et maintenir une puissance de combat maximale.

NOTES

- ¹ Cette expression, peu usuelle, est au cœur de l'ouvrage de Martin van Creveld, *Fighting power : Germany and U.S. Army performance, 1939-1945*, Westport (Conn.), Greenwood Press, 1982.
- ² Sur cette idée de la « guerre caméléon », je renvoie le lecteur au classique de Raymond Aron, *Penser la guerre, Clausewitz, tome II : l'âge planétaire*, Paris, Éditions Gallimard, 1976. Sur l'évolution de la guerre depuis les dernières années de la guerre froide, voir Martin van Creveld, *La transformation de la guerre*, Paris, Éditions du Rocher, 1998 (1991).
- ³ Sur les conflits et les opérations de maintien de la paix durant et après la guerre froide, voir Allan G. Sens, *La Somalie et l'évolution du maintien de la paix : les conséquences pour le Canada. Étude préparée pour la Commission d'enquête sur le déploiement des Forces canadiennes en Somalie*, Ottawa, Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada, 1997.
- ⁴ Il n'est pas question ici de traiter des conséquences du déploiement canadien en Somalie. Je renvoie le lecteur à l'ouvrage de Allen G. Sens cité plus haut, mais aussi, dans le cadre de la même commission d'enquête, au travail de Donna Winslow, *Le Régiment aéroporté du Canada en Somalie : une enquête socio-culturelle*, Ottawa, Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada, 1997.
- ⁵ A.G. Sens, *La Somalie et l'évolution du maintien de la paix*, p. 59.
- ⁶ Berel Rodal, *L'expérience de la Somalie d'un point de vue stratégique : répercussions sur les forces militaires dans une société libre et démocratique. Étude préparée pour la Commission d'enquête sur le déploiement des Forces canadiennes en Somalie*, Ottawa, Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada, 1997, p. 48.
- ⁷ Toujours dans le cadre de la Commission d'enquête sur le déploiement des Forces canadiennes en Somalie, voir l'étude de Paul LaRose-Edwards, Jack Dangerfield et Randy Weekes, *Instruction militaire non traditionnelle destinée aux casques bleus canadiens*, Ottawa, Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada, 1997.
- ⁸ L'expression *fighting power* n'a pas d'équivalent français. « Puissance de combat » ou « puissance combative » traduisent l'esprit du concept.
- ⁹ M. van Creveld, *Fighting power*, p. 3.
- ¹⁰ Aux yeux de van Creveld, c'est le cas de l'armée américaine en Europe en 1944-1945. Cette thèse, très largement partagée depuis la fin de la guerre, a été récemment contestée par quelques auteurs.
- ¹¹ P. LaRose-Edwards, J. Dangerfield et R. Weekes, *Instruction militaire non traditionnelle*, p. 95.
- ¹² Il est clair que le déploiement du Régiment aéroporté du Canada en Somalie est porteur de leçons et que des mesures quant à la formation non traditionnelle des militaires doivent être prises. Cependant, je ne suis pas du tout certain que le régiment en question était, en fonction de plusieurs critères, apte à déploiement quelconque. Je suis sûr par contre que sa valeur, en tant qu'unité militaire, a durement été mise à l'épreuve en Somalie.
- ¹³ D. Winslow, *Le Régiment aéroporté du Canada en Somalie*, p. 213-289.
- ¹⁴ « Dreamer, dreamer » pouvait-on lire dans les pages d'un quotidien national. Il est clair que la nomination d'un ombudsman a été reçue par plusieurs avec scepticisme. Malgré cela, il semble que André Marin sera très occupé au cours des prochaines années. Voir le reportage de Mike Trickey, « Military ombudsman sets sights », *National Post*, 24 novembre 1998, p. A16.
- ¹⁵ *Un héritage déshonoré : les leçons de l'affaire somalienne. Rapport de la Commission d'enquête sur le déploiement des Forces canadiennes en Somalie*, Ottawa, Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada, 1997, 6 vol.
- ¹⁶ On pense à tous les problèmes liés à la mise en place du *ELM (Enhanced Leadership Model)* et toutes les résistances officieuses qu'il semble rencontrer.

- ¹⁷ Le lecteur retrouvera en annexe les mêmes éléments et sous-éléments pertinents.
- ¹⁸ Et les opérations de relations publiques ne manquent pas. Pour la dernière en date, voir la revue *L'Actualité* du 15 avril 2000, sous la plume de Michel Vastel, « Soldats, la fin des gros bras ».
- ¹⁹ Voir le témoignage simple mais instructif de Claude Savard, *Journal intime d'un béret bleu canadien en ex-Yougoslavie*, Montréal, Éditions Québecor, 1994.
- ²⁰ Alfred Vagts, *A history of militarism, civilian and military*, New York, The Free Press, 1967 (1937), p. 13.

Part VI
WRITING WAR

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Partie VI
INSCRIPTION DE LA GUERRE

Historiography and Archives

Historiographie et archives

SHAPING THE CANADIAN RECORD OF WAR IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Paul Marsden

Even before the Canadian contingent sailed for Cape Town and the South African War in late 1899, the Department of Militia and Defence was struggling with a records problem. In the short thirty years since Confederation the department had accumulated enough paper to pose problems for the administration of the militia, and officials were begging for relief from the congestion. The government, already sensitized to the general issue, had in 1890 canvassed London for advice on how to go about systematically destroying old documents and files. It was only after the West Block of Parliament burned, the flames fuelled by the records of Railways and Canals, Northwest Mounted Police and other departments, that Ottawa acted. The effects of the blaze went beyond destroying important valuable documents, it convinced the government that files and papers were a fire hazard and should be destroyed once they were “valueless.”¹ Of course, before one can determine what is without value, one must define value itself. As this paper will demonstrate, soldiers and public servants wrestled for much of the century trying to define what constituted historical value in the context of military records.

It is an incontrovertible fact that the nature and extent of records have a direct effect on the historical legacy. As Collingwood said, “History proceeds by the interpretation of evidence, where evidence is a collective name for things which singly are called documents, and a document is a thing existing here and now.”² Events shape records, and the records have a similar effect on the historical account. This simple equation is as true of records war as it is to those of peace. Yet there is little questioning in historical discourse as to how and why some records survive and others do not. If records and papers form the principal body of evidence for historical enquiry, should not the forces which affect their survival concern us? This short study is, therefore, an exploration of some of the forces that have shaped these records over the last one hundred years, outlining the fate of certain records of Canada’s involvement of the conflicts of the twentieth century, and how those that survived came to find their place in the historical record?

Curiously, at the turn of the century the military already possessed one definition of what constituted historical value. The Queen’s Regulations and Orders (QRO) were the basis on which militia units and the fledgling Permanent Force conducted and administered themselves. They spelled out the responsibilities of an officer, his authority

over the personnel of his unit, setting out instructions on dress, discipline, and a range of other matters. The most persevering of officers, those who endeavoured to read the QRO cover to cover, would find the very last section of this pocket sized book contained instructions on records and record keeping. Here the regulations and orders spelled out which records a unit was obliged to maintain, including pay lists, returns for horses, marriages, births, deaths and courts martial. In addition, the officer learned of his obligation to periodically call a Board of Officers to muster documents. Record keeping was not an administrative obligation or burden, it was an essential responsibility of the officer commanding. It is particularly interesting to note that these responsibilities included history. The QRO for the British Army, as early as 1857 spelled out what type of information the officer should extract for the objective of compiling the “historical record” of the unit. Later Canadian versions, near duplicates of the British QRO, contained similar instructions. While the origins of this section are difficult to trace, it is clear that the historical record was to allow the regiment to construct a unique tradition and culture. It was not for some greater historical objective.³

A more general understanding of the relationship between contemporary records and a national history can be identified at the beginning of the century. In the appointment of Arthur Doughty, Dominion Archivist, and five prominent historians to the Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Laurier Government displayed an awareness of the intellectual currency that history was gathering.⁴ Through the meetings of the Commission, it is evident that they directed their principal focus on making accessible the papers and records of the archives to encourage historical enquiry, not on contemporary records. However, the commissioners recognized that the acquisition and preservation activities of the archives had to be broadened to document the contemporary achievements and developments of Canadians.⁵ The government responded, first with the passage of the *Public Archives Act* in 1912 and shortly after with the appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into the state of the Records of the Departments of the Dominion of Canada. The act formalized the role of the Public Archives by providing for the removal to the archives “of any public record, document or other historical material.”⁶ Although this law provided the archives with great potential, the authority to designate value rested with the Governor in Council. More importantly, a means to identify records for preservation was still required. Determining these means was to be one of the objectives of the Royal Commission. To this end they visited most departments of government and found in some documents predating the War of 1812. Ultimately, the Commissioners, Doughty, Pope, then Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, and E. F. Jarvis, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Militia and Defence, achieved something of solution. They recommended the construction of a building where the records no longer required by departments could be stored to await the problematic assessment of their historic or statistical value.⁷

As these developments unfolded officials at the Department of Militia and Defence did not wait patiently. In 1903, the department had reorganized its entire records system in an attempt to gain greater control. Ten years later files continued to accumulate with the mounting pressures of administration and the modest growth in the permanent force. The Inspector of Central Registries, H. Chesley wrote to Jarvis in late 1912, reporting happily that they now had a man for “weeding out and killing old files and volumes.” Jarvis wrote back rather laconically that given his recent appointment to the Royal Commission and the acknowledged need to protect historic records, the suggested action might not be appropriate.⁸ By the time that Jarvis and his fellow commissioners did

complete their work there was scarcely the opportunity to implement their recommendations. War broke out three months later and the nation's focus shifted to Europe.

The efforts of Max Aitken and Doughty both to protect records and to create records of the Canadian contribution to the Great War have been well documented.⁹ In contrast to the slow and the plodding bureaucracy in Ottawa, the achievements of Aitken and Doughty in Britain and on the continent are remarkable. Together, they were aggressive in their pursuit of both official records and other papers and documents for compiling a record of Canadian military achievement. They both implicitly recognized that the circumstances required such an approach. Of course, in this recognition and enterprise they were not alone; almost every combatant nation had some form of initiative, sometimes public sometimes private, to assemble and preserve individual and collective records of their national contributions.¹⁰ All seemed to be motivated by the collective realization of the uniqueness and magnitude of the war and an overwhelming need to document and commemorate the struggle.

Yet, as momentous and powerful as the need to commemorate and document, there were other factors, mundane and common factors, that would affect the record of the Great War. It is evident that those in Ottawa did not seem to appreciate the work undertaken by Aitken and Doughty in quite the same way as it had been viewed by the Ministry of the Overseas Military Forces of Canada (OMFC). In November 1918 the then acting Adjutant General, Maj.-Gen. E.A. Ashton, wrote to the Minister of Militia and Defence outlining his proposal for the consolidation of all war records in Ottawa. On policy and general subject files related to the CEF he noted the need to retain them until the force was disbanded, but added that action was already underway to "reduce the volume of these files by destroying all non-essentials."¹¹ He recommended similar action be taken in London. Ashton's counterpart at the OMFC, Maj.-Gen. Thacker, resisted, countering that such work should only be undertaken by experienced officers and that the pressures of demobilization were not conducive to this type of work. Thacker prevailed, and the records were sent back *in toto*. However, the bureaucracy at Militia Headquarters had already demonstrated that they viewed the OMFC and CEF records as just another paper problem to be managed.

During the war, attempts were made at Militia Headquarters to stem the rising tide of paper in the offices and registries of the Department. Chesley had tried once again in 1915 to initiate his planning of 'weeding and killing,' but was restrained by Jarvis who remained in place as Assistant Deputy Minister.¹² With the war not quite a month over Chesley and the Chief Registration Clerk, A.E. Watterson revived the issue. This time, however, they enlisted an ally, Brigadier Ernest Cruikshank, the Director of the Historical Section of the General Staff.¹³ Not only did Cruikshank have some historical credentials to his name, but he had also served at the Public Archives from 1907 to 1911 as Keeper of Military Records. The group drafted an Order-in-Council calling for the formation of a committee, consisting of the three of them, who would review files in order to determine which ones were "worth preserving, either for this department or as archives." Openly acknowledging that their suggestion was not strictly in accord with the recommendations of the Royal Commission, they played heavily on Cruikshank's historical credentials.¹⁴ Their ploy worked, or so they thought. Obsessed as they were with the need to clear space, they had no notion of what they had undertaken. At their first meeting they laid out a plan of operations whereby they would first rid the department of documents from 1867

to 1903, after Cruikshank had reviewed them.¹⁵ Cruikshank must have seriously disappointed the other two when he reported that having viewed 126 of the 600 files for the year 1867, it was too large an undertaking. The only solution was to transfer the records for 1867 to 1903 from the Offices of the Deputy Minister and Adjutant General to the Public Archives.¹⁶ With respect to the record of war, there was one immediately positive development coming out of this decision. In the 63 shipping crates sent to the Public Archives on the March 4th 1919 were the records of the Canadian Contingent to South Africa, including diaries.¹⁷ It is ironic that this was not a conscious decision of preservation or commemoration, but rather the expedient solution to a problem of administration and space.

This clearing of old files was just the first step in a tumultuous period witnessing demobilization and the downsizing that would also affect the records of the war. Unfortunately, this environment did not make for a reasoned approach to the protection of valuable records. The arrival of the shipping crates from the disbanded OMFC and CEF necessitated immediate action at Militia Headquarters. In 1920 Cruikshank gave his approval to a circular letter over the signature of the Adjutant-General to all Military Districts, instructing them to immediately hold Boards of Officers to review and destroy "useless" files and documents. They were cautioned to ensure no documents of historical value were destroyed, employing the definition of "historical" found in the KRO.¹⁸ Yet, just a month later Elmsley had to clarify the order, directing all units to desist in destroying any service related documentation. On this and subsequent occasions officers became a bit over zealous in trying to rid themselves of files, thereby complicating the work of the Board of Pension Commissioners and others trying to adjudicate pension claims.¹⁹ As it turned out, this was just the tip of the proverbial iceberg as far as service documents and personnel files were concerned. The CEF records would be the source of bureaucratic conflict over the next thirty years.

At the centre of much of the conflict stood the Directorate of Records. The expansion of the army during the war had necessitated in 1916 the creation of this office to deal specifically with the Non-Permanent Active Militia and CEF service files and related documentation.²⁰ Lt.-Col. Logie Armstrong, who assumed the title of Director of Records at the end of the war, appears to have had a avid desire to maintain and build his directorate into something of a minor fiefdom, amassing records and compiling statistics. In 1923 he headed an organization with an establishment of 143 men and women.²¹ His ambitions were, however, running contrary to the plans of the Deputy Minister, G. Desbarats and the Adjutant-General, Lt.-Col. C.F. Panet. Urged on by Watterson, now head of records operations, they saw the Public Archives as the solution to the crush of wartime records and, more importantly, as a means of reducing the bloated Directorate of Records bureaucracy.²² Following the example of the 1867 to 1903 records, they began to direct a steady flow towards Doughty of files for Permanent Force and Militia Officers who had died previous to 1914. Then in 1925 they sent all the files of deceased CEF officers to the Public Archives.²³

Unfortunately, transferring records was not the only solution employed. Twice in the 1920's the Judge Advocate General, Col. Ordre sought the authority of Desbarats to destroy both the Field and General Courts Martial from the Great War. The Deputy Minister approved the destruction in 1929, but the order was never carried out. Curiously though, Ordre did follow the Minister of National Defence's instruction to destroy personally the General Courts Martial for the twenty-five Canadians shot at dawn.²⁴ The

other solution commonly adopted to relieve the congestion was the stripping of files. Logie Armstrong was particularly keen on this means of reducing files, claiming that the personnel files, each consisting of an overseas file and a headquarters file could be reduced to something like fifty percent of its original volume.²⁵

Throughout this time there continued to be proscriptions against the destruction of records, with departments requiring the permission of the Governor-in-Council for any destruction. However, the Department of National Defence and most other departments seemed to have forgotten these instruction by the mid-twenties. In late 1926 when the Treasury Board raised the concern that departments were not abiding by the 1914 Order-in-Council on document destruction, Panet sought the legal advice of Ordre. Panet was of the view that it applied only to "Public Departments" and that the KRO was the appropriate instrument for National Defence. Ordre employed a peculiar logic in response, stating the KRO have the "same force as an Order-in-Council. In this regard they appear to conflict with the statement in the Report of the Royal Commission on Public Documents, but as this was only a report, it could be ignored."²⁶ The Judge Advocate General conveniently overlooked the fact that the recommendations of the Royal Commission had been adopted as an Order in Council in May 1914.²⁷ In spite of this, the opinion appears to have been influential within the department. After this Boards of Officers became the vehicle for the destruction of records at Headquarters for the next twenty years, at which time the Public Records Committee was formed.

Two safe havens prevented the destruction of more of the wartime records. Most prominent was the Historical Section of the General Staff, headed by Colonel Archer Fortescue Duguid. While the productivity, or lack thereof, of the section has been documented, the mere presence of the Duguid's group sensitized the records staff to the ongoing value of records.²⁸ While the principal objective of the section remained the official history of the Great War, they ranged far and wide over the field of Canadian military history. This, of course, offered a convenience to Watterson, allowing him to transfer large numbers of pre-war and wartime files to the Directorate rather than equivocating as to whether or not they possessed any historical value. The co-location of the two organizations in adjacent floors in the Daley Building facilitated the movement of these files. Thus, DHS took over from the central registry the labour intensive job of stripping Headquarters files, preserving historically valuable documents in their own classification system and destroying the remainder of the files.²⁹ However, as indicated by later transfers from DHS to the Public Archives, the Directorate was eventually overwhelmed and just resorted to storing files whole.

The other sanctuary for preserving war records remained the Public Archives. Shortly after the Archives opened its new wing, in what is currently the Canadian War Museum, DND took the opportunity to unburden itself of the entirety of the CEF service and subject files from the OMFC and CEF. Doughty must have been dumbfounded when he opened the letter from the Deputy Minister of National Defence on the 28th of October 1927. Desbarats wrote enquiring as to whether the archives would please take custody and control of one million files from his department.³⁰ Naturally Desbarats did not get an immediate response. Fernand Rinfret, Secretary of State under whom Doughty acted, and J.L. Ralston, the Minister of National Defence entered into the fray. The transfer became a bureaucratic issue, taking almost three years to resolve. In writing to his Cabinet colleague the hard nosed Ralston, who had commanded the 85th Battalion during the war, did not appear convinced of the value of the records: "Presumably they have some

historical value, but they are not much use in the routine work of this Department.”³¹ On 1 April 1930, after much negotiation, DND transferred the records to the control of the Public Archives. In a note from Chief of the General Staff, General McNaughton to the Adjutant-General, the purpose of the transfer was clear: “Unessential work to this Department is to be eliminated or transferred elsewhere.”³² Fortunately, this move protected the records for the next eighteen years, but, as we shall see, not indefinitely.

Until 1936 the blunt edged solutions to identifying records in Canada of historic value remained the same. When possible records staff either transferred the files to the Historical Section, or to the Public Archives. However, in June 1936, the government made it easier to destroy records with the passage of a Treasury Board Minute which allowed departments to destroy broad classes of records.³³ This authority did accommodate the possibility of historic review, but the onus was shifted entirely to the Dominion Archivist, who had to respond within six months to a request to destroy records. Descriptions such as “miscellaneous correspondence on subjects of relatively little importance not likely to be referred to again” could not have been helpful to the Doughty’s successor, Gustave Lanctot. For military records Lanctot informally delegated this task to Duguid, trusting his staff of “historians.”

In Ottawa, the outbreak of the Second World War clearly affected the situation with respect to the Great War records. DND took over the records storage facility built on the Central Experimental Farm and convinced the Public Archives to return the 35,000 OMFC and CEF subject files which had been part of the 1930 transfer.³⁴ Presumably Duguid wanted better access to these valuable records as his writing of the official history ground to a halt. While he may have wanted to focus his efforts on Volume II of the history, he would not be left alone. In September 1940, the Defence Council formally gave him the authority which earlier Lanctot had informally granted him, charging him with the responsibility to review the findings of all Boards of Officers to ensure that no records of historic value were destroyed. Unfortunately, some offices continued to act in ignorance of this directive.³⁵

Overall, it is clear that the pattern established in the Great War was the same in the Second World War. Officials on both sides of the Atlantic voiced concerns about the vital need to protect historical documents. However, in Ottawa this was often just rhetoric. While Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Stacey and his staff worked tirelessly in Britain and in theatre to identify and protect records, - as well as to produce them - in Ottawa there was little effort to do the same. At National Defence Headquarters the usual factors prevented action. The limitations of staff and space, and the more immediate tasks, naturally took precedence over history. This must have been all too apparent to Stacey after he returned from overseas to assume the position of Director of the Historical Section of the General Staff. After completing the single volume *The Canadian Army, 1939-1945* he drafted a circular for the signature of the Vice Chief of the General Staff, directing all offices and commands to review their registries for prewar and wartime records. The memorandum did not give the offices the choice of determining whether the records were historical or not, rather they were ordered to forward all such records to the Historical Section.³⁶ As the returns came in during the first three months of 1949, it was evident many offices had never considered themselves as having produced significant records. Directorates, such as Staff Duties, Armoured, Air, Signals, Chaplains, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, Organization, and Quarter Master General posted nil returns, most noting that they had destroyed their records shortly after the war. Fortunately, a small number of important

offices had not been so hasty. The response from the Directorate of Military Operations and Plans was a gold mine of pre-war and early wartime planning documents, as were those from Western Command.³⁷ It was during this period Stacey made considerable strides to build regular contacts with members of the General Staff and key directorates at National Defence Headquarters. The Section benefited immensely from this network during the Korean War.

It should also be said that Stacey profited from an environment more conducive to wartime historical projects, marking a difference from his Great War predecessors. The Privy Council Office officially recognized the need to document the war effort by setting up the Public Records Committee in 1944, both to encourage official histories and to protect records that might be required for such projects.³⁸ The most prominent of these were the official histories of the armed forces, but many other departments were also so engaged. The Public Records Committee, composed of senior bureaucrats and chaired by the Secretary of State, reviewed lists of files submitted to them for destruction. Before they gave the final authorization in the form of a Treasury Board Minute, the Dominion Archivist, also a member of the committee, reviewed the files for any possible long term historical value. While the committee possessed considerable authority and facilitated the preservation of records, it had a fundamental, and for later historians, fatal flaw. The Public Records Committee's enthusiasm for historical projects of the Second World War did not extend to the Great War or the South African War. As participants of the 1939 to 1945 struggle, it is understandable that the members had a preoccupation with the history of that war. Yet, it is unsettling to see how often the committee destroyed earlier records so as to make room for more recent records.³⁹ The list of actual decisions by the Public Records Committee to destroy files is a long one. However, in the context of this study there are some notable cases. As indicated above, the service files of the CEF had been transferred to custody of the Public Archives in 1930. On March 23rd 1948 the committee decided that all wartime service files would be transferred to the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). Colonel H.M. Jackson, then of DVA, opined that the files had no archival value and, thus, the decision was taken to allow the stripping of them. As a result, the two parts, headquarters and overseas, were consolidated by the War Service Records Division of DVA down into the single thin envelope of forms which survives today.⁴⁰ Interestingly, because of a historic coincidence, we can see the consequence of this action. Shortly after Newfoundland entered Confederation, DVA transferred the records of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment to Ottawa. Somehow these records escaped the fate of the CEF files. An examination of any of these records reveals a fuller file, complete with correspondence on leave requests, assessments, and wartime letters to and from the soldier's family.⁴¹ This unstructured correspondence is far more evocative of the conditions of the soldier than the surviving "forms" on the CEF files. While the Public Records Committee had authorized the same stripping process for the Second World War service files, mercifully it was never carried out, as officials at DVA began to have second thoughts.

Another of the disturbing aspects of the Public Records Committee is how it viewed historical projects. The committee was supportive during the projects, often voting additional funds and monitoring closely the progress of the histories. However, when projects were completed they did not view the records as having any further utility. The Naval Historian, Gilbert Tucker, appeared before the committee in early 1946, requesting just such an authority be granted for the destruction of Naval Service files dating from 1914. He explained that his staff had extracted anything of value and they had no further

use for the records. Approval was granted.⁴² A similar fate befell a large portion of the records of the Department of Munitions and Supply, even though the final volume never appeared. As disturbing as these episodes were, the worst was yet to come. As the years past and wartime history initiative faded, the purpose of the committee became more obviously one of records management. National Defence Headquarters clearly understood this change. While the committee initially provided one time authorities for the destruction of files, the Director of Central Registries at NDHQ began in the late 1950s to use earlier authorities to destroy 'similar' records. Unfortunately, in some of these cases neither the Public Archives or the Historical Section were consulted. The most spectacular of the destructions resulting from this procedure was that of a large number of Royal Canadian Navy Reports of Proceedings from the Second World War.

As depressing as these cases are, there were again factors which mitigated against more extensive destruction. Shortly after the war microfilm technology reached an economical scale, and National Defence embraced it with enthusiasm. The department filmed records such as the Great War Courts Martial, even though they had been approved for destruction twenty years earlier. In total the Department filmed more than a 150 different files series and card indices. Every microfilm job was undertaken to allow the department to hold on to records with possible residual administrative value and to reduce accommodation. While historical or archival value never entered the rationale for filming, it unwittingly preserved thousands of files which would have surely been authorized for destruction by the Public Records Committee. Thirty years later, a similarly fortuitous fate befell a large quantity of Second World War and Korean War records from all three services. When DND realized that it was still sitting on a large mass of forty year old records and that they would be responsible for them under the *Access to Information Act* and *Privacy Act*, it transferred the 13000 boxes to the Public Archives.

There is a clear line running through the events described in this paper. In many cases records were not preserved or destroyed for their value or their lack thereof. More often decisions as to what should be preserved were determined by bureaucratic expediency. Historians should be cognizant of the legacy of these decision for two reasons. Firstly, while the destruction of valuable records is often the result of a bureaucratic blindness, the survival of others can be attributed to similar factors. Most historians and many archivists hold the assumption that the records that have been retained are deserving of preservation and are of some significance in a large context. But through most of this century their has been no such conscious and articulated view as to what constitutes a historic or archival record, thus there is a risk of exaggerating the significance of isolated records. Through an accident of fate, the deployment of peacekeepers to Somalia in 1992 may end up as the most well documented operation conducted by the Canadian Forces. This is because of the subsequent Royal Commission. It is quite possible that at sometime in the future this event will be judged far more significant than it really was, strictly on the basis of the weight of evidence. The second reason for concern is that at the end of the twentieth century the record of the last hundred years of war is not yet complete. The federal government is still holding some records related to the South African War, not to mention the latter conflicts and nearly fifty years of peacekeeping operations. If there are any lessons to be learned from the past, hopefully they will be applied to properly identifying and preserving the records of value. The survival of records of war on the basis of their the historical or commemorative value cannot be taken for granted.

NOTES

- ¹ National Defence Records, File 1876-1 pt.1, Pope to Panet, 20/9/1897. A departmental commission was established to review the records of each department after the fire.
- ² R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp.9-10
- ³ *The Queen's Regulations and Orders for The Army* (London: George E Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1857), Sec. 70 refers to "History of the Services of the Regiment." All subsequent editions of the QRO and KRO have a similar section, including those printed for the Canadian Militia.
- ⁴ NAC, RG 2 PC.788-1907. See Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp.26-29 on the effects of the relationship of Shortt and Doughty on archives and history.
- ⁵ Ian E Wilson, "Shortt and Doughty: the Cultural Role of the Public Archives of Canada, 1904 to 1935," MA Thesis, Queen's University, 1973, pp. 59-86.
- ⁶ *Public Archives Act* (RSC 1927, Chapter 8), Section 7(a).
- ⁷ Report of the Royal Commission to enquire into the state of the records of the Departments of the Dominion of Canada. The recommendations of the commission were acknowledged by the Borden government with the passage of P.C. 1163 (4 May 1914).
- ⁸ NDR, File 1876-1 pt.1, Chesley to Jarvis, 15/11/1912 and Jarvis to Chesley, 16/11/1912
- ⁹ Robert McIntosh, "The Great War, Archives and Modern Memory" in *Archivaria* (Fall 1998 No.46) and Jonathan Vance, *Death so Noble* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), pp.163-167.
- ¹⁰ Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (Cambridge: Canto, 1998), pp.80-81.
- ¹¹ NAC, Records of National Defence (RG 24), Vol. 1749, File 6-14, Ashton to Min M&D, 30/11/1918.
- ¹² NDR File 1876-1 pt. 1, Chesley to DM M&D, 19/11/1915.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, Chesley to Jarvis 5/1/1918.
- ¹⁴ NAC, RG 2, Vol. P.C. 37-1919.
- ¹⁵ NDR, File 1876-1 pt. 1, "Proceedings of a Meeting of the Departmental Commission for the Destruction of Useless Files and Papers," held 3 February 1919.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, "Proceedings of the Second Meeting," 27 February 1919. The Deputy Minister's records were nearly untouched from 1867 forward, however in 1897 the Adjutant-General had destroyed many of the early records of his office, in what one latter correspondent would call "the holocaust in Ottawa." RG 24, Accession 1983-84/167, Box 4632, File 1716-50/6, William Kirby to Mackenzie King, 2 May 1938.
- ¹⁷ NAC, Records of the Department of Militia and Defence (RG 9) II-A-3. An examination of these records indicates that many of them came from the files of Adjutant General and were probably removed from Series II-A-1 after their transfer to the Public Archives in March 1919.
- ¹⁸ NDR File 1876-1 pt. 1, Chesley to Cruikshank, 9 August 1920 and NAC, RG 24 Vol. 1749 file 6-14, Circular Letter No. 546, 14 September 1920.
- ¹⁹ NDR 1876-1 pt.1, Draft Circular Letter from Adjutant-General, October 1923.
- ²⁰ RG 24, Vol. 57 File 57, File 650-53-3. It is significant to note that the Director of Records, the Chief Registration Clerk and the Inspector of Central Registries all carried the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel or a civilian equivalent, giving them some authority within the military establishment.
- ²¹ RG 24, Accession 1983-84/167, Box 4632, File 1716-50/6, Scott to Panet, 5 December 1929.
- ²² *Ibid.* Panet to Armstrong, 31/7/1925.
- ²³ *Ibid.* Panet to Armstrong, 31/7/1925.
- ²⁴ File HQS1822, JAG to DM, 16/4/1929. (I would like to acknowledge Gregg McCooley of the Personnel Records Unit of the National Archives for pointing out this document to me.)

- ²⁵ RG 24, Accession 1983-84/167, Box 4632, File 1716-50/6, Armstrong to Watterson, 8/5/1926.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, Panet to Ordre, 10/1/1927 and Ordre to Panet, 11/1/1927.
- ²⁷ RG 2 P.C. 1153-1914 (4/5/1914)
- ²⁸ Charles Stacey, "*A Date with History*" (Toronto: Deneau 1983), pp.64-68. At the same conference at which this paper was presented, Wesley Gustavson in his paper "Unfinished Business: Colonel A.F. Duguid and the Canadian Official History of World War One," provided more detail and analysis to Duguid's production, or lack thereof.
- ²⁹ NDR, File 1876-1, Duguid to McNaughton, 18/11/1932. Some of the fruits of this labour can be discerned in the Historical Section, "*File Classification Guide*," undated. (Appears to be dated during the Second World War, as it includes some early material from that war.)
- ³⁰ RG 24, Accession 1983-84/167, Box 4632, File 1716-50/6, Desbarats to Doughty, 26/10/1927.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, Ralston to Rinfret, 3/1/1928.
- ³² *Ibid.*, McNaughton to Panet, 16/1/1930. The Public Archives finally took the records on the condition that DND provide the storage space and that they transfer two clerks to assist in processing the files and responding to enquiries.
- ³³ RG 35, Series 7, Records of the Public Records Committee, Vol. 9 Destruction of Records - Treasury Board Minutes, 1936-1944. TB 160481 dated 2/6/1936.
- ³⁴ RG 24, Accession 1983-84/215, Box 148, File 1716-50/6 pt. 2, Lanctot to DesRosier, 26/1/1940. These are the records which eventually become RG 9 III.
- ³⁵ RG 24, Accession 1983-84/167, Box 4633, File 1716-75/126, Duguid to Coleman, 2/5/1941.
- ³⁶ RG 24, Accession 1983-84/167, Box 4559, File 1450-2, Stacey to D Administration, 23/12/1948.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, Stacey to DMOP, 2/2/1949. The returns from all directorates and commands are in this file. Where there was a positive return there is often the Kardex references under which the Historical Section catalogued the documents.
- ³⁸ RG 35, Series 7, Vol. 9, Public Records Committee Minutes, 1944-1947. Minutes of First Meeting 5/6/1944. Both Duguid and Conn, the Royal Canadian Air Force Historian were present at this meeting.
- ³⁹ RG 35, Series 7, Vol. 9, Public Records Committee Minutes, 1944-1947. Minutes of Third Meeting, 10/12/1945. The acute shortage of storage is discussed at this meeting, as well as exploring the possible solution of microfilming.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Minutes of Public Record Committee Meeting 23/3/1948.
- ⁴¹ The complete service files of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment and the Newfoundland Forestry Company are found in RG 150, Accession 1992-93/171.
- ⁴² RG 35, Series 7, Vol.1, Minutes of Public Record Committee Meeting, 13/12/1945.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: COLONEL A.F. DUGUID AND THE CANADIAN OFFICIAL HISTORY OF WORLD WAR ONE

Wesley C. Gustavson

I n 1938, Colonel Archer Fortescue Duguid published the first and only volume of his Canadian official history of the First World War. It was eagerly anticipated as the Historical Section had been directed to compile such a history in 1921, and many veterans as well as the public were puzzled by the delay in publication. Despite delays, however, reviewers were generally satisfied with the results. Writing in the *Legionary*, W.W. Murray declared it a “masterly work of great care and precision;” while W.B. Kerr believed it would form the basis for all future works on the subject. Duguid’s eventual successor, C.P. Stacey, was equally impressed and later praised it as “one of the soundest pieces of historical work ever produced in Canada.”¹ It was hoped that the positive response would hasten completion of the remaining seven volumes; but nine years later and with seemingly little progress made, the project was canceled.

The end result of having ‘missed the boat’ as one critic put it, and the adoption of G.W.L. Nicholson’s one volume official history as the authoritative text on the war, has been the consignment of Duguid and his work to the background of Canadian military history.² The positive reviews having long since been forgotten, or in Stacey’s case, withdrawn.³ Thus there have been few attempts to fully explain why the official history was never completed; historians instead preferring to lament its absence and generally point to Duguid’s incompetence, obsession with heraldry and the Historical Section’s numerous secondary duties as explanations. Duguid is indeed a tempting target, being a civil engineer by trade and having no particular qualifications for writing a history of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) other than having been a participant in all of its major engagements.⁴

Yet these conclusions, however persuasive, lack depth and by focusing on Duguid’s shortcomings, historians have ignored or overlooked several other important factors contributing to the Section’s failure. In fact, the Historical Section’s problems can best be understood not as the result of incompetence, indifference and overwork, but as a management failure. Put simply, it was the result of several factors: government neglect and military indifference, plus Duguid’s particular methodology, and his inability to effectively manage and prioritize the duties of the Historical Section.⁵

Perhaps the most common misperception is that Duguid was incompetent and/or indifferent to this appointed task, when, if anything, the opposite was the case. Duguid was an ardent Canadian nationalist who believed that the war had been a ‘national force’ and that commemorating the CEF’s exploits was “a duty to the dead and to generations yet unborn.”⁶ Key to any understanding of Duguid is this notion that history’s primary purpose was commemoration. As he explained to the Canadian Historical Association in 1935, “not the least of the functions of history is the preservation of the tradition of self-sacrifice, and the transmission to posterity of that precious heritage so dearly bought in

battle overseas during the most momentous years in Canadian history.” Although, much like his Australian counterpart, C.E.W. Bean, Duguid saw no contradiction between historical accuracy and nationalist commemoration and hoped that lessons would be learned from his account.⁷

The evidence also seems to indicate that Duguid viewed himself and the Historical Section as not only the chroniclers of the Great War but also the custodians of its memory. This and his nationalist beliefs made it difficult for Duguid to concentrate solely on one task as he felt his supervision or intervention was necessary to ensure the accuracy of any and all historical information regarding the CEF. Therefore it was perfectly reasonable – if not imperative – to spend time writing detailed answers to enquiries, proofreading regimental histories, researching battle honours and closely monitoring the British official historian. Unintentionally the Historical Section’s mandate encouraged these activities as in addition to the official history, it was charged with the collection and classification of military documents, publication of historical material, assisting the Imperial War Graves Commission, British official historian and private historians. Leading Duguid to later claim that the Section had been given a dual purpose, firstly the official history and secondly the supply of information concerning Canadian military history.⁸ It was this same feeling of duty or responsibility combined with an interest in heraldry that prompted Duguid’s involvement in outside projects such as the Memorial Chamber and the Book of Remembrance, both of which he is credited with designing. Overall, the results of these efforts were not inconsequential; by 1929 the Section had sorted and indexed 135 tons of records, indexed over 7,000 photographs, answered approximately 8000 inquiries, researched battle honours and composed inscriptions for numerous war memorials. In all the Historical Section had compiled 6432 pages of material, 150 maps, 4288 charts and 12,000 cards, but no official history.⁹

Even when focused on the official history, progress was hampered by the manner in which Duguid approached the writing process. Considerable time was spent writing monographs and other specialized accounts to be used as quick reference guides when writing the official history or simply inserted into the narrative or included in an appendices volume. Consequently a great deal of material was prepared; some of it of high quality, the lengthy Ross Rifle monograph for instance, but again no official history. One cannot help but think that the time spent compiling these monographs and other accounts for use in the official history would have been better spent writing the official history. Moreover, Duguid tended to approach history in scientific terms and was reluctant to begin writing until all the relevant material had been arranged so as to avoid faulty conclusions. While accuracy is a laudable goal, there is a difference between scholarly exactitude and a descent into petty detail, a distinction that Duguid never seems to have fully comprehended. Indeed, he once admitted that “getting it right” had become something of an obsession and appears to have developed a ‘forest for the tress’ mentality at times as the value of some of the minutia contained in volume one and prepared for future volumes is questionable. Is it truly necessary to know that the average price of horses in the first contingent was \$172.45 and that each was inoculated with a prophylactic streptococcus? Equally suspect is the knowledge that at one point the CEF required 150,000 sets of razors (with cases) and 300,000 hand towels.¹⁰

Some of the responsibility for this lack of production and focus must lie with successive governments for the general indifference displayed towards the Historical Section and indeed any sort of official history. During the war the government had been

content to rely upon the efforts of the flamboyant Sir Max Aitken (later Lord Beaverbrook) and Dominion archivist, Arthur Doughty, to ensure the documentation of the Canadian war effort, waiting until just after the armistice to finally establish an Historical Section.¹¹ Although supportive in principal, a series of ministers who were uninterested in their portfolio meant that a coherent policy was in Stacey's words, "somewhat slow in crystallizing."¹² This is in fact, a rather generous assessment as the government's actions suggest that there was never a clear policy of any kind. Having created a Historical Section the government then allowed three years to lapse before providing it with a mandate, one which failed to set clear guidelines and gave the Section a number of miscellaneous and wide-ranging duties unconnected to the official history. Viewing it as a temporary organization the government also ignored or turned down numerous requests by Duguid to have his staff made permanent. Not until 1940 were the civilian employees – some of whom had been 'temporary' for over seventeen years - finally granted permanent status.¹³

Added to this general indifference was the acrimonious atmosphere in the newly created Department of National Defence. Intended to increase inter-service cooperation and reduce administration costs in a period of retrenchment, the department came into being on 1 January 1923. Problems immediately arose as the new Chief of Staff, Major-General J.H. MacBrien, sought to subordinate the interests of the air force and the navy to those of the army in order to maintain the army's place as the predominant service. The Director of the Naval Service, Commodore Walter Hose, strongly objected to this and the ensuing feud between the two effectively paralyzed the department until MacBrien's resignation in June 1927.¹⁴ This episode was particularly damaging to the Historical Section as it occurred at time when it needed guidance on what direction its efforts should be focused. Indeed, successive ministers did not provide this guidance, and MacBrien, preoccupied with departmental in fighting and plagued with financial difficulties, could offer assistance only infrequently.

Macbrien's resignation returned a semblance of order to the Department and with it a renewed interest in the Historical Section and a chance to redress the neglect of the previous years. In early 1928 Duguid even responded to one query by predicting publication of the first volume in the next year, if the Section's workload was reduced. Defence Minister, J.L. Ralston, was not so optimistic and authorized a committee to investigate the Historical Section. Unfortunately, settling the makeup of the committee prove so problematic that it was unable to meet until December, tendering its report early in the New Year. Among other things, the committee recommended that the history should be written and an advisory board appointed to oversee its production. What likely caused Duguid some distress was the Committee's view that the official history not emphasize military history, instead focusing on the war's impact on social, political and economic institutions. The committee also wished to appoint a professional historian to the task, relegating Duguid to the role of research assistant.¹⁵

Fortunately for Duguid, none of the proposed changes went beyond the planning stages as the new CGS (Major-General A.G.L. McNaughton), questioned some of the committee's findings and enthusiastically endorsed Duguid as the right man for the job. Although McNaughton's praise may have been influenced by the fact that he and Duguid had served together and he (and no doubt others) must have been uneasy at the prospect of an interpretation of the CEF from someone other than a serving officer.¹⁶ As a result, no attempts were made to modify the committee's findings and in the absence of any firm

direction, very little changed and the Historical Section continued to operate much as it always had. That is, until McNaughton and Duguid interpreted a brief statement by the minister in May 1932 (Donald M. Sutherland) as an official appointment and finally got down to the business of writing.¹⁷

The publication of volume one in 1938 seemed to herald a new beginning for the Historical Section and Duguid reported that work on the second volume was progressing steadily. Yet the outbreak of the Second World War sounded what would be the death knell for both Duguid and the official history. Work on the history was almost immediately suspended as the demands of the current conflict inevitably limited the time that could be devoted to the it, despite the more than doubling of the Historical Section's staff by 1944.¹⁸ In many ways this was simply a continuation of the problems of the 1920s and 30s as official policy and Duguid's own priorities prevented any meaningful work on the history.

Things appeared to turn around in 1945 when Stacey was appointed director of the Historical Section and Duguid was given a separate directorate with no responsibilities other than finishing his series. There was a sense of urgency to this move as Duguid had only about two more years to serve before retirement and was considered the only man capable of completing the job.¹⁹ Strangely, the feasibility of finishing the remaining seven volumes in two years, when it had taken 17 years to publish the first, appears not to have been seriously considered. Duguid, on the other hand, did not think it could be concluded in two years, regarded the deadline as a target date, and devoted his time to laying the groundwork for his successor.²⁰ Why the General Staff did not clarify their position or even seem to notice what Duguid was doing was partly due to the fact that Duguid's establishment was now but a subsection of a larger organization, one traditionally regarded with some ambivalence. Then there were the greater and more immediate problems associated with reorganizing the department and demobilizing and repatriating the overseas army.

Surprisingly though, the final decision to cancel the official history was made by the army itself. Faced with certain cuts in defence spending in 1946, the CGS (Lieut.-General Charles Foulkes) directed his vice chief (Major-General C.C. Mann) to investigate the plans for both the First and Second World War Histories, the results of which were anything but encouraging. Mann recommended – and Foulkes concurred – that Duguid's section cease operations, be disbanded as of 1 January 1947 and its records deposited in the archives. Both had balked at the total projected cost of the official history – over a half million dollars – at a time when the armed forces were struggling to allocate scarce resources. Poor sales of Duguid's and Sir Andrew Macphail's medical history were also cited as evidence of little public interest in any such history and provided another compelling reason for cancellation. Foulkes and Mann also argued that advances in warfare had rendered any study of the First World War unnecessary. The Great War was, in effect, old news, and any lessons, Foulkes reasoned, could be gleaned from existing works, even if none had a Canadian perspective.²¹ Duguid's pleas to reconsider the decision proved futile and in the ensuing budgets cuts the CEF history, along with the burgeoning historical programs of the RCN and RCAF were eliminated with only Stacey's army history surviving.²²

Although the analogy can be carried too far, the plight of the Historical Section in the 1920s and 30s paralleled that of the army itself as both were in need of guidance that was not forthcoming.²³ The Historical Section's 1921 reorganization provided little

direction due to its vague terms of reference and numerous supplementary duties. This problem was compounded by the general staff's preoccupation with their own political battles and successive ministers who did not know what the Section was doing and had little inclination to find out. For his part, Duguid interpreted many of his responsibilities in the broadest manner possible and, at times, went out of his way to take on extra work. It would seem therefore, that the Historical Section's problems were less the result of incompetence or indifference than they were of mismanagement at all levels.

This failure, however, was not preordained and it must be concluded that the primary reason for the lack of progress was Duguid's management. A vague mandate and official indifference may have made the job more difficult and perhaps added to the time needed, but these were ultimately obstacles that could have been overcome by a focused effort from Duguid and his staff. In the end, it is somewhat ironic and unfortunate that Duguid's obsession with preserving the memory of the CEF actually prevented him from completing the one project that would have had the lasting impact he hoped for.

A recent analysis of the CEF in the latter stages of the war concludes "neither before nor since have Canadians played such an effective, crucial and decisive role in land warfare."²⁴ Given this and the popular sentiment that the war proved to be Canada's "coming of age," Duguid's unfinished business must surely rank as one of the most regrettable episodes in Canadian military history. All the more telling when one considers that far from being the final authority that some imagined, official histories are often the first word and have tended to heavily influence the direction of subsequent debate.²⁵ One could even argue that the lack of an official account – Nicholson notwithstanding – is why Canadian WWI historians, until very recently, have focused on a rather narrow selection of topics: the heroism of Second Ypres, the glory of Vimy, and the genius of Currie. For this state of affairs, Duguid is largely responsible, and in a very real sense he did 'miss the boat', although critics would still do well to remember Stacey's observation that "the task of an official historian is difficult at best, and in Canada perhaps especially so."²⁶

NOTES

- ¹ W.W. Murray, "Canada's Official War History: A Monumental Work," *Legionary*, Vol. XIII, No.12 (July 1938), p. 6; W.B. Kerr, (Book Review), *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XX, No.1 (March 1939), p. 65; C.P. Stacey, "The Nature of an Official History," *The Canadian Historical Association Report (1946)*, p. 75.
- ² Major-General C.C. Mann (VCGS) to Lieut.-General Charles Foulkes (CGS), 16 September 1946, File 2, Biog D, Directorate of History and Heritage, National Defence Headquarters. Subsequently cited as Duguid Biographical File (DBF); G.W.L.Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919: Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962).
- ³ Stacey, (Book Review), *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. LXX, No.3 (September 1989), p. 411.
- ⁴ G.W.L. Nicholson, "Archer Fortescue Duguid 1887-1976," in *The Canadian Historical Association: Historical Papers (1976)*, p. 269.
- ⁵ Of necessity, this work sidesteps a number of issues, including any evaluation of Duguid as an historian or his disagreements with the British official historian. For more on these issues see, Wesley C. Gustavson, "Missing the Boat? Colonel A.F. Duguid and the Canadian Official History of World War I" (Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Calgary, 1999), esp. Ch. 2; T.H.E. Travers, "Allies in Conflict: The British and Canadian Historians and the Real Story of Second Ypres (1915)," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 24 (1989); and *Ibid*, "Currie and 1st Division at Second Ypres, April 1915: Controversy, Criticism and Official History," *Canadian Military History*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Autumn 1996).
- ⁶ A term borrowed from Jonathan Vance, see *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), p. 227; Duguid to Lieut.-Colonel Wilfred Bovey, n.d. but late February or early March 1947, Vol. 22, (Canadian Forces, Colonel Duguid, Historical Section), Alan B. Beddoe Papers, National Archives of Canada (NAC), MG 30 D252.
- ⁷ Duguid, "Canadians in Battle, 1915-1918," *Canadian Historical Association Report, 1935* (May 1935), p. 50; Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.147; Duguid, *Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War 1914-1919, General Series. Vol. 1: Chronicle, August 1914-September, 1915* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1938) p.v.; Duguid to Stacey, 23 May 1939, (DHS 3-1, Vol. 2), NAC, RG 24, Vol. 1740.
- ⁸ P.C. 1652, 27 May 1921, File 3, DBF; Memorandum on the Historical Section, 5 January 1928, p.1, (HQS 5393), NAC, RG 24, vol. 2732.
- ⁹ The Historical Section (General Staff): Work carried out under P.C. 1652 of 27th May 1921 up to the 20th April 1929, 24 April 1929, File 11, DBF.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*; A list of the monographs for use in the official history can be found in Official History Monographs, n.d., (File 7), NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6998; Duguid, *Official History*, pp.viii, 87; *Ibid*, *Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War 1914-1919, General Series. Vol. 1: Chronology, Appendices and Maps* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1938), No. 111 (The Ross Rifle), p. 79; Handwritten notes, n.d., (Introduction...Contents, Vol. II), RG 24, Vol. 6990, NAC; Duguid, "Canadians in Battle," p. 48; Duguid to Ralph Hodder Williams, 3 March 1924, (DHS 10-8), NAC, RG 24, Vol. 1754; Appendix No. 55, (Chapter III, Vol. II), NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6992;
- ¹¹ An excellent summary of their efforts is Robert McIntosh, "The Great War, Archives and Modern Memory," *Archivaria*, No. 46 (Fall 1998), pp. 5-14; P.C. 2814, 15 November 1918, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 1732.

- ¹² Historical Section, General Staff, Organizations and Functions, February 1947, 12 February 1947, p.1, (Official History, General 1945-1949), B91-0013/001, C.P. Stacey Papers, University of Toronto Archives.
- ¹³ Gustavson, "Missing the Boat?," pp. 17-18.
- ¹⁴ Stephen J. Harris, *Canadian Brass: The Making of a Professional Army, 1860-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp.149, 153-155.
- ¹⁵ Report of the Special Committee, 2 January 1929, File 9, DBF.
- ¹⁶ McNaughton to minister (Ralston), 22 January 1929, File 10, DBF.
- ¹⁷ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 16 May 1932, p. 2982; McNaughton to Duguid, 18 May 1932, (DHS 10-10, vol. 3), NAC, RG 24, Vol. 1755.
- ¹⁸ *Report of the Department of National Defence, 1939* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1939), p. 67; The Historical Section's initial establishment was set at 15, a figure that remained more or less stable throughout the inter-war period, and one that had risen to 36 by 1944, see P.C. 1652, 27 May 1921, File 3; Strength of the Historical Section (GS), File 15; DBF.
- ¹⁹ Stacey, *A Date with History: Memoirs of a Canadian Historian* (Toronto: Deneau Publishers, 1983), p.172; Lieut.-General Charles Foulkes (CGS) to minister (D.C. Abbott), 5 October 1945, File 2, DBF.
- ²⁰ Duguid to DCGS(A), 3 July 1946, File 2, DBF.
- ²¹ Mann to Foulkes, 16 September 1946; Foulkes to minister (Brooke Claxton), 21 December 1946; File 2, DBF.
- ²² Gustavson, "Missing the Boat?," pp. 96-103.
- ²³ Harris, *Canadian Brass*, p. 162.
- ²⁴ Shane Schreiber, *Shock Army of the British Empire: The Canadian Corps in the Last 100 Days of the Great War* (Westport: Praeger, 1997), p. 142.
- ²⁵ Gilbert Tucker, "The Royal Canadian Naval Historical Section," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XXVI, No.3 (September 1945), p. 245; Robin Higham, "Introduction," in *Official Histories: Essays and Bibliographies from around the World*, ed. by Robin Higham (Manhattan: Kansas State University Press, 1970), p. 3; T.H.E. Travers, *The Killing Ground: The British Army, The Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare, 1900-1918* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1987), pp. 203, 217.
- ²⁶ Stacey, "Canada's Last War – And the Next," *The University of Toronto Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (April 1939), p. 247.

ARE WE LOSING OUR MEMORY?: DECISION-MAKING IN DND

Allan D. English, Angus Brown and Paul Johnston

As the title implies, this paper is about losing memory - in this case institutional or corporate memory. However, the focus of this discussion is not memory in the sense of something that is often assumed to be “historical” and therefore slightly irrelevant to many in the armed forces, but memory as a faculty that is critical to the functioning, perhaps even the survival, of the institution described here - the Department of National Defence (DND). Recent articles in the media have highlighted the fact that this account is just a small part of the story of a larger record-keeping and administrative crisis across the public service that threatens the ability of the government to function effectively, according to John Reid the Information Commissioner.¹ It is argued here that DND, like most other government departments, has developed serious problems with its institutional memory, and they are having a significant impact on the ability of the Canadian Forces (CF) to cope with the challenges of the 21st century.

A biological metaphor may be useful in helping us to appreciate how crucial DND’s institutional memory is to its effectiveness. In the animal kingdom, memory is essential to survival. For human beings in particular, our memory enables us to communicate, to learn, and to adapt to our changing environment - in other words, memory is essential to what defines us as homo sapiens. Psychologists often portray memory as comprising three stages: encoding, storage, and retrieval. Encoding information from our environment involves a number of processes, but in simple terms we select a small amount of information from all the stimuli that bombard our senses and put it into short-term memory. Because it has a limited capacity, information that is held in short-term memory is usually displaced when new information is deposited in it. Some of the data that is displaced from short-term memory is placed in long-term memory where it can be stored almost indefinitely. Once in long-term memory, information can be retrieved by a variety of methods, but forgetting (the inability to retrieve information in long-term memory) can be caused by a failure in either or both of the retrieval and storage processes.² This biological model can be used to explain some recent deficiencies in DND’s institutional memory that have affected its ability to function efficiently.

It has become apparent since at least the 1999 air campaign against the former-Yugoslavia, when vital military information was no longer being put in a format that could be easily encoded or stored for future retrieval, that this a pervasive problem among western armed services. It may only be a slight exaggeration to say, as many are discovering, that there are virtually no written records of the Kosovo conflict.³ Now that electronic transmission of data permeates all western armed forces, it has become much more difficult to ensure that military organizations are able to capture data in their electronic “short-term memory” and transfer it to the institution’s “long-term memory,” in whatever media it might be retained permanently.

One aspect of this problem was recognized in the Minister of National Defence's reply to criticism of the Somalia Inquiry: "DND/CF policy on document retention and disposal is still being developed. Work is ongoing in conjunction with the National Archives of Canada to improve document management."⁴ It is encouraging to see that an aspect of the problem has been identified; however, there seems to be little urgency in the Department to resolve these questions. The next part of this paper will present three brief examples to illustrate how problems with DND's institutional memory arose and what the prospects might be for correcting them.

The first example, is provided by Colonel (retired) Angus Brown who was the Director Arms Control Verification (J3 ACV) in National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) during the period 1995-97. In late 1997 and early 1998 he became concerned that there was a danger of losing a segment of our military history because of problems with DND's institutional memory. It appeared that the Arms Control Verification operations both past and present were not well known, either in or out of the military, and that they had not been chronicled in any systematic way. Because the Arms Control Verification function was subordinate to another staff element in NDHQ, an annual historical report detailing these operations was never written. In fact, Colonel Brown found that a number of three-ring binders left to him by his predecessor (and which he was on the verge of discarding as part of a routine clean up) contained a series of briefings on various subjects. These later turned out to be useful sources of information not otherwise found in files, when he was later searching for organizational, budget and operational recapitulations of previous years.

Progressive cutbacks of personnel bit deeply into the organization. During his two-year tour in ACV the cuts continued, particularly in the area of clerks and secretaries. The long-term effect was that clerical work was prioritized. The main effort was put on the filing and control of inspection reports and correspondence with NATO headquarters and other national and international staff agencies. Even these had to be vigorously protected from the centralization impetus gripping the headquarters. It was necessary for the directorate to have these files close at hand to answer routine queries, to prepare future inspections, and to deal with our counterparts in other NATO and signatory countries. The great fear was that the centralized system would either let the reports languish or destroy them after a short period of time as part of a larger file stripping regime. The shortage of clerks and the need to keep critical files meant that the routine housekeeping of correspondence was ignored or left to desk officers. Most of the desk officers kept their own files, often in electronic format. A large part of their correspondence with their international counterparts was done by facsimile and electronic means, neither of which methods lent itself to keeping copies. As the central administrative staff shrank, more and more work devolved upon the desk officers who naturally kept selective records, often using their own systems. As often as not, the selectivity was even greater when it came time to hand over jobs. What was topical was saved; what was not was often neglected. Through this process, central record files progressively became more and more sparse.

In NDHQ, the richest source of information on ACV was the file holding the minutes of the Arms Control Co-ordinating Committee. They were complete because of the level at which they were created. Since a Major-General chaired the meetings, those files created by and for senior officers, who still had staff officers to write the minutes of meetings and secretaries to file them properly, were fairly complete. Still, in many cases, there was no depth to the files. Discussions and subsequent decisions of the Committee,

some of them quite important, were reflected in the most sparse terms and normally there were few or no supporting texts of briefings to provide a clue of the rationale behind the final actions taken. Of course, without even the briefings, there was only the most elemental indication of the factors and data taken into account by the Committee to evaluate the options and to eventually decide on a course of action. The next most important source of information, after the minutes of the Arms Control Co-ordinating Committee, were the various NDHQ files containing budgetary and personnel manning information. These were often tangential to the organization of the ACV staff, dealing as they did with the bare bones of who was to take which cuts when and, occasionally, the effect they would likely have on the inspections schedule. The trail was not easily followed and often, again, only final decisions or suggestions were given with little or no hint provided as to the methodology used to reach the end state.

Traces of meetings attended by ACV desk officers in NATO, in Vienna, or outside NDHQ were much less well documented and complete. Reports were not always committed to paper or, if they were, copies of the reports did not always make their way to the central file. Most officers kept a file or files in their desk or on their computer dealing with a project or aspect of their responsibilities. It was only because Colonel Brown had been their director, had been briefed by them, and knew of the existence of these personal desk officer files that he was able to access them. Having gained access to them, however, he found that often information was simply in the form of a hand-written note, a computer diary entry or an extract of some parent document with no indication of what it was or its source. That made assessing the context of much of the information difficult, to say the least. As noted in the foreword of a research paper written by Colonel Brown on ACV, "Files were not always adequately cared for, or were not created in the first place. Some data is held only in the desk drawers and the minds of those who are involved with the day-to-day conduct of the operations. So, there are bound to be gaps."⁵

It is important to note that the phenomenon described by Colonel Brown was not restricted to this one part of DND, but appears to be an example of a systemic problem. Testimony before the Board of Inquiry - Croatia indicated that during the deployment of CF personnel to that area in 1993-95 there were few clerks among the Operations staff to organize or control files and that records were often just "dumped in a box" and later lost or destroyed. This led to a situation where, according to the Board's report, "No formal process was in place to properly assess and analyze data to allay fears of possible contamination and effects on CF personnel." In addition, the Board asserted that, even as late as 1999, the CF did not have a "quality database" to track its personnel. The Board also found that, even with the adoption of technologies that have been acquired to improve communications, the ability to communicate with CF personnel across the country has not improved significantly and that the assumption that everyone reads notices posted on the Internet is flawed.⁶ The Board's report indicates that there are still many problems with the way DND's memory is working, despite the hope that technology will solve these problems.

Captain Paul Johnston's experiences reflect the viewpoint of someone working on an operational staff in NDHQ. Considering things from this perspective, it is perhaps interesting to wonder how future historians might view our own time. At first blush, one might think that this will be a good time for future historians, at least in terms of the quality of the historical record we are leaving behind. After all, the CF today is involved in (at last count) 22 active operations overseas, so plenty of interesting things are

happening, and rarely are our units' records in danger of being destroyed by hostile action. Furthermore, one might assume that in the information age with huge amounts of data processed automatically and electronic file keeping, surely we are leaving a plethora of records for posterity? In fact, for various reasons, we probably are not. There are signs that this will improve in the next five to ten years, but in many ways the current era may well prove to be the worst documented time period of the Canadian military since Confederation.

The "information technology" (IT) revolution is often heralded as bringing a new era of freer flowing information readily available for all. In principle, such a development should improve staff work, the dissemination of information, and the compilation of a permanent record of all decisions and actions. Perhaps one day IT shall truly have this effect on military staffs. Unfortunately, while there have been various real successes in improving staff work in the new information age, so far at least, IT has had many serious negative effects. In fact in certain ways, computerization seems to have worked rather like a "solvent," dissolving much of the old system's staff discipline. A good example of this is email.

As we all know, email has become ubiquitous, and in theory this should not be a bad thing. It allows for near instantaneous transmission of vast amounts of data around very large, complex, and widely dispersed organizations. With those characteristics, in principle it should be an ideal method of communication for the military. Unfortunately, few headquarters are keeping track of their email. Until the IT revolution, the function now often filled by email was accomplished by the CF's teletype message system, which left a permanent record of every message sent. The transmitting message centre kept a copy of every message, and it was standard practice for the receiving unit to keep a copy in the appropriate file. This meant that if one checked the unit files on any particular issue, a record would be found there of all correspondence relating to that issue. In the new email age, few copies of email messages are ever kept in any such central repository. Typically, email messages are resident on the personal machine of the receiver, where they last until they are deleted or the hard drive replaced. Another factor that works against proper record-keeping today is the greater "informality" of email. Many commentators consider this to be one of its virtues, and in many ways they are right. However, when email becomes the only means by which material is disseminated, this can create problems, in particular with attachments. Many times, fragments of a document are passed around headquarters in hard copy discussing some issue or other, without any date or indication of where the text in question came from or for whom it was intended for. Some questions then arise. Is the text authoritative? Is it even still current? Frequently, when one finds the original document from which the fragment originated it turns out that the document itself was an attachment to an email, printed out and long ago separated from the original message. Determining the provenance of such text, while perhaps not impossible, is seldom worth the time and effort. Contributing further to the problem of incomplete records is the fact that these texts are rarely archived in a central file.

To be fair to IT and the information age gurus, none of this is necessarily the fault of email per se. There is no reason why our systems could not create central records of all email. Indeed, with computerization, soft copy central filing systems could be created automatically, with copies of every email filed by the computers themselves. In private industry many business enterprises have their computer systems create automatic central

copies of all email correspondence. However, the fact is that right now the CF is not doing this; therefore, a great deal of correspondence is simply not being put into institutional “long-term memory.” Whatever difficulties IT may create - or perhaps more accurately we are creating for ourselves with IT - they pale in comparison to the human dimension behind the deterioration of our institutional memory. The past decade has seen the CF regular force reduced from approximately 85,000 down to just under 60,000. In the relentless paring of military personnel in the CF and civilian staff in DND, inevitably many of the first positions to go have been the information handlers such as clerks, secretaries, archivists and librarians. However, it was these people who kept the record keeping system going, and it is their disappearance that lies at the root of the current “records-keeping bedlam.”⁷

The effect of all this has been a hollowing out of the permanent records in the staff system, and a significant loss of institutional memory. In the not so distant old days, before the IT revolution and the massive cutting of clerical staff, all units and headquarters had an elaborate system of what were known as “central registries” or “CRs.” These were the places where the institutional memory was kept, tended by the guardians of the administration branch. If one wanted to know about widgets, one merely had to go to the CR and check out the widget file. There one would find, in chronological order, every message, letter, memo or note ever to have passed through that headquarters relating to widgets. A comprehensive record for all.

Nowadays, with few clerks to keep files up to date, and much material passing invisibly via electronic means in any case, most CR files are incomplete and faint reflections of their former selves. Most staff officers know this only too well, and therefore no longer trust CRs. They keep their own copies of any important materials in their own office space, and this makes them less inclined to pass material to the CR for filing, which of course only exacerbates the problem. One of the insidious effects of this practice is that it drastically reduces corporate memory. Individual staff officers know what they have seen pass through their offices, what they have copies of, and what the CR holds, but on reassignment that staff officer's replacement will be almost starting over again. In principle, this problem is dealt with by “hand overs” in which the outgoing staff officers explain their jobs to their replacements, but such handovers, if they occur at all, can never cover every detail. All too often there is insufficient opportunity for a comprehensive handover. At one time, as issues came up, staff officers could count on being able to pull files from the CR and read through them, thus seeing all of the pertinent material and bringing themselves up to speed on a relevant issue. But as we have seen, this is precisely the capability largely lost to us now. The net result is that all too often institutional memory is now only as deep as the current incumbents' memory or the limited records they hold.

Another victim of the budget cutting of recent years has been the archiving process. In many cases, as staffs are shrunk old files are simply being thrown out without their future value being assessed. Before the advent of widespread computerization, those files would have been properly archived, but the people who used to perform that function have largely been cut. In many cases the harried staff officers culling the files have little idea what the requirements for archiving old files are, much less the process for doing so. Brrrrrrp. Into the shredders much of it goes, lost forever to the institutional memory.

The department has, to a certain extent at least, recognized this problem. The official solution is something known as EDRMS - Electronic Document Record and Management

System. This is an ongoing project to link all of the DND staff system together on one giant internal network, and to store files for what is termed the “corporate record.” The idea is to replace the old CR files with electronic storage. With EDRMS, everyone's computers would be linked, and whenever a person attempted to “save” a file they would be given the option of saving it to a central file, where it would be permanently preserved (in read only format) along with the date, time, and name of the account from which it was saved. Email, “PowerPoint” presentations, spreadsheets, and wordprocessor files would all be captured in this way, with the goal of recreating the comprehensiveness of the old CR files, but in digital format. This would also give the added advantages of making the files searchable and instantly accessible from across the network.

However, for now EDRMS remains but a project, even its funding is in doubt. Also, EDRMS will not address classified material, which means that material critical for current operations and what will be of great interest to future historians will not be retained in the same way as unclassified material. In addition, there are larger difficulties with electronic archiving, as even today “archivists and record managers are forced to keep warehouses of outdated computer hardware and software to retrieve and read obsolete hard drives and floppy disks,”⁸ assuming of course that the people with the expertise to utilize these antiquated systems can be found. Perhaps in time all of these issues will be resolved, and one day we will live and work in the paperless office of Bill Gates’ dreams. But until we get there, the records being left for posterity are likely to be poor. Originally, the cutback in the number of clerks in DND was meant to be tied to the introduction of EDRMS, so that there could be a seamless transition between the “paper” and the “paperless” systems with no loss of continuity in the record. Alas, in the rush to meet mandated strength reductions, that original intent was lost, and the clerks were done away with before EDRMS came on line. As a result, we are probably living today in what will be the worst documented era of Canadian military history ever.

The experiences of Allan English, a military historian who has undertaken some research and done some teaching for DND, parallels those described above. For example, in preparing an historical overview of aircrew selection issues, he asked to see the “Hincke Report,” a study that everyone who was connected with the aircrew retention project described as a key document on the subject. It was prepared by Colonel Joe Hincke and some colleagues and the “Report” was the basis upon which most of the pilot retention policy decisions of 1998 were made. However, it was soon discovered that the “Hincke Report” was not a report at all but a “PowerPoint” presentation that had been prepared for senior DND decision makers. On top of that, the original “PowerPoint” presentation was not held by staff officers currently dealing with the aircrew retention issue; they only had access to the third or fourth revision which they had stored on their own computers. So how did one find out what evidence was used to make important decisions with long-term implications for CF personnel policy and expenditures in the millions of dollars as the consequences of these decisions? The task was not easy and it is still not complete. Researchers associated with the project told of incomplete data bases; data that was stored on now-obsolete, and virtually inaccessible, computer systems; and information that was simply never stored in institutional long-term memory. Despite a thoughtful analysis of the key issues by senior decision makers, it is clear that they did not have access to all the data they required, and given the pressure to make a decision quickly, not enough time was available to attempt to gather all the necessary data.

Part of the DND memory problems described above can be explained by the faith that some members of DND's senior leadership have placed in the predictions of "futurists." These decision makers, believing that everything we need to know is accessible in electronic format, have arrived at some potentially disastrous conclusions. What General Romeo Dallaire called the "auto-de-fé" of the NDHQ library in 1997-98, when many priceless documents were dispersed or destroyed, was only a symptom of a bigger problem. With all the cutbacks in the cadre of the guardians of its information, DND's ability as an institution to encode, store, and retrieve vital knowledge has been seriously impaired. The point has now been reached where important decisions are routinely being made without adequate information to make a proper study of key issues and where a complete record of why certain decisions were taken is not being kept.

This has led to an equally unsettling tendency that has been observed in officers from the most junior to the most senior levels - an aversion to writing well-reasoned and rigorously researched staff papers. A student on a recent course for senior officers suggested that an essay on the course, designed to develop research and analysis skills, be dropped and be replaced by a "multi-media presentation." This reflects a trend that is worrisome. As they become proficient with new computer-based technology, overworked staff officers often put together slick audio-visual presentations, but they do not have the time (and in some cases the skills) to do appropriate research and to write lucid and well-documented staff papers that support recommendations for decisions. Driven by the philosophy that we need to get inside the enemy's "OODA" (or decision making) loop, the emphasis in many military organizations seems to have shifted from making quality decisions to making many decisions quickly, irrespective of their merit.⁹ The skills of rigorous analysis and effective writing have been forgotten or left to atrophy in many CF officers. There is hope for improving the CF's decision-making skills with the new attention to officer education as elaborated in the "OPD 2020 Statement of Operational Requirement,"¹⁰ but there is also the risk that they will deteriorate as some senior officers continue to question the need for such skills or to believe that they do not have the time to cultivate them.

Predictions of the future are more often wrong than right, so no attempt to predict the future will be made here. But a warning will be sounded. If DND does not take steps to improve its institutional memory in a timely manner, it risks ending up like many unfortunates seen on the streets of Canada's cities - dysfunctional, acting inappropriately, squandering the resources they possess, and unable to cope with the present or the future effectively. While the ability to deal with the current memory crisis is important for all government departments, it is crucial for DND to address the crisis immediately because, unlike other government departments, DND routinely makes decisions that can affect the health or even cost the lives of its members in uniform. Let us hope that the department moves quickly to improve its memory, and thereby improve its ability to reason and to act logically.

NOTES

- ¹ Kathryn May, "Government Faces Information Crisis," *Kingston Whig-Standard* (8 April 2000), 14.
- ² Main concepts taken from "Memory," *Britannica Online* <http://www.eb.com> and Rita L. Atkinson et al., *Psychology* 9th ed. (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), 245-63.
- ³ Vice Admiral Daniel Murphy, commander of the US 6th Fleet in testimony before the US Senate Armed Forces Committee in *Defense Daily*, 18 Oct. 1999, cited in "Internet Follies : It's A Wild, Wild Web" (posted 20 Oct. 1999) <http://www.defense-aerospace.com/data/features/data/fe79/index.htm>.
- ⁴ Minister's Monitoring Committee on Change in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces, "Interim Report 1998," Ch 7 Operational Issues, "Status," np, http://www.dnd.ca/menu/press/Reports/Changes/Eng/operat_e.htm.
- ⁵ Angus M. Brown, "Canadian Armed Forces Arms Control Verification Operations: A Historical Record 1989-1997," unpublished research paper dated 15 April 1998, on deposit with NDHQ/DHH archives, ii.
- ⁶ "Board of Inquiry Potential Exposure of Canadian Personnel to Contaminated Environment - Croatia 1993 - 1995, Final Report," Summary of evidence and findings and Observations, http://www.dnd.ca/boi/engraph/report_e.asp, np; and testimony of LCol Paul Wynnyk, 29 Sep 1999, http://www.dnd.ca/boi/engraph/wynnyk_testimony_e.pdf, 13-14.
- ⁷ May, 14.
- ⁸ May, 14.
- ⁹ See Tony Mason, *The Aerospace Revolution* (London: Brassey's, 1998), 14 for a brief description of the implications of "Observation, Orientation, Decision, Action loop."
- ¹⁰ See "Canadian Officership in the 21st Century – OPD 2020 Statement of Operational Requirement," dated Jan 2000 (draft).

Representations Représentations

ARTS AND ARMS: THE REPRESENTATION OF THE SEVEN YEAR'S WAR IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

JOHN CARDWELL

The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, which concluded the War of the Austrian Succession in 1748, failed to resolve the chronic territorial conflicts between Britain and France in North America. These intensified during the early 1750s.¹ Hostility between the two great imperial rivals was exacerbated by increasingly bitter economic competition.² This paper examines the origins of renewed war in North America during 1754–1756 as depicted in contemporary British literature and engraved prints. The great diversity in artistic quality, and political knowledge and sophistication, revealed in the poetry, ballads, fiction, drama, and graphic art which commented upon the crisis, demonstrates the existence of a thriving literary-political culture, which incorporated all stations of society.³ Literary works inspired by territorial and economic conflict with France circulated widely among courtiers, ministers, and members of the parliamentary classes, among the middling commercial and professional orders, and among the common people. Because of their comprehensive dissemination among all elements of the political nation, literature and graphic art represent invaluable historical sources for a study of mid-eighteenth-century Britons' reactions to imperial conflict in North America.

North American affairs were extensively reported in the British press.⁴ During the early 1750s, they were dominated by the two most important and intractable territorial disputes left unresolved by the settlement at Aix-la-Chapelle: the quarrel over the boundaries of Canada and Acadia, and the struggle for possession of the Ohio Valley. Acadia had been ceded to Britain by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, but without any clear definition of its limits. The British insisted that it included all the land north and west of the Bay of Fundy, extending to the St. Lawrence River and the borders of New England. France, however, maintained that Acadia's boundary was the isthmus at Chignecto Bay, and was determined to resist British expansion into Canadian territory beyond. In the autumn of 1749, in an attempt to pre-empt British plans to push their settlements northward, the French established a fort on the Missaguash River at Beauséjour. The British protested at this invasion of what they believed to be their territory, and built a fort of their own on the other bank of the river, leading to an tense stalemate along the frontier.⁵ Antagonism between the colonial powers was also stimulated by quarrels

concerning how far the boundaries of Canada extended into the region south of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River.

In 1749, the Governor of Canada, the Marquis de la Galissonnière, had initiated plans to enforce France's claims to the Mississippi basin, the heart of the North American continent, by expanding the French presence southward from Lake Erie, and joining together Canada and Louisiana by a series of fortified posts. At the same time, British Americans were beginning to cross the Allegheny Mountains, drawn by the Ohio Valley's great potential for trade and settlement. The British crown and colonies rejected France's right to annex the enormous territory and to monopolize trade with the region's native peoples. In the spring of 1754, Colonel George Washington had been dispatched by Virginia to defend the rival claims of the colony, and of the recently formed Ohio Company, by constructing a fort at the forks of the Ohio River, the location of modern Pittsburgh. In April, a superior French force expelled Washington. His counterattack failed, and he was pursued to the colony's westernmost base at Fort Necessity, where he was compelled to lay down his arms. The French began to build a powerful fort at the strategic site named in honour of Galissonnière's successor Marquis Duquesne.⁶

Comment in the press regarding the crisis was dominated by assertions of the North American colonies' great commercial value. The remarkable growth of the British economy during the eighteenth century, and the establishment of a thriving manufacturing industry in particular, owed much to the development of overseas trade. British commerce had increased by nearly threefold in the century before 1750, contributing to unprecedented levels of economic prosperity, and enhancing the quality of life enjoyed by all stations of society. The transatlantic economy had experienced the most vigorous development: by 1750 North American imports had quadrupled in value and the re-export of colonial products had tripled.⁷ Britain was able to achieve an advantageous balance of trade by purchasing her European imports with re-exported colonial commodities, which were paid for by the export of domestic manufactures. The great wealth reaped by the sugar, molasses, tobacco, rice, and indigo planters of the West Indies and the middle American colonies stimulated a growing demand for luxury goods imported from Britain. It was during the 1740s that the American consumer market for British pottery, glass, metal ware, and other manufactured products rapidly accelerated. So strong was the prevailing fashion for English luxury goods among colonial conspicuous consumers, who wished to demonstrate their superior taste, and their capacity to indulge it, that home-made wares were often disguised as imports. The New England merchants who supplied fish, grain, and timber to the West Indies shared their neighbours' preferences, and spent much of their handsome profits upon English manufactured goods.⁸

British commercial expansion was distinguished not only by the development of a thriving merchant community, but by participation directly or indirectly by significant numbers of ordinary citizens, especially those involved in the burgeoning wholesale, retail, service and manufacturing sectors of the economy. Shopkeepers who supplied an astonishing variety of foreign luxury goods for domestic consumption, manufacturers who employed imported raw materials in production and exported their products to overseas markets, and those who engaged in maintaining the complex internal and international transportation networks by land and water by which goods were circulated, all enjoyed the benefits created by the free flow of trade. Geographically, the rewards were widely distributed among many regions and types of urban community. Ports such

as Bristol and Liverpool, industrial centres in the Midlands, Yorkshire and the West Country, market and county towns as well as London, all profited from the transatlantic economy. A pamphlet warning of the menace of French maritime-colonial competition, provided a blunt statement of the great material advantages Britons and British Americans reaped from imperial commerce:

The honest King and People of these Dominions place their highest Ambition in having white Shirts and good Coats upon their Backs, store of Beef and Pudding in their Bellies, Money flush in their Pockets, Fleets constantly going out and coming in.⁹

By mid-century, the conviction that imperial expansion, overseas trade, national wealth, and state power and prestige were inextricably linked, was accepted not only by the broad range of occupational and social groups connected to international enterprise, and by those writers and politicians who championed their concerns, but had become established as a central tenet of British political culture by the experience of the colonial wars with Spain and France during 1739–1748.¹⁰ This idea emerged as a prominent theme in the literature reacting to the renewed conflict with France in North America, illustrating its widespread dissemination. One poetic call to arms emphasised the contemporary belief that the riches generated by trade and empire provided the means to defend Britain's constitutional and religious liberties against the threat posed by her hereditary enemy. George II is warned of French designs to:

Seize thy possessions, and destroy thy trade,
The sinews and the bulwarks of thy state;
O'er run thy colonies with sword and fire,
Those parent foundations of substantial wealth,
And chief supporters of thy name and throne.¹¹

The deliberations of the commission established by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle to adjudicate long-standing controversies over the boundaries of Canada and Acadia, New York, New England, and the British colonies in the West, had been well-publicized. As talks stagnated and the frontier war escalated, the memorials issued by both nations to the international community justifying their claims had appeared extensively in the British press.¹² All genres of literature accused the French of pursuing a characteristically treacherous policy of expansionism in North America, concealing their true aspirations beneath diplomatic subtlety and the pretence of peaceful negotiation. The French implement a deliberate, systematic policy of encroachment into British territory, occupying strategic points in the Ohio, Niagara, and Champlain-Hudson valleys and along the Acadian frontier, resorting to brute force when expedient, but cleverly calculating the timing and scope of their advances so as to avoid provoking a determined response. To gain further time to strengthen its military position in the disputed regions, the French court pretends to disown these acts of aggression as the unauthorized initiatives of bellicose Canadian officials. A verse fable portrayed the conflict as a struggle within the animal kingdom. France is represented by the acquisitive, cunning, cruel leopard, which disrupts the harmony of the forest by usurping the territory of its neighbour, the formidable, but too patient and trusting British lion:

So 'twas resolv'd to dispossess
By Force, by Fraud, or by Address,
The *Lyons* of the Settlement

They had upon the Continent.
 Tho' solemnly at a Convention,
 Of each the just and fair Pretension,
 Was settled by Plen'potentaries,
 All which the *Leopard* calls Vagaries,
 The Fruits of their distemper'd Brains,
 And of the Treaty now complains.

The Prince whom false Ambition guides,
 In Force and Cunning still confides,
 And each alternative substitutes,
 As either best his Purpose suits.
 The *Leopard* thus by slow Approaches,
 Upon the *Lyon*'s right inroads.
 Unjustly tries his Bounds t' extend,
 Still he's the *Lyon*'s faithful Friend:
 For *Leopards* ever are polite,
 Even when they strip you of your Right.
 And if they plunder your Possessions,
 They pay you with genteel Expressions.¹³

The poet Joseph Reed, however, was more direct in his denunciation of repeated French invasions of British territory and breaches of faith:

Perfidious France!
 Are these thy Treaties? These thy plighted Vows,
 Unviolated, to preserve the Peace
 Of ravag'd Empires?
 From whence proceeds this Gallic Insolence?
 This Violation of the sacred Bonds,
 That harmonize the various Race of Man,
 To kindle, unprovok'd, a Scene of Blood
 In our Columbian Territories?¹⁴

The French were also accused of infiltrating political agents and Catholic priests into Acadia to foment rebellion among the native peoples and George II's new subjects in preparation for a reconquest of the ceded territory. One poem denounced fanatical French priests' alleged attempts to whip up the hatred of natives converted to Catholicism by propagating the perverse lie that Christ had been a Frenchman crucified by the Protestant British.¹⁵

During the development of the crisis, literature and prints which advocated war, or accepted it as inevitable, recorded the widespread conviction that it was justified by the imperative, once and for all, to resolve the inveterate territorial and trade conflicts with France in North America. If the French were allowed to occupy the strategic Ohio Valley, and connect their possessions in Canada and Louisiana with a barrier of forts stretching from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, via the Allegheny, Ohio and Mississippi rivers, the British colonies would be confined to a narrow tract of land along the Atlantic coast, and slowly strangled to death. If victorious in the struggle for the Ohio, the French

would win for themselves the vast potential wealth of an unexplored continent, depriving the American colonists of the westward expansion which was essential to their survival.

A neo-classical poem, inspired by the prospect of a declaration of war, in which national representatives Britannia and Gallia are summoned before Jupiter to appeal for victory by arguing the justice of their actions, clearly identified the vindication of Britain's imperial destiny in North America as the fundamental cause of the conflict:

For soon the Britons will with Gallia wage,
For the rich Confines of Virginia's Land,
And fair Acadia's cultivated Soil,
A dreadful, bloody, and avenging War.¹⁶

Convinced by the honesty, piety, lawfulness, and humanity of Britannia's petition, Jupiter decrees a resounding victory for her sons, which reiterated the imperial, maritime, and commercial motives most Britons considered worth fighting for:

Let airy Aeolus from blasting Winds
The Isle preserve! And o'er the glassy Deep
The British Navy, and the Merchant Ship
With pleasant Gale the furling Sail extend,
And waft them gently to the wish'd for Port!

The vanquish'd Gaul for Peace shall humbly sue,
And to the Britons for its Basis yield
Acadia's fertile Soil, Ohio's Forts,
And Dunkirk's lofty Battlements erase:
She shall to them full Satisfaction make
For Treaties broke, and on the briny Sea
Shall own their Sovereign Pow'r, and Laws obey.¹⁷

Many literary works, which revealed anxiety about the maritime and colonial threat posed by France, shared the importance British merchants, politicians, and the political nation attached to control of the North American fishery, an issue that would generate such heated controversy at the conclusion of the Seven Years' War in 1763. Writing on the fishery concentrated not only upon its significance as an industry that produced substantial wealth, but also stressed its vital role in fostering British sea power.¹⁸ The interdependence or symbiotic relationship of commerce and sea power, a principle clearly understood at mid-century, was seen to operate most decisively in the case of the fishery. It was realised during peace by a thriving merchant marine and fishing fleet, and during war by a powerful navy which secured their unrestricted access to resources, trade routes, and markets, and eliminated foreign competition. A flourishing fishing fleet provided a pool of skilled seamen who were essential for the manning of the wartime navy. It had been hoped that the conquests of Newfoundland and Acadia in 1713 would give Britain a commanding position in the Atlantic fishery. For this reason, their acquisition had been acclaimed as one of the most propitious events coinciding with George I's accession:

Now, chiefly, when their fishery's expand
In such a manner, under such command,
O fair possessions those! illustrious spoils!
Well worthy of a prince t'adorn such toils!
Hail, royal youth! this early honour's thine,

Do thou, betimes, delight in the marine,
 And favour commerce, - ev'ry praise, thy aim,
 Becoming thy illustrious birth and name.¹⁹

During the early 1750s, however, observers of colonial affairs were alarmed by the continuing vitality of the French North Atlantic fishery, achieved it was thought, by violating treaty restrictions. They pressed for tougher measures to prevent further French intrusion into the nation's own fishery.

Most of the works discussed so far have been poems, but all genres of literature were employed by authors to express outrage at what they perceived to be blatant attacks upon British colonies and commerce in North America. A play dramatised French diplomats' attempts to bribe members of the British government to turn a blind eye to their programme of imperial conquest and domination. The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was interpreted as a cunning ruse giving France the opportunity to augment her army and fleet in preparation for the next phase of its execution. As one of the French ministers cynically confesses, "we never conclude a Peace without an advantageous War in our View."²⁰ A novel describing the military career of a patriotic gentleman, who was disowned by his family for enlisting in the army as a common soldier, was equally damning of French imperial aggression.²¹ An imaginary dialogue between Louis XV and George II, in which each monarch presses his nation's rights to Acadia and the Ohio Valley, rejected French assertions as groundless.²² The theatre emerged as an influential force in fostering anti-French sentiment. The poet and dramatist David Mallet rewrote the great patriot masque Alfred as Britannia: a Masque, which was performed at Drury Lane to rapturous applause during the spring of 1755, helping incite demands for military action against France.²³

Graphic art provided a powerful visual dimension to the campaign in the press calling for retribution against the French. In 1755, the print *The American Moose-Deer, or Away to the River Ohio* reacted with outrage to France's expansion into the Ohio Valley. It alluded to several controversial incidents in which British Ohio traders had been arrested and imprisoned by the French, who claimed that they were illegally dealing with the native peoples of the West. The engraving emphasised the great wealth produced by the tobacco, fur, salt, rum, indigo, and other colonial trades, which the French seek to monopolise. While the traders are driven away in chains, Fort Duquesne is constructed at the strategic heart of the contested region, and the French consolidate their position with troops, arms, and munitions.²⁴ A second engraving underscored British political opinion's mounting indignation at French double-dealing. The figure of Louis XV is depicted with two faces, preaching diplomatic compromise and promising to return the occupied territories when addressing the British, while with the other face, he instructs his minister to proceed with their plans of aggression. A verse caption drove home the accusations of equivocation and hypocrisy:

Th' amusing Treaty he revives in vain,
 Whilst rising Forts extend th' insidious Chain.²⁵

In 1755, the Newcastle Ministry's reaction to the confrontation with French forces in the Ohio Valley during the previous year made war in North America inevitable. In January, General Edward Braddock was sent with two regular regiments to capture Fort Duquesne, and offensives were to be launched against French forts in Acadia, Niagara and the Champlain-Hudson Valley. On 21 April, Admiral Edward Boscawen was dispatched to American waters to intercept French reinforcements for Canada, leading to

the capture of two ships in the mouth of the St. Lawrence on 10 June. Boscawen's action provoked the French to break off diplomatic relations on 22 July. Despite the hostilities in North America, war would not be declared until 22 May 1756, after its extension to Europe, and the French had invaded the strategic Mediterranean Island of Minorca.²⁶

The initial optimism and high hopes of the 1755 campaign were illustrated by two prints that anticipated the immediate conquest of the ministry's objectives. In the first engraving, the British lion plucks feathers marked Ohio, Beauséjour, Crown Point, and Niagara from a fleeing Gallic cock, while a native boy jeers at the grounded rooster, "Pretty bird, how will you get home again."²⁷ In the second, the metaphor is repeated, and a British sailor throttles a cock, forcing it to disgorge the territories usurped by France. The capture of Fort Niagara is presaged by a French canoe plunging over the Falls to its destruction.²⁸

In 1755-1756 however, the outcome of the ministry's ambitious plan to drive the French out of all the disputed territories in North America proved to be extremely disappointing. The near annihilation of Braddock's army, when it had laboriously cut a road through the wilderness, and advanced to within a few miles of Fort Duquesne, was a disillusioning blow, rendered more unexpected and ignominious after confident reports of his progress.²⁹ The projected attack upon Fort Niagara ground to a halt because of political conflict and logistical limitations. Another army raised at Lake George for an offensive into the Champlain-Hudson Valley was hamstrung by similar obstructions, barely repulsed a French counter-thrust, and never marched against its objective.³⁰ Britain's only unqualified military success, the capture of Forts Beauséjour and Gaspereau on the Acadian frontier, was overshadowed by the other defeats. The ministry was censured for Boscawen's inability to prevent the French fleet from crossing the Atlantic to deliver regular troops, arms, and supplies to Canada, which would allow the enemy to wage offensive war against the British colonies. Many observers were also anxious that too little had been done to protect North American and West Indian trade.³¹

Even before Braddock's defeat and the other miscarriages, the Newcastle Ministry had been criticised for failing to assert British territorial rights in Acadia and the Ohio Valley in the face of French aggression. Direct negotiations between the British and French governments were initiated in 1752 in an attempt to resolve the crisis, but as the talks dragged on, Newcastle was blamed for not taking a tougher stance, and coercing the French to make major concessions.³² Newcastle's most strident opponents accused him of sacrificing British imperial and commercial interests in North America by slavishly pandering to George II's partiality for Hanover.³³ This indictment was given brilliant satiric expression in *The American Moose-deer*, where the moose, symbolic of North America, is surrounded by the imperial monarchs of Europe, who are eager to lay claim to its resources. George II is portrayed as the most irresponsible, near-sighted imperial ruler, concerned only with short-term exploitation of the British colonies, whose riches are diverted for the aggrandisement of Hanover. He stands behind the moose holding up its tail, and beats it with a whip. The wealth generated by British imperial commerce is rather incongruously represented by the droppings of the moose, which fall into George II's crown, while the German-born king exclaims, "I'm for de produce to enrich Hanover."³⁴

One of the earliest indictments of the ministry's colonial policy was made by the Tory polemicist John Shebbeare in his second novel *Lydia*, which charged Newcastle with criminal neglect for failing to respond vigorously enough to French encroachments,

and to maintain British naval supremacy in the Atlantic. The captain of a Royal Navy warship in American waters, the dissolute, swaggering aristocrat Charles Bounce, is exposed as a fraud for not retaliating against a French man of war, which refuses to pay the customary salute to the white ensign. The novel's patriotic hero, Lieutenant Arthur Probit, and the crew burn to avenge the insult, but Bounce laughs at the "Honour of old England," and attempts to conceal his personal cowardice behind the political cowardice of Newcastle, who had issued him secret instructions not to defy the French whatever the provocation:

... you'll be broke by [Anson] I have Orders from the Duke of [Newcastle] not to offend the French on any Account; we are in no Condition to go to War; pshaw damme do you imagine that I would not have been Yard-arm and Yard-arm before now with her? What a damned Scrape the brave Colonel Wash[ing]ton who so delighted with the whistling of Bullets, has brought upon the M[inistr]y.... Do you imagine the M[inistr]y would say that we are the Aggressors, if they did not intend to yield to the French, or that we were in a Condition to go to War.³⁵

One print conveyed the idea that a gullible, pacifistic Newcastle was being hoodwinked by French diplomats into delaying an armed retaliation until it was too late, for he is handed a dose of laudanum by the Governor of Canada to administer to the awakening British lion.³⁶

In Lydia, Shebbeare also condemned the ministry for failing to maintain excellent relations with North America's native peoples, and especially the Iroquois, which damaged Britain's interest in the fur trade, and deprived the colonies of valuable allies skilled in frontier warfare. A virtuous, heroic Onondagan warrior and chief journeys to Britain to appeal for the redress of the sufferings of the Iroquois Confederacy, and to see for himself whether the inhabitants of Old England are as degenerate as the colonists who persecute his people. Shebbeare was inspired by the Albany Conference of 1754, at which Britain's oldest and most powerful native allies had expressed their deep dissatisfaction over the crown's failure to address a host of grievances.³⁷ In a ludicrous encounter, Cannassatego is mistaken by Newcastle for the Young Pretender in disguise, who has infiltrated Britain to assassinate the prime minister and incite a Jacobite revolution. Cannassatego's impressions of Newcastle, who afterwards refuses even to listen to the pleas of the Iroquois, completes the sachem's utter disillusionment with the social and political immorality of Whig England, and he returns to advise his nation to break the Covenant Chain of friendship and take revenge upon their oppressors.³⁸

The debacle at Fort Duquesne severely damaged the credibility of the ministry, and generated a prolonged controversy over its causes. In enunciating one of the most widely accepted explanations for Braddock's defeat, an influential political poem accused the ministry of badly mismanaging native affairs. The administration was blamed for alienating the majority of the western tribes, most fatally in the case of the Shawnee, Delaware, and Mingos of the Ohio Valley, who had been seduced into hostility by the French. Many had fought against Braddock:

But vile Oppression ev'ry where,
Breeds Hate, Disdain, and mad Despair;
Each Mortal has an equal Right,

For Life and Liberty to Fight;
 To strive against Oppression's Weight,
 Nor sink beneath his rigid Fate;
 Then why should we express Surprise,
 Tho' Indians do against us rise!
 Or that they with a barb'rous Rage,
 Scalp old and young, and middle Age!
 Self-preservation reigneth there,
 The same as here, or any where;
 Hence is it not 'gainst common Sense,
 To blame them for their own Defence?
 What Means were taken to procure,
 A Friendship lasting and secure?
 Or did we use those Indians well,
 Who now against us do rebel?
 No, no, we slighted each Advance,
 So in Despair they joined with France.³⁹

The deep reluctance of the western tribes to guide and assist Braddock had been aggravated by the general's arrogant, threatening behaviour:

A rash hot-headed Man destroy'd,
 Th' Advantages we might enjoy'd;
 And by a cruel Declaration,
 Increas'd their Rage against our Nation;
 How often has it been averr'd,
 By those who have the Sentence heard,
 That B[raddock] swore in angry Tone,
 He would Massacre ev'ry one.⁴⁰

In the wake of the catastrophe, during 1755-1756 Fort Duquesne became the base for French and native raiding parties, which terrorised the frontier settlements of Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland. Several thousand colonists fled western Pennsylvania, which was reduced to a wasteland. New York and New England were also exposed to the ravages of torch and tomahawk. Luridly detailed accounts of scalping, torture, cruel captivities, and looted, burning farms, often relayed from American sources, were propagated by the British press and literature.⁴¹ Typical was the republication in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of a poem by the Virginia clergyman Samuel Davies, which revealed the intense hatred in North America fuelled by imperial rivalry, racism, religious bigotry, and mutual atrocity. In a passage so gruesome that it should have been printed in blood or red ink, Davies described the surprise attack upon a Virginia backcountry farm by French-incited natives:

Mad with the passions of an Indian soul,
 The tawny furies in the thickets prowl,
 Thro' the dark night, and watch the dawn of day,
 To spring upon their unsuspecting prey.
 The musket's deadly sound, or murder's screams,
 Alarm the slumb'ers, and break off their dreams.
 They start, they struggle, but in vain the strife,
 To save their own, a child's, or parent's life,

Or dearer still, a tender bleeding wife,
 Now mingling blood with blood, confus'd they die,
 And blended in promiscuous carnage lie.
 Brains, heart and bowels, swim in streams of gore,
 Besmear the walls, and mingle on the floor,
 Men, children, horses, cattle, harvests, all,
 In undistinguishing destruction fall.
 Th' infernal savages lift up the yell,
 And rouse the terrors of the lowest hell;
 Suck the fresh wound, in bloody puddles swill,
 And hence imbibe a fiercer rage to kill.
 From the raw skull the hairy scalp they tare,
 And the dire pledge in triumph wear.⁴²

The sufferings of the settlers highlighted the Newcastle ministry's tragic inability to protect Britain's North America's colonies.

The French capture of the strategic naval base of Minorca in July 1756, after Admiral John Byng's failure to raise the siege, provoked a violent political controversy, severely undermining the political nation's faith in the Newcastle Ministry's ability to defend British imperial and commercial interests.⁴³ The news of Byng's retreat, and the surrender of Minorca's commander, General William Blakeney, inflicted a further wound upon British martial pride, still open and bleeding after Braddock's debacle. A widely-read poem by the patriot poet Richard Glover "deplor'd Old-England's Shame" on the Ohio, and placed Minorca's conquest in the context of a disastrously mishandled war to reinforce its demand for the ministry's replacement.⁴⁴ A poem in the *Public Advertiser* exemplified the deep gloom and dismay of a people demoralised by the two great defeats, which were unflinchingly juxtaposed in a single couplet:

Disgrac'd her Glories on the Main;
 Her Blakeney beat, her Braddock slain.⁴⁵

An already disheartened political nation was staggered by more bad news from North America in the autumn of 1756. Taking advantage of British inactivity and unpreparedness, the Marquis de Montcalm moved from Montreal to seize the British forts, naval base, and fur trading post at Oswego on the south-eastern shore of Lake Ontario. The loss of Oswego was a critical strategic blow, which confirmed French control of the Great Lakes, and deprived the British of their only trading connection to the native peoples of the north-west, who were further persuaded towards neutrality or active alliance with the French.⁴⁶ An elaborate hortatory poem which pleaded with the nation and its leaders to shake off the enervating toils of luxury, and recover the warlike strength of their ancestors, chronicled its tragic consequences in the catastrophic North American war. In poetry as purple as Samuel Davies's, Britain lamented the latest disaster, so quickly following the defeat on the Ohio, which was still strewn with the unburied corpses of the vanquished British soldiers:

Behold the ghost of Braddoc, brave in fight,
 With generous Halket, stalking sullen round
 Ohio's red stream, unburied, unrevenged!
 See round the chiefs a croud of mangled shades,
 Cruelly deform'd by many a hideous gash!
 These point at ev'ry wound, still seen to bleed,

With horrid looks devour the purple sand,
 And grimly beckon to revenge their fall.
 Behold a later scene, with ruin fresh
 And shameful ignominy; see the foe,
 Their ensigns streaming from Oswego's walls,
 Vaunting with victory! see, in the dust,
 A naked trunk where valiant Mercer lies,
 Cover'd with honor! from his cruel wounds,
 The work of butchering France, the warm blood streams,
 And calls impatient for some great revenge.⁴⁷

The news of a further defeat at Oswego, which arrived in early October, destroyed whatever little public faith remained that the Newcastle Ministry was capable of successfully conducting the war. A print which emphasised the immense gulf between the sanguine prediction of the plucking of the Gallic cock in 1755, and the harsh reality of 1756, pictured a Frenchman chopping off the paws of the British lion with a sword. In the symbolic dismemberment of the British Empire, the first two strongholds to be amputated were labelled Oswego and Minorca.⁴⁸

One of the most powerful pieces of anti-ministerial literature published in response to the early defeats of the war was a ballad that emphasised its imperial and commercial origins. It demonstrated political opinion's firm belief that international trade was the lifeblood of the British economy, and the ultimate source of that naval and military power which guaranteed national independence. Moreover, it adeptly expressed contemporary ideas of the interdependency of empire, commerce, industry, agriculture, and national wealth and personal prosperity. The author painted a terrifying picture of the domino effect, which would be caused by the loss of Britain's North American colonies and the ruin of trade. The catastrophic repercussions would be felt by every sector of the economy and by every social class, devastating sailor, merchant, shopkeeper, tradesman, artisan, farmer, gentleman, and aristocrat. The ballad horrified its readers and hearers with a dire prophecy of poverty, conquest, and oppression if the Newcastle administration's calamitous conduct of the war was allowed to continue:

And you my brave Tars, who sail on the main,
 Bring Wealth to the Merchant; our Honour sustain,
 Must starve in our Ports, depriv'd of your Glory;
 Indeed my good Friends 'tis a very sad Story.

Ye Merchants who now in your Coaches do ride
 Must lower your Grandure and bring down your Pride:
 Ye Shop-keepers too, who in plenty do live,
 Soon must ye now with sad Poverty Strive.

Ye Farmers laborious who live by the Plough,
 Where to pay Rents, will you get money now?
 Ye Hinds and Mechanicks of each branch of Trade,
 Throw all your Tools down, and lay by the Spade.

Ye Lords and ye Gentry, who make a great Show,
 Your Tenants can't pay, so down you must go,

The Peer, the Beggar, and honest Jack Tar
By B[yng] and N[ewcastle] brought on a Par.

Minorca is lost; and America too
Soon my good Folks, will be taken from you:
And when to the French you've lost all your Trade,
Soon to French Slaves Vile Slaves you'll be made.⁴⁹

Finally, an allegorical history of the government's military record, thinly veiled as the speech of a Japanese emperor, who repudiated his incompetent advisers during a shamefully mishandled war with China, confirmed the collective view of the utter bankruptcy of the ministry. It demanded a change of men and measures at a time:

...when an Enemy flushed with Success (like a rapacious Wolf got into a Fold of defenceless Lambs) is slaughtering at Discretion our poor unprotected Subjects in so many distant Parts of the World, and stripping us at the same Time of our most valuable and dearly-purchased. Possessions, Possessions upon which our Trade and Navigation, and consequently our Wealth, Credit, Influence, and Importance, yea our very Being as a naval Power, the first naval Power upon Earth (a Distinction kind Nature evidently designed for us,) principally, if not entirely depended.⁵⁰

In conclusion, literature and graphic art reacting to the imperial crisis in North America during the early 1750s illustrate contemporary convictions of the great economic and strategic value of the British colonies, and of the urgency of promoting their expansion into the Ohio Valley, Acadia and the other contested regions. Literary works emphasise the dominance of a mercantilist vision, which asserted that national prosperity and power rested upon achieving an advantageous balance of trade, and envisaged fierce international competition to obtain resources and markets. Literary sources reveal an absolute certainty of the justice of British claims in North America, and a determination to resort to force rather than sacrifice any of the nation's legitimate territorial rights. The uncompromising, confrontational attitude reflected in political literature and prints functioned as a powerful catalyst encouraging the political nation's demands for military action against France. The early defeats in the war generated an intense political controversy, and created a crisis of confidence in the Newcastle Ministry's commitment and ability to vindicate British imperial interests in North America, which contributed to its collapse in November 1756.⁵¹

NOTES

- ¹ *Anglo-French Boundary Disputes in the West, 1749–1763*, ed. T.C. Pease (Springfield, 1936), pp. 1-39; Max Savelle, *The Diplomatic History of the Canadian Boundary 1749–1763* (New Haven, 1940), pp. 1-55; T.R. Clayton, “The Duke of Newcastle, the Earl of Halifax and the American Origins of the Seven Years’ War,” *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 24 (1981), pp. 571-603.
- ² C. M. Andrews, “Anglo-French Commercial Rivalry, 1700–1750,” *American Historical Review*, Vol. 20 (1914–1915), pp. 539-56, 761-88.
- ³ For a discussion of contemporary political literature’s patronage, authorship, dissemination, and its importance as a vehicle which both mirrored and moulded political opinion, see M. John Cardwell, “Arts and Arms: Political Literature, Military Defeat, and the Fall of the Newcastle Ministry 1754–1756” (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1998), pp. 1-15, 267-86.
- ⁴ D.E. Clark, “News and Opinion Concerning America in English Newspapers, 1754–1763,” *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 10 (1941), pp. 75-82; R.D. Spector, *English Literary Periodicals and the Climate of Opinion during the Seven Years’ War* (The Hague, 1966), pp. 108-28; Hermann Wellenreuther, “Pamphlets in the Seven Years’ War: More Change than Continuity?,” *Anglistentag 1995 Greifswald, Proceedings*, ed. J. Klein (Tubingen, 1996), p. 63, has identified 39 works dealing with the conflict in North America published during 1754–1756.
- ⁵ Savelle, pp. 28-30.
- ⁶ The Gentleman’s Magazine devoted considerable attention to the Ohio campaign, representative of the British press and public’s great interest in the wilderness struggle. It published an American officer’s eyewitness account of the engagements and Washington’s Capitulation in July 1754, pp. 399-400. As the North American war escalated, the magazine informed its readers of the history of Franco-British imperial expansion and conflict, printing official documents by British and colonial officials justifying British territorial claims. Maps assisted readers in locating the contested regions, and provided powerful visual confirmation of British claims. Pamphlets vindicating British rights were regularly extracted or reviewed. The magazine avidly followed the development of hostilities through regular sections entitled “Plantation News” and “Journal of the War in America:” Jan., pp. 15-18., Feb. pp. 77-79, Mar. p. 134, May p. 235, June pp. 252-256, 260-64, July, pp. 291-96, 304-308, Aug. pp. 349-55, 378-80, Sept. p. 389, Oct. pp. 435-37, 458-61, 470-75, Nov. p. 519, Dec. 1755, pp. 479-80; (hereafter referred to as GM). GM’s comprehensive coverage of the crisis was matched by other periodicals and the newspapers.
- ⁷ K. Morgan, “Atlantic Trade and British Economic Growth in the Eighteenth-Century” in *Industrialisation, Trade and Economic Growth From the Eighteenth Century to the Present Day*, ed. P. Mathias and J.A. Davis (Oxford, 1996), pp. 1-14; R.P. Thomas and D.N. McCloskey, “Overseas Trade and Empire,” in *The Economic History of England Since 1700*, ed. Roderick Floud and D.N. McCloskey (Cambridge, 1981), Vol. 1., pp. 90-92; John Rule, *The Vital Century: England’s Developing Economy 1714–1815* (London, 1992), pp. 262-74.
- ⁸ T.H. Breen, “An Empire of Goods: The Anglicisation of Colonial America, 1670–1776,” *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 25 (1986), pp. 467-99.
- ⁹ A Letter from a Cobler to the People of England, on Affairs of Importance, 1755, p.17. The authorial persona of a simple artisan like a cobbler, and the homely language of the pamphlet, suggest a wide popular appeal.
- ¹⁰ Nicholas Rogers, *Whigs and Cities: Popular Politics in the Age of Walpole and Pitt* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 391-405; Robert Harris, *A Patriot Press: National Politics and the London Press in the 1740s* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 4-10; 221-56; Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715–1785* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 137-65; John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State 1688-1783* (London, 1989), pp. 164-75.

- ¹¹ *The Patriot, or a Call to Glory*, 1757, p. 8. Numerous other examples could be cited demonstrating the critical importance of commerce and empire in creating prosperity during peace, and in supplying “The nerves and sinews of substantial war,” *Britain, A Poem*, 1757, p. 4.
- ¹² GM, Mar. 1756, pp. 128-30.
- ¹³ *The Lyon, the Leopard, and the Badgers. A Fable*, 1756, pp. 7-8. A second allegorical fable narrated a similar story of premeditated French expansionism, *The History of Reynard the Fox*, 1756, pp. 70-73.
- ¹⁴ Joseph Reed, *A British Philippic*, 1756, pp. 3-4. Other poems urging Britain to take revenge against French encroachments in North America included Britain’s *Resolution to Fight the French*, 1755; *Sailor’s Song, to the South. A New Ballad: Occasion’d by the Rumour of War*, 1755; *A Sea-piece: Containing I. The British Sailor’s Exultation. II. His Prayer Before Engagement*, 1755; *Britain, Strike Home*, 1756; *A Poem on the Declaration of War against the French King*, 1756; *Ode on the Present Times*, 1756; *A Pathetick Address to All True Britons*, 1756.
- ¹⁵ *The British Hero and Ignoble Poltroon Contrasted... With Some Strictures on the French Proceedings in America*, 1756, p. 3.
- ¹⁶ Robert Averay, *Britannia and the Gods in Council; a Dramatic Poem*, 1756, p. 20.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 31.
- ¹⁸ GM, May 1755, p. 217; *London Magazine*, Aug. 1755, p. 360 (hereafter referred to as LM).
- ¹⁹ “The Ocean,” *State Poems, (Relative to Former and to Future Times, and especially, to the Present Critical Conjunction)*, 1755, p. 10.
- ²⁰ *The Sham Fight*, 1755, p. 8. Tobias Smollett’s comedy *The Reprisal: or, the Tars of Old England*, written during 1755, although not performed at Drury Lane until early 1757, justified retaliation against French encroachment.
- ²¹ *The Life and Memoirs of Mr. Epigram Tristram Bates, Commonly Called Corporal Bates, a Broken-hearted Soldier*, 1756, p. 227.
- ²² *The Royal Conference or a Dialogue Between Their Majesties G[eorge] the II of E[ngland] and L[ouis] the XV of F[rance]*, 1756, pp. 12-15, 18-19, 25-38. The mock dialogue was based upon the memorials circulated among the European courts by the British and French governments. The speciousness of Louis XV’s claim to Acadia was further highlighted in a feigned confessional letter by a French merchant in Holland, *A Letter from a Frenchman at Paris to His Countryman at the Hague*, 1756.
- ²³ *Britannia: A Masque*, 1755; for details of the masque’s performance see *The Monthly Review*, April 1755, p. 383. Another masque from the same year, *The Press-gang, or Love in Low Life*, 1755, exhorted Britons to avenge their wrongs suffered at the hands of the French in the Ohio Valley.
- ²⁴ *The American Moose-Deer, or Away to the River Ohio*, British Museum Catalogue (hereafter referred to as BMC) 3280.
- ²⁵ *The Grand Monarch in a Fright; or, The British Lion Roused from His Lethargy*, BMC 3284.
- ²⁶ Clayton, pp. 571-603.
- ²⁷ *Britain’s Rights Maintained*, BMC 3331. In the contemporary political bestiary, the cock or rooster was symbolic of France for her alleged arrogance and vanity. The British had demanded the demolition of forts built on the Niagara River and at Crown Point on Lake Champlain in territory claimed to be part of New York.
- ²⁸ *British Resentment, or the French Fairly Coopt at Louisbourg*, BMC 3332.
- ²⁹ 977 of the 1500 British troops engaged in the battle and three-quarters of the officers were killed or wounded. The French and their native allies suffered only 39 casualties. Narratives of the battle appeared in GM, Aug. pp. 378-80 and Sept. 1755, pp. 426-27; “Verses Occasioned by the Melancholy News of the British Forces Being Defeated, and General Braddock Slain, on the Banks of the Ohio River,” LM, Oct. 1755, p. 496.
- ³⁰ During the fighting, the British lost one of their staunchest Iroquois allies, the Mohawk chief Hendrick. His death, Mohawk losses, and the inconclusive outcome encouraged the movement of the Iroquois Confederacy towards neutrality, “On the Death of Hendrick, Sachem of the

- Mowhawks,” “The Speech of Hendrick’s Son, on Hearing of His Father’s Death,” *Grand Magazine of Arts* (December 1755), p. 203.
- ³¹ *Poor Old England*, BMC 3540; *Poor New England*, BMC 3541.
- ³² In contrast, a Latin panegyric poem praised the Earl of Halifax, President of the Board of Trade, as the colonists’ champion, and endorsed his belligerent attitude toward French encroachment, *Ad Nobilissimum Virum*, GM, May 1755, p. 228.
- ³³ The expectation that France would retaliate should war break out by invading George II’s electorate proved to be a major strategic problem for the ministry, and provoked charges that it led to a policy of appeasement in North America. In an attempt to prevent the colonial conflict from spreading to Europe, the ministry negotiated a series of controversial subsidy treaties with Russia, Hesse-Cassel and Prussia during 1755–1756. The opposition in the press and Parliament claimed that the treaties would embroil Britain in a bloody, expensive continental war in defence of Hanover, preventing it from realising its legitimate, national maritime-colonial aims in North America, Cardwell, pp. 170-191.
- ³⁴ *The American Moose-Deer*, 3280. In contrast, Louis XV appears as the most far-sighted monarch, feeding the moose with fodder marked troops, arms, munitions and warships, strengthening the military position of his colonies in preparation for their expansion.
- ³⁵ John Shebbeare, *Lydia, or Filial Piety*, 1755, I., p. 211.
- ³⁶ *The Grand Monarque in a Fright*, BMC 3284.
- ³⁷ Important conferences like that at Albany were subjects of great interest, and were extensively reported in the press, reflecting the avid if naive contemporary curiosity regarding North America’s native peoples. GM, June 1755, pp. 252-56, printed transcripts of speeches delivered by the most celebrated chiefs, like Hendrick of the Mohawks. For an analysis of the impact of the conflict on the native peoples of the Ohio Valley and the Iroquois Confederacy see Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America* (New York, 1988), pp. 22-37, 80-108, 188-95.
- ³⁸ Shebbeare, *Lydia*, III, pp. 265-75, IV, pp. 115-17. The novel illustrates the Enlightenment’s fascination with romantic primitivism, and presents one of the most positive portrayals of a native figure in eighteenth-century fiction.
- ³⁹ *One-Thousand, Seven-Hundred, and Fifty-Six. A Dialogue*, 1756, p. 29.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.
- ⁴¹ GM, Dec. 1755, p. 580; Mar., May 1756, pp. 131, 227; *London Evening Post*, 19 Feb., 24 July, 1756; *A British Philippic*, p. 4; *The British Hero and Ignoble Poltroon*, pp. 3-4; *The Patriot*, pp. 45-6.
- ⁴² Samuel Davies, “Extract from a Poem on the Barbarities of the French and their Savage Allies and Proselytes, on the Frontiers of Virginia,” GM, Feb. 1757, p. 83. Ultimately, the European combatants’ perceptions of the native peoples were dictated, not by a sympathetic understanding of their cultures or aspirations, but by their willingness to fight for British or French imperial interests.
- ⁴³ Cardwell, pp. 75-152.
- ⁴⁴ *A Sequel to Hosier’s Ghost*, p. 3.
- ⁴⁵ “An Ode to Edward Vernon,” *Public Advertiser*, 31 July 1756.
- ⁴⁶ GM, Nov. 1756, p. 508, printed the articles of capitulation.
- ⁴⁷ Britain, pp. 15-16. The British commander, James Mercer, was killed while preparing to lead a sortie against the besiegers. In his extreme denunciation of French conduct in North America, the author graphically dramatizes the devastation of a pastoral colonial settlement by a native scalping party, excited to the most vicious acts of depravity by the French, pp. 16-20.
- ⁴⁸ *The British Lion Dismembered*, BMC 3547. The next two limbs in danger of falling to the French were labelled Nova Scotia and New York.
- ⁴⁹ *The Black and Yard Arm. A New Ballad on the Loss of Minorca, and the Danger of our American Rights and Possessions*, 1756.

- ⁵⁰ *The Speech of a Patriot Prince*, 1756, p. 8. Other works condemning the ministry's mismanagement of the developing conflict included: *The Freeholder's Ditty*, 1756; *The Ministry Change'd*, 1756; and *His Majesty's Most Gracious Speech*, 1756; as well as many of the publications discussed above.
- ⁵¹ For an explanation of how military failure at the outbreak of the Seven Years' War precipitated the fall of the Newcastle Ministry see Cardwell, pp. 267-82.

WHEN WAR ART IS NOT HISTORY?

Laura Brandon

During the First World War, the organizers of the war art program, the *Canadian War Memorials Fund* (CWMF) accepted only finished compositions into their collection. They did not require the artists they commissioned to hand in their working drawings and sketches.¹ The Canadian War Artists' Committee adopted the same approach for the Second World War art program.² A sea change occurred, beginning in the 1980s, when the Canadian War Museum began to acquire, for a variety of reasons, a number of the artists' sketchbooks from both wars that they had not passed in. In a number of cases, the appearance of these sketchbooks has made it possible to evaluate the finished product, usually an oil painting, against the rough field and studio sketches. The results have been interesting, for they raise doubts about the authenticity and nature of the historical record that many believed was being compiled.

War art is traditionally viewed from two main points of view, that of history and that of art. Canada's war art historically has had a difficult time tiptoeing through this mine-littered battlefield. It tried to be art until 1971, when the National Gallery of Canada transferred the war art collections to the Canadian War Museum because they were by then viewed as historical record.³ Even before the transfer, the war art was more often than not being exhibited as historical record.⁴ But the other point of view, that the war art carries a meaning more subtle than fact, one that arises from the artist's creative take on history - had also been noted consistently, if not as strongly, as I will show.

This dichotomy in interpretation has become clearer to me as a result of my work at the Canadian War Museum over the past eight years as its curator of war art. But the implications of not addressing the nature of the difference through interpretive means have been brought home to me particularly strongly more recently. This has come about because of visitor responses to the exhibition I recently curated entitled *Canvas of War*.⁵ At the end of this show is a comment book. Hundreds of visitors from amongst the thousands who have viewed the exhibition have felt moved to write in it.

For a majority, the artists have quite clearly depicted the history of the two world wars. One individual, for example, wrote:

I would like to thank the past and current governments of Canada for hiring brilliant artists who depicted [and] captured the essence of two worldwide conflicts that were the First World War and the Second World War. It is exactly what my great grandfather, a World War One veteran told me one day before his death.

In this comment the writer actually identifies the conundrum I am going to explore when he refers to the exhibition as both "depicting" and "capturing the essence" of the wars. Using one example, I am going to suggest that the works of war art on view in the exhibition have little to do with "depicting" and a lot to do with "capturing the essence." Furthermore, I am going to argue that in using war art in a military history context it is important that the creative process that generates the works of art be explained as much

as the facts of the history to which they refer. If this is not done there is a danger that the works of art, which are largely fiction, although extraordinarily moving and impressive ones, will become viewed as documentary history.

Canvas of War has a strong historical focus. Much effort has gone into ensuring that the label text is factually accurate. There are maps, historical chronologies, and accounts of major battles to be studied. There is far less to be read on the creative process that gave rise to the works of art that illustrate the history. The degree to which this has provided the art on view with an unwarranted veneer of factual accuracy is problematic. It seems that, in the absence of other information, the visitor has no means of assessing the veracity of the paintings' content. As a result, for those who are unaware of the creative process, the compositions can be regarded as being legitimate historical documents of war.

What is this creative process to which I am referring? An examination of the genesis of Alex Colville's Second World War painting, *Infantry, near Nijmegen, Holland*, provides a good example.⁶ Here we can see that rather than bringing together carefully sketched observations to create a finished work, much as an historian would develop his topic by using documentary evidence, artists were just as likely to rely on imagination, memory and the creative impulse. This fiction would be given the appearance of authenticity by the careful addition of uniform, accoutrement, and technical details.

To begin with, the date of *Infantry, near Nijmegen, Holland*, is pretty telling, 1946, nearly two years after the events ostensibly depicted occurred. Nevertheless, Colville's diary from the time indicates that he had a major composition in mind as early as 1 February 1945.

On 1 February I envisaged my first big canvas, the subject being infantry marching in single file along a road. That morning I made numerous sketches of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles marching, then a study of a desolate road. The following day . . . I did a pen and wash drawing, *Infantry*, from the previous day's sketches.⁷

Infantry (12170) shows a group of soldiers trudging wearily away from the viewer along a muddy Dutch road.⁸ It was based on a number of sketches including that of the road itself (12145.4) and the figures (12145.1, 12145.2).⁹ Nearly a year later, back in Ottawa, the artist is facing a large blank canvas. He has had time to think about his subject and wants to change it. Scribbled on the right of this last sketch is what looks like a compositional change. The style is different so possibly it is not of the same date as the rest of the sketch. A subsequent collection of compositional sketches in the Canadian War Museum supports the idea that the artist rethought the subject he saw in February 1945 at a later date. In one (82219) he is looking at the arrangement of figures; in another instance in relationship to the landscape.¹⁰ In yet another (82220) he is playing with the relationship of the soldiers' heads to one another.¹¹ In a further study (82205) he confirms an interest in having the soldiers march towards the viewer in a curved formation.¹² In what is likely an even later sketch (82206) he straightens out the line of soldiers.¹³ On another page of scribbled lines (82218) he introduces what becomes the second figure holding a Bren gun.¹⁴ This is developed in another brief series of pencil lines (82204), although the figure is leading, rather than in second place, as in the finished work.¹⁵ This figure takes on more detailed form in a delicate pencil drawing (12145.5).¹⁶ The uniform and accoutrement details are pencilled in in another small sketch (82373) and the arrangement of helmets is studied in the briefest of drawings (82298).¹⁷ The leading

figure emerges in a more finished drawing (12145.6).¹⁸ The artist provides him with his own hand (82370) and his father's face.¹⁹ The final drawing in the series (12145.3) is squared for transfer to the canvas.²⁰ A photograph of the artist surrounded by studies for various works and the finished painting *Infantry, near Nijmegen, Holland* confirms his working methods.²¹

Colville titled the work simply, *Infantry*. For him it was no longer the Royal Winnipeg Rifles in Holland but a powerful commentary on courage, adversity, and the exhausting grind of soldiers' lives in wartime. In an interview he said that the composition "expressed the terrible life that they had; lack of sleep, food, exposure, constant danger. It's amazing that people endured. They did, these ordinary young guys."²² However, to convey this he interjected his father's face, a man who never served overseas at all, and who was not and never had been a soldier. In an interview he said:

The corporal was based in a way on my father who was that type of small slight guy with a narrow face . . . I've always thought of my father as a kind of heroic figure. I don't know if I was conscious of that at the time that I was painting that I was making the person look like my father . . . who had been the foreman of a rivet gang who were also doing dangerous work and often got killed."²³

The words '*near Nijmegen, Holland*' were added later giving the work a specificity he perhaps did not intend. The war art collection's first curator, Major R.F. Wodehouse, provided this title in the 1960s when he was preparing his magnum opus, the *Check List of The War Collection*.²⁴ Nonetheless, it should be noted that Colville did provide a location and identified the unit as belonging to the 3rd Infantry Division on the back of the canvas thereby adding a degree of authenticity not borne out by the artistic process he followed in composing the work.

How has this painting been used over time? Most famously it appeared as a detail on the cover of Heather Robertson's 1977 book, *A Terrible Beauty*.²⁵ No information is provided on the painting other than the tombstone data of the catalogue entry. It is also used in a similar manner, namely as an illustration, on the packaging for the video that was produced to accompany the exhibit, *Canvas of War*.²⁶ In terms of art-oriented productions, only in the 1990 publication by Ken McCormick and Hamilton Darby Perry, *Images of War: The Artist's Vision of World War II*, is any effort made to account for the genesis of the painting.²⁷ Even here, however, the authors write that the studies for the painting were done in the field, which suggests a link with events seen. In terms of history books, Colville's father's head turns up on the bottom of almost every page of the Department of National Defence's 1995 publication, *Liberation: the Canadians in Europe*.²⁸ Icon though Colville's father is here, the information that he was not a liberating soldier is not provided anywhere in the text. The painting is also on the front cover of the book *Canadian Military History*, a 1993 edition of readings, edited by Marc Milner.²⁹ In 1972 it was also the cover illustration for *The Canadian Military: A Profile*, a series of essays edited by Hector J. Massey.³⁰ In both instances, a work whose status as an evocative fiction is never explained, is used to represent the subject of Canadian military history itself.

I am not trying to say that war art should not feature in publications such as these, nor that its use in these publications is matter of vast significance for the study of history. What I am trying to say is that both history and art are ill served if more information on the painting itself is not provided. Are we being fair to the artists' intentions if we present their paintings in a historical rather than art historical context that leaves readers thinking

they have viewed history rather than a work of the imagination? Without some background on the creation of the work, the average purchaser of *Liberation* or Milner's volume may assume that in the context of a history book, the image is also historically correct. In terms of the art publications, the average reader, in the absence of information to the contrary, can also question the role of imagination and assume that the art is illustration. I should point out that this assumption was one reason why the National Gallery transferred the war art collection to the Canadian War Museum in 1971. That artists rework what they have seen in the same way that filmmakers cut, edit, and paste, cannot necessarily be known unless it is explained.

How did the idea that Colville's painting is an historical depiction prevail? Again, history is largely responsible. The "instructions" issued to war artists by the Canadian War Artists' Committee in Ottawa during the Second World War were clearly directed towards historical record.³¹ Approved on 2 March 1943, the two-page typewritten document informed the official war artists what was expected of them and how they should set about accomplishing these goals. "As a war artist appointed to one of the Canadian Services you are charged with the portrayal of significant events, scenes, phases and episodes in the experience of the Canadian Armed Forces, especially those which cannot be adequately rendered in any other way." These "instructions" continued:

You are expected to record and interpret vividly and veraciously, according to your artistic sense, (1) the spirit and character, the appearance and attitude of the men, as individuals or groups, of the Service to which you are attached – (2) the instruments and machines which they employ, and (3) the environment in which they do their work. The intention is that your productions shall be worthy of Canada's highest cultural traditions, doing justice to History, and as works of art, worthy of exhibition anywhere at any time.

In section 9, the "instructions" admonished: "Accuracy in delineation and presentation of clothing, equipment, weapons, vehicles and craft is essential. Details of arms, equipment and vehicles, whenever shown, should be checked against contemporary photographs." This plea for 'rivet counting' was softened by a subsequent instruction reading: "General direction as to subjects and field to be covered will usually be given and suggestions as to medium, treatment and composition may be offered, but the final choice will rest with the artist."

C.P. Stacey, the army's wartime official historian during the Second World War, who managed the army's war artists overseas, worked within the boundaries of these instructions. In his autobiography, *A Date with History*, he acknowledges that artists could produce both history and propaganda, but he nevertheless supports the potential of art to be an historical record. "It seemed to me that if there were to be army artists they belonged in the business of historical recording rather than in that of publicity."³²

It seems to me clear that both the writers of the "instructions" and the senior officers like Stacey who managed the artists, were hazy on what the artistic process really involved. The extent to which the creation of a painting was led by an artistic rather than an historical imperative was not clearly understood. The extent to which history was not recorded was not comprehended. Furthermore, as historian Jonathan Vance notes regarding the First World War art program in his 1997 book on the Canadian war experience, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War*, this was not a new phenomenon. "When the deputy minister of National Defence prepared a memorandum on the CWMF in 1928," he writes, "he took pains to stress "that the

collection contains actual battle scenes historically accurate and the pictures depict the type of warfare, materials and conditions of war fare [*sic*] and locations very correctly.”³³ In reality, this was largely not what the collection consisted of as the more avant-garde of the compositions confirm.

This is not to say that alternate views had not been expressed that provided a different way of appreciating the paintings. Sir Robert Borden, prime minister of Canada in the Great War, for example, viewed the First World War paintings as documents that would relate “the meaning of the war as it was and as it would be understood.”³⁴ Andrew Bell, in a 1945 article in *The Studio* entitled “War Art” indicated that the role of the Second World War artist was to “fill the eye” with the atmosphere and spiritual shading of the struggle.”³⁵

Enough evidence exists to confirm that most war artists themselves were aware that their depictions were not historical documents. Caven Atkins, for example, wrote in a 1943 letter to the director of the National Gallery of Canada, Harry McCurry, that, “Art is not imitation. Life and its actions are used only as inspiration and are points of departure for the creative idea.”³⁶ What Colville himself said he was doing accords well with Atkins’ view:

At the same time there was a film and photography unit which was also part of the army. They were shooting footage all the time. The difference of course is a conceptual one. The camera can record, can make extraordinarily good, affecting records, but a painter is more likely to select and reject, to edit, to interpret. You are not a camera, you are doing essentially different things. There is a certain subjectivity, an interpretive function.³⁷

The British philosopher-historian R. G. Collingwood, addressed the tangled topic of art versus history in a 1938 book entitled *The Principles of Art*.³⁸ For him, works of art were products of the imagination and not history.³⁹ This conclusion was based on the fact that the making of art does not follow the rules of historical enquiry and proceed from a requirement to present evidence and keep to the facts. In his book, *Philosophy of the Arts: An Introduction to Aesthetics*, Gordon Graham agrees with Collingwood and, unknowingly, with Sir Robert Borden, when he concludes that, “art is most valuable when it serves as a source of understanding.”⁴⁰ Graham writes further:

Though there are evident differences between art on the one hand and . . . and history on the other, the former, no less than the latter, can be seen to contribute significantly to human understanding. In appreciating how it does this, it is essential to see that works of art do not expound theories, or consist in summaries of facts. They take the form of imaginative creations which can be brought to everyday experience as a way of ordering and illuminating it.⁴¹

These are important words. It is a call to explain the creative act and make clear its role in history as a means of understanding as opposed to a function as a bearer of facts.

In conclusion, while many of the war artists’ drawings and watercolours from the battlefield do, in some cases, record quite faithfully sights seen and experienced, the paintings are of a different order. The sights and scenes of war have been transformed into something else. Aided by imagination they are a synthesis not only of what has been seen but also of emotions felt, and also observed. These latter elements are particularly intangible qualities that are less than amenable to visual documentation. Their very evanescence makes them difficult to capture in media like photography and film, and

more than doubly so in paint or pencil. The moment is gone by the time the camera or hand is ready. Invariably, it is the artist's eye that sees and remembers them for future use. But the process of remembering and revisiting is inevitably one of reconstruction, and hence involves imagination.

Yes, the reworked painted image conveys a sense of time and of period. But like war films, war art does not function well within the conventions of historical practice, as expressed by such as Collingwood. While it can add a powerfully emotive dimension to our understanding of history, it can communicate most effectively in subjective and frequently imaginative generalities. To avoid misrepresentation, we must clearly acknowledge war art for the imaginative fiction it so often is, to be fair both to art and history. We need more thoughtful evaluative processes that accommodate both the evidential limitations of war art and the very real fact that its visual imagery can be a powerful instructor. If we do not, we risk making art the equivalent of history irather thna something else entirely. The exactitude that the exhibit visitor claimed to have seen in *Canvas of War* should not rest unexplained.

NOTES

- ¹ The original 1920 gift to Canada of the works of art comprising the Canadian War Memorials Fund did not include the working sketches. While some are now in the Canadian War Museum's collection most are scattered throughout public and private collections in Canada and Great Britain.
- ² The works deposited with the National Gallery of Canada in 1946 did include a significant number of drawings. The actual sketchbooks were retained by the artists themselves and have only entered the Canadian War Museum art collection and also that of the National Archives of Canada, if they survived, as separate and more recent gifts and acquisitions.
- ³ For an account of the transfer see Laura Brandon, "A Unique and Important Asset? The Transfer of the War Art Collections from the National Gallery of Canada to the Canadian War Museum," *Material History Review*, Number 42, Fall, 1995, 67-74.
- ⁴ For example, the exhibition, *Aviation Paintings*, was originally intended for exhibit at the National Gallery of Canada prior to the 1971 transfer. Ultimately, it was shown at the Canadian War Museum in 1972. In the Second World War section, the catalogue divided the paintings by aircraft type.
- ⁵ *Canvas of War: Masterpieces from the Canadian War Museum*, Canadian Museum of Civilization, February, 2000 – January, 2001.
- ⁶ Alex Colville, *Infantry, near Nijmegen, Holland*, oil on canvas, 101.6 x 121.9 cm, CWM 12172.
- ⁷ Graham Metson and Cheryl Lean, *Alex Colville: Diary of a War Artist*. Halifax: Nimbus Publishing Ltd., 1981, 92.
- ⁸ Alex Colville, *Infantry*, watercolour on paper, 28.7 x 38.7 cm, CWM 12170.
- ⁹ Alex Colville, *Untitled*, carbon pencil, ink and wash on paper, 22.9 x 18.8 cm, CWM 12145.5.
- ¹⁰ Alex Colville, *Untitled*, carbon pencil, ink and wash on paper, 21.3 x 27.3 cm, CWM 12145.2.
- ¹¹ Alex Colville, *Untitled*, ink on paper, 25.5 x 19.0 cm, CWM 82219.
- ¹² Alex Colville, *Untitled*, ink on paper, 25.5 x 19.0 cm, CWM 82220.
- ¹² Alex Colville, *Secondary Sketch of Figures (Infantry, near Nijmegen)*, charcoal on paper, 26.0 x 17.8 cm, CWM 82205

- ¹³ Alex Colville, *Rough Sketch of Figures (Infantry, near Nijmegen)*, pencil on paper, 26.0 x 17.8 cm, CWM 82206.
- ¹⁴ Alex Colville, *Unidentified Sketches and Notes*, ink on paper, 25.5 x 19.0 cm, CWM 82218.
- ¹⁵ Alex Colville, *Preliminary Sketch of Figures (Infantry, near Nijmegen)*, charcoal on paper, 26.0 x 17.8 cm, CWM 82204.
- ¹⁶ Alex Colville, *Untitled*, carbon pencil, ink and wash on paper, 22.9 x 18.8 cm, CWM 12145.5.
- ¹⁷ Alex Colville, *Uniforms Study*, carbon pencil on paper, 28.0 x 23.0 cm, CWM 82373. Alex Colville, *Helmets Study*, carbon pencil on paper, 20.5 x 14.5 cm, CWM 82298.
- ¹⁸ Alex Colville, *Untitled*, carbon pencil, ink and wash on paper, 22.9 x 19.1 cm, CWM 12145.6.
- ¹⁹ Alex Colville, *Hand Study*, carbon pencil on paper, 25.4 x 20.3 cm, CWM 82370.
- ²⁰ Alex Colville, *Untitled*, 25.4 x 30.5 cm, CWM 12145.3.
- ²¹ Metson and Lean, 158.
- ²² Interview with Michael Ostroff, September 1999. Canadian War Museum artist file, Alex Colville.
- ²³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴ All the correspondence with Alex Colville prior to the publication of Wodehouse's catalogue refers to the painting as *Infantry*.
- ²⁵ Heather Robertson, *A Terrible Beauty: The Art of Canada at Toronto*: James Lorimer and Co., Ltd., 1977.
- ²⁶ *Canvas of War: the Art of World WarII*. Sound Venture Productions and the Canadian War Museum, 2000.
- ²⁷ Ken McCormick and Hamilton Darby Perry, *Images of War: The Artist's Vision of World War II*. New York: Orion Books, 1990, 360.
- ²⁸ Bill McAndrew, Bill Rawling, Michael Whitby, *Liberation: The Canadians in Europe*. Montreal: Art Global, 1995.
- ²⁹ Marc Milner, *Canadian Military History: Selected Readings*. Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1993.
- ³⁰ Hector J. Massey, ed., *The Canadian Military: A Profile*. Toronto: Copp Clark, 1972.
- ³¹ *Instructions for War Artists* issued to Flying Officer C. F. Schaefer, 25 September 1943. Canadian War Museum Archives, Carl Schaefer War Diaries.
- ³² C.P. Stacey, *A Date with History: Memoirs of a Canadian Historian* (Ottawa: Deneau, 1982), 106
- ³³ Jonathan F.Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997, 102.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ Andrew Bell, "War Art," *The Studio*. Vol. 129, No. 625, April 1945, 116.
- ³⁶ Caven Atkins to H. O. McCurry, 7 March 1943. National Gallery of Canada Archives, Canadian War Artists, Caven Atkins, 5.42 – A.
- ³⁷ Metson and Lean, 123.
- ³⁸ R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938.
- ³⁹ As cited in Gordon Graham, *Philosophy of the arts: An Introduction to Aesthetics*. London: Routledge, 1997, 50.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*

MODERNISM AND MONUMENTALISM: CANADA'S PART IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEMORIAL ARCHITECTURE

Paul Gough

In this short paper¹ I want to look at the success and failure of Canadian artists when faced with commenting upon, and commemorating, the European Wars of the 20th century. First I would like to start with my response to the Canadian War Memorial to those wars that was recently unveiled in London, England.

If you approach from Buckingham Palace, the memorial appears as two white triangular masts floating on the lawns of the park. A little closer and the triangles shimmer in the sunlight; a little closer again and they are revealed as two slabs of polished stone rippling with shallow cascades of running water. The two triangles are bisected by a narrow passageway which cuts through the sculpture like a symbolic parting of the seas: a suggestion perhaps of a land bridge connecting Canada to Great Britain. If you walk through the corridor two things happen : the sound of rushing water drowns out the sound of traffic, and secondly, the ground rises slightly, as little as 30 centimetres but just enough to require you to make an effort, while all around is the rush of falling water. If you are sensitive to the sculptural play of space and movement this is an intensely memorable experience.

A shallow, sunken pyramid the monument is angular and uneasy on the eye: it seems to typify all that is edgy and unrelenting about modernist architecture. But look closer. It is not a totally abstract motif : sunk into the lower reaches of the water are several dozen bronze maple leaves. In the past few years they have reacted to the water, and are changing from bronze to green - a strange symbolic reversal of the ageing process, as if the water is bringing fresh life to dead nature.

To me, the Green Park memorial is significant for several reasons:

Firstly, it is a strikingly bold design. As an abstract monolith it incorporates and fuses simple geometric shapes with subtle figurative elements. As I shall go on to elaborate, this has been the hallmark of Canadian monumentalism.

Secondly, the design seems to pay homage to specific Canadian symbols: the inclined fissure between the triangles is reminiscent of the concrete trenches on Vimy Ridge, or the archway of the war memorial in Ottawa. The running water is an echo of the fountain in the Canadian garden at *le Memorial* in Caen. It is as if there are many inter-connected themes each telling a particular part in the Canadian war narrative of the 20th century.

Thirdly, and perhaps more controversially, the fusion of abstraction and figuration in this piece, and in other Canadian war memorials, seems to convey an adventurousness that has been lacking in other Canadian war art.

In order to put the new memorial in perspective we have to turn back to the middle years of the Great War to relate the story of official Canadian war art and the pivotal part played by its protagonist - Max Aitken.

A self-made millionaire, entrepreneur, unionist MP and a proud Canadian, Max Aitken had more or less appointed himself the official recorder of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. He amassed piles of photographs, reports and eye-witness accounts of the Canadians at war. From December 1915 he was the sole conduit of Canadian news on the battle front and in 1916, at his own expense, he founded the CRWO (Canadian War Records Office); three months later the office had a staff of 17 men and 11 officers who were systematically gathering news, reports, and photographs from the Canadian lines. It was a remarkable achievement. At a time when all war news was heavily controlled the CRWO had become 'the fountainhead of reliable information concerning Canadian affairs and the Canadian troops in the field'.² Its success completely overshadowed the British Department of Information who could not compete with Aitken's entrepreneurial flair and energy. The British director later went on to complain, famously, that it seemed as if 'Canada is running the war'.³

However, in mid-1916 the British commissioned the first official war artist to visit the front - the Scottish etcher Muirhead Bone - and bring back eye-witness artistic accounts of the fighting. Aitken responded in kind. But here he seems to have made his first error of judgement.

There were many good reasons for using artists: the supply of photographs from the Western Front was drying up; and most of those photographs seemed to show the same stretch of dreary, desolated landscape. Aitken had grown weary of the heroic antics of the battle-illustrators who invented their compositions from the drawing boards in Fleet Street. Aitken also recognised that by giving front-line artists a roving commission he would strike, on Canada's behalf, an important blow for artistic freedom which would contrast with the military imperative of German 'Kultur'. At the back of his mind perhaps, he also held a vision for a grand memorial building which would house a comprehensive cultural record of Canada's part in the war.

Aitken's error was to ignore Canadian artists. Indeed, the first piece commissioned by the CRWO was painted by the English academician Richard Jack, who produced a vast 12 feet by 19 feet canvas full of the more extreme excesses of Victorian high battle art. Undeterred, Aitken recruited the young art critic Paul Konody and between them they commissioned scores of artists in England. The fashionable society painter William Orpen recalled how he was approached in September 1917:

About ten minutes past four up breezed a car, and in it was a slim little man with an enormous head and two remarkable eyes. I saluted and tried to make military noises with my boots. Said he: 'Are you Orpen?' 'Yes, sir' said I. 'Are you willing to work for the Canadians?' said he. 'Certainly, sir' said I. 'Well,' said he, 'that's all right. Jump in, and we'll go and have a drink.'⁴

Konody, however, had a conservative eye. He disapproved of the formalist abstraction of most modern English art, dismissing Vorticist art as little more than 'geometrical obfuscations'.⁵ On one occasion he ordered the young avant garde artist David Bomberg to repaint entire sections of his canvas showing a Canadian Tunnelling Company at work because it was insufficiently naturalistic. The painter William Roberts

was told in writing that, when working for the Canadian War Memorial Fund, ‘cubist work’ was inadmissible.⁶

Proof of this inherent conservatism is evident in the fact that half of the artists working for the Canadians in 1917 were busy painting portraits of eminent politicians, statesman and decorated soldiers.

The real problem however remained that few of these artists were from Canada. While William Orpen revelled in the fact that ‘the Canadians have robbed every artist of distinction in England’⁷ there was a growing furore across the Atlantic that indigenous artists were being systematically ignored. The Canadian portrait painter, Ernest Fosbery, on convalescent leave from the front expressed a widespread anger at the exclusion of he and his fellow artists from the CWMF schemes:

We have in the Canadian academy some good portrait painters ... and I think it probable that there would be a considerable feeling in Canada if in a matter of this sort Canadian artists were entirely overlooked. Canada is taking its place as a nation and Canadian art has more than kept pace with the developments of the country. Would it not be possible to have this essentially Canadian series of portraits done by Canadian artists?⁸

A month later, in November 1917, a Montreal newspaper summarised the mood in the headline ‘Canadian Artists not Included’. Aitken’s response was characteristic. Within weeks four Canadian painters had been employed. In terms of artistic output these artists and their colleagues could not be bettered, but their work lacked the adventurous language and innovative styles that had been used to such good effect in the work of their English counterparts. Canadian painting was still coming to terms with the visual opportunities afforded by modernist abstraction. Even for artists of the quality of AY Jackson and FH Varley the constraint of a war-time commission was not the time to experiment with artistic style.

If we look through the extraordinary collection of Canadian art produced in the Great War there are only a few artists who pushed the boundaries of pictorial practice. One of the Canadian painters to embrace the full range of modernist possibilities was John Turnbull, whose paintings of dogfights and aerial combat are closest to the Futurist ideal of simplified forms, abrupt tonality and radical colour.

By making this criticism I am not saying that Canadian painters in any way failed to convey the realities of the war in Europe. I think that Jackson’s work of the ravaged landscape and Varley’s images of burial are amongst the finest icons of conflict of the 20th century. But could that be said of their fellow-artists? Can they be compared with the innovative work of Paul Nash, Bomberg, Roberts and Lewis, or Otto Dix and Max Beckmann? Were Canadian artists hugely disadvantaged by their late start in describing the war in France and Flanders?

This was clearly the verdict in 1919 when the important Canadian War Memorials Exhibition was shown in London. Not one Canadian artist was shown in the central Gallery of Burlington House, indeed the focal point of the show was preserved for Augustus Johns’ immense drawing *The Canadians opposite Lens*.⁹

As we have seen, Aitken and Konody were wary of the overt modernism of some of the British painting that had been commissioned. Konody publicly despised battle art and high history painting which drew on archaic and stale allegorical imagery. He argued passionately that the era of mechanised total war demanded a virile art that fused

description with innovative and direct formal language - on the strict understanding that it wasn't too virile, nor too direct.

To this end he championed the English Futurist painter Christopher Nevinson. It was a fairly predictable choice. Nevinson's work was extraordinarily popular at the time - policeman had to be brought in to control the crowds who wanted to see it. The paintings were outwardly radical but in fact were rather illustrative, spiced with little more than 'a veneer of cubism'. As Konody admitted in 1916 it was 'absolutely intelligible without being in any sense of the word literal representation.'¹⁰

Nevinson's paintings were successful because he managed to fuse figuration and abstraction, realism and surface geometry. It was a pictorial language that reconciled aesthetic opposites. And, in my opinion, it is the point where Canadian art has also contributed something quite particular to the iconography of conflict.

I mentioned earlier that the memorial fountain in Green Park, London successfully managed to incorporate figurative elements within a geometric whole. Its designer, Pierre Granche, may have recognised that these principles had first been forged in the heat of modernism in the first decades of the 20th century. He certainly will have been aware of the tradition of Canadian memorialism of which his monument is an important part. Look, for example, at the most striking of the Great War memorials built by Canadian sculptors: the Vimy Memorial.

We will all be familiar with it. It was designed from open competition by Walter S Allward, a sculptor from Toronto.¹¹ Chosen from over 160 other submissions Allward's design successfully fuses a bold architectural scheme with a wide retinue of figurative elements. In principle it takes the form of two gigantic stone pylons - each meant to symbolise the twin forces of Canada and France - standing on a stepped base that alone required eleven thousand tonnes of masonry. On the inside walls of each pylon are various figures each playing a particular allegorical role - Defenders, the Spirit of Sacrifice, representatives of Peace, Justice, Truth, and Knowledge. Just as the monument seems to teeter on the edge of the Ridge, so the figures lean precariously out of the stone work; fused to it, but struggling to be liberated from it.

Architectural historians have pointed out that few countries in the post-war period would tolerate modernist designs for their war memorials. Public and private memorials drew largely from a restricted stock of classical imagery which were usually plinth-based statues and figurative sculptures. A few daring designers tried to combine the two modes. Perhaps the best known is Edwin Lutyen's Cenotaph in central London which is generally held to be a severe abstract monument devoid of extraneous decoration. In fact, it has strong figurative elements because, when seen from above, the sculpture is actually a coffin elevated on a giant pedestal. The Ottawa War Memorial similarly attempts to unite the architectural with the figurative, with the troop of soldiers being projected through the giant arch. But it is not as effective as the Vimy monument.

In my opinion, there is only one other comparable piece on the whole length of the Western Front and it too was designed by a Canadian. It is the extraordinary statue-cum-obelisk at St Julian on the Ypres Salient in Belgium which was designed by Frederick Clemesha, an architect-soldier who was wounded while serving with the Canadian Corps in the Great War.

The monument commemorates the infamous gas attack of April 1915 and it is a quite extraordinary, indeed overwhelming, spectacle. At 35 feet tall it towers over the

countryside. It takes the form of a truncated obelisk, its tip replaced by the lowered head of a soldier in mourning, his arms neatly clasped and his rifle reversed. As at Vimy, the natural, organic forms meld convincingly into the face of the stone, the figure seems to metamorphose into the severe vertical lines of the pillar. It is a pose both humble yet immutable - a quite potent mixture.

To conclude. I have argued that Canadian artists and architects have contributed something quite distinctive to the art of war. Not on canvas or drawing paper perhaps, but in two particular ways: firstly, the system of administration that was devised by Max Aitken became the template for the British Ministry of Information set up 1917. And twenty years later, during World War Two, it was adapted by the British War Artists Advisory Committee under Lord Clark.

Secondly, as we have seen, Canadian artists, sculptors and architects learned the lessons of European modernism by incorporating the geometric angularity and audacious sense of scale into their post-war memorials and monuments. It is an active tradition which fuses the realistic with the abstract, we can see it today in the peacekeepers memorial in Ottawa and floating on the lawns of Green Park in central London.

NOTES

- ¹ Much of the fieldwork for this research has been co-funded by the research committee at UWE Bristol, the British Council and Wilfred Laurier University. In this respect, I should like to extend particular thanks to Professor Terry Copp and Professor Brian Osborne. Aspects of this paper have been published in UK and Canada: see Paul Gough, 'War Memorial Gardens as Dramaturgical Spaces' *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 1999, Vol. No., pp and Paul Gough, 'A Difficult Path to Tread', *Canadian Military History* 1999, Vol. No. pp
- ² Max Aitken in the Sir Robert Borden Papers, National Archives of Canada (NAC), Vo.64, 19 May 1916, p.12.
- ³ John Buchan to Sir Reginald Brade, 4 August 1917, Imperial War Museum.
- ⁴ William Orpen, *An Onlooker in France*, Williams and Norgate, 1924, p.24.
- ⁵ *The Observer*, 26 March 1916.
- ⁶ Cited in William Roberts, *Memories of the War to end all Wars: 4.5 Howitzer Gunner, RFA, 1916 - 1918*, Canada Press, 1974, p.24.
- ⁷ Orpen, *op.cit.* p.42.
- ⁸ Fosbery to Eric Brown (undated, possibly October 1917) cited in Maria Tippett, *Art at the Service of War : Canada, Art and the Great War*, University of Toronto Press, 1984.
- ⁹ Recent scholarship has been more even-handed towards Canadian artists. Studies by Laura Brandon, curator of art at the Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, and Maria Tippett have recorded the impact of the war on Canadian art, and have drawn our attention to their brush with European modernism.
- ¹⁰ Konody, *op.cit.*, p.42.
- ¹¹ For a full account of the commission and construction process see John Pierce, 'Constructing Memory : the Vimy Memorial', *Canadian Military History*, Vol.1, Nos. 1 and 2, Autumn 1992, pp 5 - 14 ; and Jonathan F.Vance, *Death so Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War*, University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 1997.

ERASING MEMORIES OF WAR: RECONSTRUCTING FRANCE AFTER THE “GREAT WAR”

Brian S. Osborne

The memory of war has come to resonate with contemporary issues in modern society. A nostalgic gaze has been cast back on our various “national” wars: the American Civil War, the Great War, the Second World War, and even Viet Nam, have all been remembered and transformed to fit new ideological discourses.¹ The ways of remembering the Great War are particularly complex. Mindless patriotism had been nurtured by focussed propaganda and jingoistic literature, even in the face of the grim realities of Flanders and France. Eventually, negative imagery in literature, art, and theatre reflected a growing popular and political reaction against jingoistic nationalism and militarism.² An analysis of the mythopoetic symbolism and historical realism of war memorials demonstrates the great range of popular responses: the celebration of victory, the commemoration of individual service, a social catharsis of human suffering, and the propagation of national pride.³

Memorialization, commemoration, and performance constitute the formal mechanisms by which we attempt to incorporate the past into our “collective memory.” Following the Great War, Canadian communities were advised that it was essential that war memorials should “embody and make plain to the present and future generations, that spiritual quality of noble sacrifice which above all else they should commemorate.”⁴ Suggested devices included fountains, public buildings, flag-staffs, murals, tablets, stained glass windows, obelisks, crosses, and realistic renderings of heroic figures. But not everyone favoured memorializing those who had made the “noble sacrifice” in granite and bronze, paint and glass. Some argued for investment in projects that would improve social well-being and advance the idealistic objectives that had motivated many of the participants. One such project was the British League for the Reconstruction of the Devastated Areas of France.⁵

Landscape As Monument

By the end of the Great War, none could escape the grim reality that millions of combatants had died and suffered in an incomprehensible confrontation of nationalist ideologies and geopolitical ambitions. But there were other victims too. Millions of civilian non-combatants had also been killed or displaced, their homes and livelihoods destroyed. Further, the conflict had been remarkable for its intensity and fixity in place. Along a 500-kilometre front running from Belgium, across France, to Switzerland, the Great War had created a dystopian war-scape that replaced the former towns, villages, and rural communities. In the former countryside, a landscape of weeds, trenches, barbed wire, shell-holes, and concrete bunkers replaced rurality. There were whole districts where no trees remained, no birds sang, and “[t]he very topsoil was destroyed.”⁶

Indeed, the visual images of the Great War have come to be entrenched in the collective national memory. These war-scapes were the subject of Canada’s War

Memorial Fund artists.⁷ For complex reasons, they were hidden away after the war but, increasingly, we are rediscovering their introspective assessments of the place of war.⁸ Nor should we neglect their written reactions to the world around them. Fred Varley's pen was as evocative as was his palette as he reported on the devastation wreaked upon humanity and places:

You in Canada...cannot realize at all what war is like. You must see it and live it. You must see the barren deserts war has made of once fertile country...see the turned up graves, see the dead on the field, freakishly mutilated. Headless, legless, stomachless, a perfect body and a passive face and a broken empty skull, see your own countrymen, unidentified, thrown into a cart, their coats over them, boys digging a grave in a land of yellow slimy mud and green pools of water under a weeping sky. You must have heard the screeching shells and have the shrapnel fall around you, whistling by you. Seen the results of it, seen scores of horses, bits of horses laying around, in the open, in the street and soldiers marching by these scenes as if they never knew of their presence, until you've lived this little woman, you cannot know.⁹

David Milne in particular focussed on the aftermath of the conflict and the detritus of war. It was a landscape in which all signs of human congress, social organization, and economic production had been eradicated: "I suppose I needn't mention that there are no fences or hedges, no trees either...not one tree stump or bush, no pile of bricks or stones that might indicate that there had once been a farm house, no trace of squares on the plain to indicate that there had once been fields."¹⁰

Working outside the realm of the Canadian War Memorial Fund, Mary Riter Hamilton also made a significant contribution in memorializing the material contexts and consequences of the Great War.¹¹ During her four years in France and Belgium (1919-22), Hamilton produced over 300 battlefield illustrations of the landscape and iconography of war: "mine-craters, cemeteries, shell blasted trees, desolate roads going off into a distance of smoke and emptiness, destroyed tanks and pill boxes, and ruined buildings."¹² Her *The Sadness of the Somme; Villiers-au-Bois, 1919; Ravages of War; Canadian Monument, Passchendaele Ridge; and Trenches on the Somme, 1918* encapsulate in people-less warscapes the material and existential realities of the impact of war.

Ironically, arid statistics demonstrate the immensity of the task faced by France in reconstructing the *régions dévastées*.¹³ The war had affected some 3.3 million hectares throughout two-thirds of the *communes, cantons, and arrondissements* of ten *départements* (Pas-de-Calais, Somme, Nord, Oise, Aisne, Ardennes, Marne, Meuse, Meurthe-et-Moselle, and Vosges). Prior to the commencement of hostilities, the region had been home to 4.8 million people. It was a region of cities, factories, and mines that produced the bulk of France's coal, iron-ore, and iron and steel, as well being home to most of the nation's textile looms, sugar refineries, and breweries. Further, prior to the war, 96% of the war-zone had been devoted to farming and forestry with some 669,351 farms. While two-thirds of the ten *départements* were arable, they also produced a tenth of France's cattle, sheep, and pigs, and a fifth of its horses.

This was the region over which the battle raged for four years. The scale of the devastation called for nothing short of a massive campaign for the revival of a destroyed rural society.¹⁴ Again, objective statistics prompt a vivid picture: 333 million cubic metres of trenches to be filled; barbed wire covered 375 million square metres of land;

over 800,000 dwellings were destroyed or damaged, as were 17,466 schools, *mairies*, and churches; 1,954 settlements were either obliterated or seriously damaged. The population of the war-zone had decreased by 57%, while that of the ten *départements* had fallen by 44% to 3.6 million.

This was the world that had prompted Varley to comment on the consequences of the destruction of other people's lived-in-worlds:

Some day the people will return to their village which is not; they will look for their little church which is not; and they will go to the cemetery and look for their own dear dead, and even they are not, in a land pounded and churned and poisoned, that was once fertile and rich with golden grain and good things for the welfare of the race.¹⁵

George Clausen's *Returning to the Reconquered Land* encapsulates the savage despair accompanied by stolid determination of those who did return to the *régions dévastées* after the war. Similarly, Mary Riter Hamilton, because she carried on working during the immediate aftermath of the conflict, recorded the beginnings of the post-war reconstruction and the establishment of rural society. She captured the first-phases of the recovery and the beginning of new life in such works as *First Celebration at Zillebeke after the War*, *The First Boat to Arrive at Arras after the Armistice*, and *The New Home*.¹⁶

Indeed, the rebuilding had not waited upon the Armistice of 1918. It went ahead from the very commencement of hostilities and continued whenever and wherever possible throughout the war and much progress had been realized by 1922.¹⁷ Some 90% of the population had returned and 2.7 million hectares of land had been restored. The one black spot was in the area of rebuilding: by 1922, clearance had been completed in only 737 of the 2,874 settlements damaged by war, and only 5,524 houses had been rebuilt. Over two million of the *sinistrés* (affected people) continued to be housed in temporary or repaired housing. Nor was much progress made with the opportunity for the *remembrement* (consolidation) of the pre-war mosaic of dispersed land-holdings that had long been recognized as being inefficient. While the war had destroyed property markers, and even cadastral maps and registers, only rarely was there an introduction of property reform. As with architecture, so with custom, the pre-eminent desire was to restore the past.¹⁸

The British League

This was the context in which the "British League for the Reconstruction of the Devastated Areas of France" functioned. It was a post-Great War initiative of commemoration that focused not on the glorification of victory but on reconstituting a society that had been expunged from the landscape by war. Moreover, the British League transcended what Mosse has called the contemporary "civic religion of nationalism" so evident in so many of the post-war commemorative initiatives.¹⁹ Rather, it was an exercise in inter-national civic responsibility, if not the more politically contentious internationalist ideology that was so prevalent among more radical reactions to the Great War.²⁰

The Idea

In 1919, M. Marcel Braibant, *Conseiller General* of the Ardennes, visited London to coordinate individual efforts to help “devastated France” and the ensuing promotional literature and speeches made clear the British League’s central premise: France had been devastated in the defence of Britain and, consequently, “English Towns saved from destruction themselves, have an obligation of honour to assist the French War areas.”²¹ As one supporter put it, it was a matter of British “justice,” a “sense of fair play,” a “debt of honour.”

Those areas suffered the long-drawn-out agonies of the war so that our cities, villages, fields, should be safe and untouched. If the French had not been content to undergo that devastation, our country would have been over-run.²²

It was also recognized that not all the damage could be attributed to “the malice of the enemy,” but resulted from French and British activities, albeit “defensive.” Nevertheless, the point was made that, “It was the shells of the Alliance that destroyed many a French village, a harsh need of war, the stern fulfilment of which saved areas in England from being devastated.”

The British League was formally inaugurated at London’s Mansion House on 30 June 1920.²³ The speakers give voice to the emotions and reasons underpinning the British League. The Lady Mayoress declared that, “sentiment was a very beautiful thing,” but she liked “the practical side” of the British League. Lady Bathurst continued the refrain, referring to the “terrible scenes of devastation in some of the battle areas...as if some great cataclysm of nature had overwhelmed the land,” asking her audience to imagine being driven from their homes and to return to find them in ruins. She closed with the injunction that “[t]his country had suffered so little that they must do something to help those Allies who had suffered so much.” Lord Denbigh, President of the Association of Great Britain and France, reported on his recent visit to France when, for four days, he had not seen “a single town or village which was not either badly damaged or had hardly a single habitable house” and that some villages had totally disappeared. But in advocating aid, Lord Durham knew he had to overcome the historical antipathies held by “cantankerous people” who were “far too prone to criticize a man simply because he was a foreigner.” And then there was the larger issue of geopolitics, foreign policy, and an exalted mission of international moral responsibility:

The two countries [have] to live side by side as friends in the future. We [have] to put aside niggling jealousies and realize that in Eastern Europe there [are] vast populations which [are] behind us in civilization. France and the British Isles [have] to stand together as a great western bulwark in the cause of peace and civilization. Nothing [will] do more to promote good feeling between the two countries and show the French people that we really [appreciate] what they had been through than the British League of Help. (Cheers).

Moreover, such initiatives could not be left to “elderly and weary” bureaucrats and politicians “who saw men and manners from the closed windows of motor-cars and estimated human relations from a map and statistics” and who lacked the “living touch.” The rest of the assembled dignitaries echoed these sentiments enthusiastically.²⁴ Duty, charity, and an unabashed idealism were advanced as underpinning the rationale for this remarkable venture.

The Organization

Transcending national self-interest and local concerns, therefore, the British League was a unique post-war exercise that attempted to sustain the wartime bonds by affording practical assistance to particular French cities, towns, and villages.²⁵ The intention was not to raise funds to rebuild “shattered French towns:” that was to be achieved by reparations imposed upon Germany. Rather, British cities and towns were invited to be “god parents” and “adopt” some French centre as a “god child” in an exercise of paternalistic philanthropy.²⁶

An Executive Committee was formed from three Anglo-French organizations: The Anglo-French Society; the Association of Great Britain and France; the Entente Cordiale. A Central Committee based in London’s Scala House organized “adoptions” of French communities by British and colonial cities, towns, and villages. A Liaison Office was established to assist Local Committees in providing assistance such as temporary shelter, clothing, money, food, seeds, and agricultural equipment. Goods were to be conveyed by the Walford Lines, a shipping company offering preferential rates to the British League.

Precise instructions were given on the best course of action for initiating the twinning process. Ideally, the local Mayor would lead the project. Next, a committee would be struck to organize a public meeting. If special assistance were needed “to stimulate popular sympathy,” the Central Committee would arrange for the visit of a competent lecturer who, “with the aid of photographic slides or cinematograph films,” would demonstrate the extent of the ruin and desolation.²⁷ The Central Committee would also assist in identifying a twin town in a particular war-area where the host community had left “many of its gallant sons dead on the field of action.”²⁸ Finally, considerable emphasis was placed upon exchange-visits between the civic heads of the twinned-communities, visa and transport facilities being arranged by the French Embassy and the British League. Thus, in September 1921, a party of fifty Lord Mayors, Provosts, and Mayors from England, Scotland, and Wales was escorted to France in an attempt at boosting the adoption process.²⁹ It was noted that such delegations had often returned,

imbued with greater enthusiasm to help the stricken peoples. They are now in a position to bear witness to the wonderful way in which the renewed inhabitants are striving against terrible odds to begin life over again, insisting on living in the ruins, in spite of inadequate shelter.³⁰

Finding a Partner

The British League focussed these efforts on the seven départements most affected by the war: Pas de Calais; Somme; Oise; Nord; Aisne; Ardennes; Meuse.³¹ By July 1922, 78 British and colonial communities had adopted 99 French communities.³² Manchester made a commitment to raising £50,000 for the re-building of Mezières; Newcastle-on-Tyne raised £20,000 for the rehabilitation of Arras; Sheffield adopted Bapaume, Serre, Puisieux (all in Pas de Calais); Winchester adopted Auchonvilliers, Beaumont-Hamel, Englebelmer (all in Somme); the City of London adopted Verdun (Meuse); Montreal was paired with Avion (Pas de Calais).³³

Organizing the Aid

Despite the rhetoric, in many communities that had been committed to assist the recovery of a French community, the entreaties of the British League fell upon somewhat

jaded, even unsympathetic ears. There were so many meritorious causes crying out for public support. Even if communities were persuaded to participate, how should the monies be raised? And, once monies were raised, what would be the most appropriate contribution to meet the particular needs of the devastated communities? Nevertheless, by the close of 1921, some £77,135 had been subscribed in forty-two British and colonial “god-parent” communities, Newcastle and Mauritius alone contributing £20,000 and £12,500 respectively.

For many of the “paired” communities, the fulfillment of the promised financial commitment marked the end of the connection. Thus, in October 1924, somewhat regretfully, London’s committee wound up its programme of aid for its god-child, Verdun.³⁴ The reasons were clear: the “old appeal” had petered out and the times were “inopportune for making a further appeal.” But the committee looked back on its accomplishments with some pride: Verdun had been provided with substantial public works in the form of a boulevard and a waterworks, both of which were said to be of “substantial help to the amenities of the town;” and it was hoped that “the kindly feelings which had been established between the City of London and Verdun would remain.” Too often, however, no official trace remains of the former bonding of the communities. But in some cases, the connection evolved into something more than the transfer of funds, the construction of public works, and the mailing of bales of clothing.

Conclusion

It appears that like other British, French, and American charity initiatives,³⁵ the British League functioned in the first years of the *reconstitution* of the *régions dévastées* and most of its activities had run down by the mid-1920s. Indeed, by 1931, much progress had been made. Some 305 million cubic metres of trenches had been filled; 346 million square metres of barbed wire and 21 million tonnes of shells removed; 3 million hectares of land cleared; 834,516 dwellings and farm buildings and 20,563 public buildings had been repaired or reconstructed; 61,382 kilometres of roads had been repaired; 6.5 million people had picked up their former lives in the ten *départements*. The reconstitution of the *régions dévastées* was virtually complete. All but 188 villages had been reconstructed; the number of buildings was only 3.7% below pre-war levels; the population was only 0.5% lower than 1911 levels. And with the reconstruction, the landscape of war was erased and replaced by the landscape of rural production.

While the optimistic rhetoric of the British League much exceeded the actual outcome, it too had played a role in this remarkable process of recovery. Of the hundred or so communities throughout the *régions dévastées* of France aided by the British League, some projects failed, others were mere modest gestures, while others were ambitious exercises in philanthropy and material aid. And many communities did not participate.³⁶ At the very outset, the British League’s Lord Denbigh had referred to antipathies to “foreigners” and niggling jealousies between Britain and France.³⁷ In Lewes, the mooted of a British League connection prompted much discussion, it being noted that “on the whole, opinion seems to incline to the view that Lewes has quite enough on hand at the moment,” reference being made to ongoing support of “Save the Children Fund,” contributions to the Red Cross aid project, and the local war memorial.³⁸ Others were opposed because of more ideological concerns. Thus, Alderman George Holman, while not wanting “to wade into the deep waters of international relations,”

nevertheless referred to “the delicate situation between ourselves and our French Allies,” and recommended delaying any action “until the Entente is a little stronger again.”

Responses such as these serve to demonstrate the gap between the high principled rhetoric of the supporters of the British League and contemporary public opinion. Indeed, the “British League for the Reconstruction of the Devastated Areas of France” may be taken as being diagnostic of a particular juncture in British-French relations. For its advocates, the intention was to nurture the spirit of the wartime “Entente Cordiale” and to demonstrate compassion for those in France who had suffered. Money, material goods, visits by delegations of politicians and school-children were all intended to further these philanthropic ends.³⁹ The final legacy was an array of symbolic gestures, material projects, and commemorative plaques scattered across the terrain of the former *régions dévastées* of the Great War in France. Whether there is any remembrance of them in the psychic landscapes of the two nations is another matter.

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NOTES

- ¹ Throughout, I use the pre-World War II term, “Great War” because for so many who experienced it, that is how they always remembered it.
- ² Not surprisingly, how we remember this critical conflict has received considerable attention. Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975); George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Trevor Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986); Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). The best analysis for Canada is Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997).
- ³ Perhaps the best overview is Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain* (Oxford: Berg, 1998); but see also Catherine Moriarty, “The Absent Dead and Figurative First World War Memorials,” *Transactions Ancient Monuments Society*, Vol. 39 (1995), pp. 7-40, and also her “Review Article: The Material Culture of Great War Remembrance,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 34, No. 4, (1999), pp. 633-662. For particular studies see Hugh Clout, *Mémoires de pierre: Les monuments aux morts de la première guerre mondiale dans le Pas-de-Calais* (Calais: Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, 1992); Angela Gaffney, *Aftermath: Remembering the Great War in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998); Michael Heffernan, “For Ever England: the Western Front and the politics of remembrance in Britain,” *Ecumene*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1995), pp. 293-324; K.S. Inglis, “The Homecoming: The War Memorial Movement in Cambridge, England,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 27 (1992), pp. 583-605, and also his *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1998); Nuala Johnson, “Cast in Stone: Monuments, Geography, and Nationalism,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 13 (1995), pp. 51-65; John Pierce, “Constructing Memory: The Vimy Memorial,” *Canadian Military History*, Vol. 1, Nos.1&2 (1992-1993); Daniel J. Sherman, *The Construction of*

Memory in Interwar France (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); R. Shipley, *To Mark Our Place: A History of Canadian War Memorials* (Toronto: New Canada Publications, 1987).

⁴ National Archives of Canada, MG30, C-105, Vol. 8, "Ontario Committee on War Memorials," April 1919.

⁵ For a more expansive treatment of this topic see my "In the Shadows of the Monuments: The British League for the Reconstruction of the Devastated Areas of France," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* (forthcoming 2001).

⁶ Hugh Clout, *After the Ruins. Restoring the countryside of northern France after the Great War* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1996), p. 40.

⁷ In 1916, Sir Max Aitken (later Lord Beaverbrook) established the Canadian War Records Office in London in order to document and proselytize Canada's contributions. See Jackie Adell, "British First World War Art and The Group of Seven: The Relationship Between the War Art of A.Y. Jackson and Paul Nash and its Influence on the Art of Lawren Harris," MA. Research Essay, Carleton University, Ottawa, 1984; Susan Butlin, "Landscape as Memorial: A.Y. Jackson and the Landscape of the Western Front, 1917-1918," *Canadian Military History*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1996), pp. 62-70; Frank K. Stanzel, "'In Flanders fields the poppies blow': Canada and the Great War," in Peter Easingwood, Konrad Gross and Lynette Hunter (eds.), *Difference and Community: Canadian and European Cultural Perspectives* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), pp. 213-226; Maria Tippett, *Art at the Service of War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 1984; Maria Tippett, "British and Canadian Art and the Great War," in Frank K. Stanzel and Martin Loschnigg (eds.), *Intimate Enemies: English and German Literary Reactions to the Great War 1914-1918* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1993). See also Brian S. Osborne, "Warscapes, Landscapes, Inscapes: France, War, and Canadian National Identity," in Iain Black and Robin Butlin (eds.), *Place, Culture, and Identity* (Quebec: Laval University Press, forthcoming 2001).

⁸ See Tippett, *Art at the Service of War*. More recently, see Dean Oliver and Laura Brandon, *The Canvas of War: Painting the Canadian Experience, 1914-1945* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2000).

⁹ Christopher Varley, *F.H. Varley: A Centennial Exhibition* (Ottawa: The National Museums of Canada, 1981), p. 38.

¹⁰ David P. Silcox, *Painting Place: the life and work of David B. Milne* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 112.

¹¹ Angela E. Davis and Sarah M. Mckinnon, *No Man's Land: The Battlefield Paintings of Mary Riter Hamilton, 1919-1922* (Winnipeg: The University of Winnipeg, 1992). Hamilton had been commissioned by The War Amputations Club of British Columbia to provide paintings of the battlefields of the Great War for publication in a veterans' magazine, *The Gold Stripe*, the proceeds of which were to go to The Amputation Club of British Columbia. After three issues, Paton produced a book, *The Gold Stripe*, which also used Hamilton's artwork. In 1926, Hamilton donated 227 of her works to the then, Public Archives, where they remain separated from that other body of war art collected in the Canadian War Museum.

¹² Davis and McKinnen, *No Man's Land*, p. 22.

¹³ Hugh Clout, *After the Ruins*. See also his "La reconstruction de la campagne au nord de la France, 1918-1930," *Hérodote* (1994), pp. 74-75, 111-126; "Rural Revival in the Pas-de-Calais after the Great War," in J-R. Pitte (ed.) *Géographie historique et culturelle de l'Europe* (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1995); "Restoring the Ruins: the social context of reconstruction in the countryside of northern France in the aftermath of the Great War," *Landscape Research*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (1996), pp. 213-230.

¹⁴ The following account of reconstruction is derived from Clout, *After the Ruins*.

¹⁵ Varley, *F.H. Varley*, p. 42.

¹⁶ Davis and Mckinnon, *No Man's Land*, pp. 22-24.

¹⁷ During these early years, volunteer organizations such as British and American Quaker groups and the Comité Américain pour les Régions Dévastées (CARD), a women's volunteer group,

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- were effective in providing aid to the population and restoring some of the communities until they withdrew in 1924. This is the period in which the British League functioned.
- 18 Clout points out that most of plans for model-villages were not realized. However, there was a sensitivity to local materials and styles, one authority arguing, “housing, like flora or fauna, is a geographical element that is linked closely to the nature of the terrain, to climatic conditions, to landownership [sic], and to the nature of farming.” Such a respect for tradition ensured the preservation of regional nuances, while still allowing enhanced living conditions by paying attention to hygiene, water supply, drainage, and the location of cemeteries.
- 19 Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, p. 101.
- 20 For more on the currents of civic responsibility and moral obligation see King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, pp. 194-215.
- 21 Imperial War Museum, British League Pamphlet, (c.1920).
- 22 Imperial War Museum, British League Pamphlet, (c.1920).
- 23 The London *Times*, 1 July 1920. Present were the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, Lord and Lady Bathurst, Lord Denbigh, Lord Burnham, Lady Dundas, Lord Mayor of Sheffield, and mayors of other metropolitan boroughs and provincial cities. A French delegation representing the Association of France and Great Britain included M. Crozier, M. de Bretteville, M. Marcel Braibant, and M. Henri Lamba.
- 24 Another initiative was to seek ten purchasers of bronze replicas of a statue by Michel de Tarnowsky, “The Triumph of Humanity.” It represented the Spirit of Progress emerging out of a battlefield scene “which conveys the impression of the desolate wilderness into which part of France was converted.”
- 25 A similar venture was the “Garden League for Devastated France” which was also concerned with nurturing the Entente Cordiale. Founded in 1920 to assist “the repatriated peasants in Northern France,” by 1925, the Garden League had donated over 1,200 garden tools, large quantities of vegetable seeds, medicinal and other plants, and over 1,000 fruit trees. They also encouraged the development of school-gardens to “establish a feeling of love for Great Britain in the youth of France,” London *Times*, 16 February 1925.
- 26 Imperial War Museum, British League Pamphlet (c.1920).
- 27 British League Pamphlet, “For France; Sympathy and Assistance; Work of the British League; A Debt of Honour,” East Sussex Record Office, DR/B39/26.
- 28 As the first report of the British League noted, “[a]doptions of towns and villages are made, as a rule by British towns whose local battalions were associated with them during the War, for where they fought, they died, and their graves...are carefully tended by French peasants today.” See Imperial War Museum, British League Pamphlet (c.1920).
- 29 London *Times*, 12 September 1921.
- 30 East Sussex Record Office, DR/B39/26, Scriven to the Mayor of Bexhill, 21 September 1920.
- 31 An interesting Imperial War Museum initiative proposed by one, Charles Fuller, on 20 April 1921 suggested the production of a Roll of Honour of all towns and villages adopted by the British League. Plaques were to be display pictures as a photographic record of “British towns which have adopted French towns and villages,” East Sussex Record Office, DR/B39/26.
- 32 London *Times*, 14 July 1922. French communities outside of the combat-zone that had not been affected by the war adopted a hundred more.
- 33 British League Pamphlet, “For France; Sympathy and Assistance; Work of the British League; A Debt of Honour,” East Sussex Record Office, DR/B39/26. It should be noted that four “colonial” cities participated in the British League: Montreal, Melbourne, Sydney, and Mauritius.
- 34 London *Times*, 9 October 1924.
- 35 Clout, *After the Ruins*, pp. 71-84.
- 36 My ongoing research into the British League is particularly interested in determining the activities of the various paired communities—as well as those who rejected the idea. Also, it will be interesting to determine whether any of the communities involved maintained their

connections after the British League was discontinued. Indeed, if they are at all part of the collective memory of the British and French communities involved.

³⁷ The London *Times*, 1 July 1920.

³⁸ Sussex County Herald, Lewes Edition, 21 August 1920.

³⁹ The London *Times* of 22 May 1923 reported that the British League had sponsored the visit of 350 British school boys on a “pilgrimage to the battlefields and to the villages of the Somme and the Pas de Calais which have been ‘adopted’ by the British towns from which they came.”

RECONSTRUCTING THE INDIAN: THE SECOND WORLD WAR, RECONSTRUCTION AND THE IMAGE OF THE “INDIAN” IN ENGLISH CANADA 1943-1945¹

R. Scott Sheffield

With the dawn of 1943, the fortunes of war had begun to turn against the Axis. Although no one in the Allied camp believed victory was imminent, the possibility of defeat had at last been banished. This confidence that the war would eventually be won grew steadily through 1943 and into 1944, as Allied armies, navies and air forces seized the initiative and drove Axis forces before them in every theatre. With the immediate task of winning the war seemingly well in hand, the world at long last began to turn its attention to the future and the shape of the post-war world.

These developments were mirrored in Canada, which was booming by 1943. Wartime production was increasing exponentially and peaked in 1944, full employment had been reached, and most of the population looked with pride at the nation's war effort and the accomplishments of its military personnel. All across the country, people, the media, and governments began to plan for the great new order they hoped to build out of the ashes of the present conflict. Driving the agenda was a deep anxiety that Canada, having won the war, might lose the peace. In large part this was a legacy of the dissatisfaction with the aftermath of the Great War. For a cautionary tale, Canadians had only to look back at the social unrest of 1919-1920, the inadequate provisions made for the veterans who had sacrificed so much, the crushing world-wide depression of the 1930s, and the rise of totalitarian, fascist, and communist regimes around various parts of the globe.

This paper explores the impact of the changing world and national situation on the ways in which the English-Canadian publicly discussed the “Indian” from the fall of 1943 to the end of the war in Europe in early May 1945.² The original inhabitants of this continent have been the subject of stories and myths which served to explain their character to Europeans.³ By the mid-twentieth century, the idea of the “Indian” had been a common aspect of Canadians' experience for so long, that even those who had never seen a “real Indian,” let alone experienced their diverse cultures, could draw on an extensive mental framework of visual imagery, assumptions and stereotypes at the mere mention of the word. This framework was immediately accessible, and contained a cornucopia of powerful, yet frequently ambiguous and contradictory, images. In developing my theory and approach for this study, the work on the discourse of race and imperialism has been instructive.⁴ This approach presumes that the mental framework of knowledge and assumption, what James W.St.G. Walker terms “common sense,” is designed and created by the dominant society, for its own consumption and to meet its own requirements. It enables the members of that society to make sense of the world around them, though it need not reflect any objective reality. Thus, the image of the “Indian” is more useful as a means of understanding the desires, anxieties, conceits, and

assumptions of Canadians, rather than telling us about Aboriginal peoples, cultures and experience.

It is the public “Indian” discourse that forms the object of interest in this paper, as it was revealed in the primary forum of public debate during the period, the print media. The writings on Aboriginal subjects in a broad range of Canadian newspapers, weeklies and monthly periodicals are treated, in a sense, as a conversation between Canadians. To a surprising degree, given the other demands on space in the country’s papers during the latter years of the war, Aboriginal people and cultures were a topic frequently addressed in this conversation. Canadians became increasingly concerned with the living conditions and constitutional status of the country’s Aboriginal people, usually under the rubric of the “Indian problem.” For a couple reasons, the “Indian problem” was drawn into the larger national debates about post-war reconstruction, with its momentum and national energy. The result was a painful self-examination for English-Canadians that led to the rise of the image of the “Indian victim” and a wide spread call for Indian policy reform.

Before examining the impact of the late stages of the war on English-Canadians’ “Public Indian,” it is necessary to provide some context. Prior to the Second World War, the English-Canadian public had traditionally had the luxury to think about the First Nations, or not, as they wished. The result was a contradictory and ambivalent dual image of the “Indian,” which trivialized Aboriginal people and issues and helped the dominant society manage collective guilt for the displacement and plight of the First Nations. The predominant “Public Indian” image appeared in a benignly positive guise as the vanishing “noble savage”: a romantic relic safely consigned to the distant past. Running counter to this, contemporary representations of Aboriginal people tended to paint a negative and demeaning portrait, an image I call the “drunken criminal.” This discourse had developed over centuries and by the 1930s was static and resistant to change.

The early years of the Second World War, particularly Aboriginal enlistment and support for the country’s war effort, created new pressures on the public constructions of the “Indian.” The fear and spectre of defeat brought about by the fall of France, combined with the symbolic significance of Aboriginal men dying for the cause of freedom and democracy, had a major impact on the “Public Indian.” The dualistic peacetime images of Aboriginal people found in the public discourse were simply not designed to accommodate and make comprehensible the “Indian” response to the war. English-Canadians were forced to expand their notions of the First Nations, resulting in the creation of a new “Indian” icon that was both a contemporary and positive figure – the “Indian-at-war.” This new image did not replace the prewar “Public Indian” duality, but was instead grafted onto the existing structure. It was thus a very complex and contradictory “Indian” discourse with which English-Canada entered the last twenty months of the war.

By the fall of 1943, the Canadian political scene was marked by the prevailing public concern about post-war reconstruction. The population was hungry for a clear vision of the future, and a better future than had been offered by fifteen years of depression and war. Too a much greater extent than either Americans or Britons, Canadians wanted to see a different country in the wake of the conflict than that which had entered it.⁵ Until this time the Liberal government of William Lyon Mackenzie King had been loath to address the issue of reconstruction for fear, “that the fighting morale of the nation might be affected adversely by over-much talk of post-war planning.”⁶ Unable

to find much solace in the government's "stay-the-course" policy, Canadians began to look elsewhere. The direct result was a stunning rise in the fortunes of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation; over the summer, the party had won two federal by-elections, become the official opposition in Ontario with 34 seats, and received the support of 29% of decided voters in one of the early public opinion polls which placed them ahead of both the Liberals and Conservatives in popularity.⁷

Editorials and letters to editors in 1943 suggest that public interest in reconstruction and the postwar period was gaining centre stage on the national agenda, and not all Canadians were confident that government's promises would amount to much. As one veteran queried in a prominent letter featured in several major papers:

I have been wondering what other men discharged from the army, particularly those who were overseas, think of the prospects for a new order in Canada. From many discussions in camps they will have formed ideas, visions, expectations, of what the new Canada should be like. Does what they now see promise fulfillment of those hopes? Do they see the dawning light of the new day?⁸

While such cynicism was not uniformly present, it was indicative of how strongly Canadians, particularly veterans, felt about these issues. Reconstruction and social security mattered, a point driven home unequivocally in the closing sentence of this letter, "next to winning the war, there is nothing of more urgent importance than that we, on the home front, shall have taken some definite steps toward winning the peace before the boys return."

In fact, preparations for the eventual peace had begun almost as soon as the hostilities commenced, but arguably the most important step was the 1943 report by the Advisory Committee on Reconstruction: entitled "Report on Social Security for Canada," and commonly called the Marsh Report after the Committee's Research Director, Leonard Marsh. By 1943, an extraordinary and complex system of committees and sub-committees had been erected to explore, examine, and make policy on every imaginable aspect of the problems associated with reconstruction and the development of social security.⁹ Indicative of the trend, the Throne Speech in January 1944 included almost no mention of the war per se. Instead, the speech focussed on the government's reconstruction agenda, which was composed of three main components: the rehabilitation and reestablishment of returned veterans; the smooth shift to a peacetime economy; and the construction of a social security safety-net.¹⁰

Equally important were Canadians' visions of what the "new order" ought to look like and of what kind of country they believed Canada should become. Undoubtedly, there were as many versions of the future as there were Canadians, and not all would have agreed on many key points. Judging from opinion polls, editorials and news stories of the period, there were several major elements that seemed to appear popular and widely held. Essentially, Canadians wanted a country protected from the excesses of war and depression that had wracked the society for much of the previous generation. In addition, tolerance of difference, be it racial, linguistic, or religious was touted as desirable. George Drew, Premier of Ontario, argued at a banquet in Guelph, on 14 October 1943, that "one of the outstanding lessons of this war is the danger of any new order based upon appeals to prejudice." A third noticeable trend was an increasing number of Canadians willing to accept an active and leading role for government in the economic and social life of the country.¹² These three elements of the "new order" were

not the sum total, but they did form the commonly accepted core of the concept. While this extended discussion of domestic political and social concerns about reconstruction and the “new order” may seem tangential to Aboriginal people and issues, it formed an essential context in which the “Indian” discourse formed a distinct thread.

So how did the “Public Indian” fare in this intellectual and cultural climate, and how did the “Indian problem” get hitched to the reconstruction agenda? Initially, the relative salience of the “Indian” had declined from the high levels of 1940-1941, but rose steadily through the last twenty months of the war. The “Public Indian” appeared in the media in all its usual guises. The “Indian-at-war” image remained the most prevalent representation of Aboriginal people in the press. The “noble savage” and the “drunken criminal” were much less evident, and they no longer carried the snide or bemused tone so common in such articles a decade previously.

It was the exploits of the “Indian-at-war,” and especially Aboriginal military service, that were instrumental in connecting the “Indian problem” to post-war reconstruction in the minds of Canadians. As with the image of the “Indian,” military service in Canadian society was rich in meaning and symbolism. As Jonathan Vance has ably demonstrated in *Death So Noble*, the icon-laden memory of the soldiers and their sacrifice during the First World War deeply affected Canadians during the inter-war years.¹³ Serving one’s country in wartime was both the highest honour and the most profound duty for a young man, and increasingly for young women. It demonstrated his assumption of the most demanding and dangerous obligations of citizenship, and created a debt of gratitude owed by the society he had fought to protect. Voluntary enlistment was preferable to compelling a person to fight; it marked the pinnacle of one’s democratic right to choose and was more valued because it was freely given. However, even if conscripted, the state and society owed the soldier something for his sacrifices. The *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* noted in 1944 that “some 3000 Canadian Indians were serving in the armed forces, a fact that has injected the problem of Indian policy directly into the field of post-war plans.”¹⁴ The link then was clear to Canadians in the late stages of the war.

However, the First Nations had provided more sustenance to the national war effort than the service of thousands of their young people. All across the country, Aboriginal communities had done whatever they could to aid the crusade: efforts usually widely acclaimed and well received in the media. In some cases, the efforts were directed to symbolic public displays of loyalty, such as when the Stony Nation of southern Alberta held a prayer for victory during a Sun Dance in 1940.¹⁵ Many groups purchased large sums of Victory bonds with band funds, while others contributed money, goods, and in one instance an ambulance to the Canadian Red Cross.¹⁶ Less tangible and well publicized, but arguably more important, most Aboriginal people had done their bit through work in the wartime economy. Canadians seem to have recognized that the First Nations had contributed more than just service personnel.

This recognition was no where better demonstrated than in a major story and photo collection in *The Globe and Mail*.¹⁷ The article opened claiming:

Cape Croker’s Chippewa Indians have gone to war. Without fanfare or trumpets or even a mild sort of war-dance, practically every able-bodied Indian man – and nine of the women – are in the uniform of one of the armed forces. And those that are staying behind are doing their bit toward making their little world a better place in which to live.

In this case, it was not just the Chief who encouraged his band to donate money or buy bonds, nor just the Aboriginal individuals that enlisted that earned the positive accolades of the “Indian-at-war” image, but the whole community. The story did not end with the usual details of high enlistments, in this case over 10% of the population, or of the band contributions to local Victory Bond drives, but went on to give a detailed description of the activities of the women and children who remained on the reserve. This treatment was indicative of the more sympathetic light in which English-Canadians were inclined to see Aboriginal people as a result of their wartime support. For Canadians, the entire Aboriginal population had gone to war, and they had incurred a debt of gratitude from the country in so doing.

But it was more than gratitude that drew consideration of the “Indian problem” into the national debate on the post-war period. Equally important was the widespread desire to forge a “new order” out of the crucible of war. Inherent to this desire, for English-Canada, was a painful self-examination. If the country was fighting racism and totalitarian state oppression in the world, then it had better insure such conditions did not exist in its own back yard; and if Canadians were fighting for democracy, freedom, equality, and the Atlantic Charter, then these principles should be embodied by the conduct in their own country. These sentiments were expressed in the House of Commons in July 1944, when one member rose and stated that, “we are not fighting today merely to defeat Germany and Japan; we are fighting in defence of definite principles. We are fighting for a peace based on justice, and justice must be granted to minorities as well as majorities.”¹⁸ It was in this context that the Canadians turned their gaze on the state of Canada’s Aboriginal population and the administrative system through which they were administered. What they saw was a glaring contradiction of the high-minded values for which the country had fought so hard and sacrificed so much blood, sweat, and treasure. In response, through 1944 and 1945, Canadians began debating Indian policy reform, most notably in the Parliamentary Committee on Reconstruction and Reestablishment in September 1944. A consensus was quickly reached that something needed to be done, and it must fit within the principles for which the war had been fought. To do otherwise diminished the sacrifice of those who served, devalued the national war crusade and potentially undermined the vaunted “new order” they hoped to erect.

The crux of the “Indian problem,” as it emerged in the public discussions of 1944-1945, was that, “in Canada, the Red Indian, the noble red man of the romantic novel of Canadian history and the Hollywood screen has been bound by a policy of perpetual wardship and denied the status of citizenship and the ordinary opportunity of economic advancement.”¹⁹ In essence, the “Indian” had not been integrated into the physical, constitutional, and economic mainstream of Canadian society. For most Canadians this meant that assimilation had not occurred. Failure was universally blamed on two factors, as articulated by the president of the Okanagan Society for the Revival of Indian Arts and Crafts:

The truly sad picture these Indians present today is a direct reflection of our unjust administration. They are wards of the government in the fullest sense of the word, and we, the citizens are responsible for the actions of our government. What the Indian is today we have made him through neglect... [and] in criticizing the Indians, we are but criticizing ourselves.²⁰

First and foremost, Canadian Indian policy and its administration bore the brunt of the blame, for “centuries of tutelage [which] have robbed the Indian of his independent

spirit and self-reliance... a heavy indictment against us in our treatment of a once proud people... and we have meant so well.”²¹ The second major impediment to improving the lives of Aboriginal people and welcoming them into national life was a more general ignorance, apathy and even racism among the population. A writer in the *Canadian Forum* made direct reference to the current conflict in decrying the existence of “that complacent racial superiority that we dislike so much in other people that we’re willing to fight a war with them about it.”²² These were strong words, and a remarkable about face from the pre-war discourse that had found no fault with either the Indian administration or the attitudes of the dominant society.

Along with this newfound willingness to accept the culpability for the plight of the “Indian,” Canadians largely absolved Aboriginal people of blame for the difficult circumstances in which so many of them lived. Even though some did acknowledge “backwardness and shortcomings” in the “Indians” character, “his lack of interest in work, and fondness for holidays and drink, his bad inferiority complex,” these failings were assigned to systemic factors that had retarded the “Indians” ability to adjust to the social and economic circumstances of contemporary Canada.²³ The culpability for the creation of the situation and for the continued failure to solve the “Indian problem” was ascribed to an initiative-killing system of administration, and an indifferent and racist society. Aboriginal communities were construed as “unfortunate and helpless” before this smothering combination.²⁴ The dynamism and agency that had been a hallmark of the “Indian-at-war” was stripped away, and in its place appeared a figure, both pitiable and tragically powerless. This “Indian victim” became the most prevalent manifestation of the “Indian” in the public discourse as the war in Europe drew to a close.

The philosophical foundations of support for Indian policy reform were broadly accepted in Canada, and most were in agreement with a number of short-term actions designed to relieve the immediate hardships of Aboriginal peoples – to end the “plight of the Redman.” Most urgent, particularly in light of the attention given to the poor health of Aboriginal people in the media, was an improved system of medical care for the First Nations.²⁵ Other short-term solutions proposed were the provision of better housing on reserves, and the conservation of fur resources so that the “Indian” trapper could continue to make a living.²⁶ As well, a need was seen for the immediate economic betterment of the First Nations, with an emphasis on equal treatment for Aboriginal veterans in the government rehabilitation program and “Indian relief and old age pensions on the same basis as white.”²⁷ However, these were viewed as only stopgap measures, not long-term solutions to the “Indian problem.”

When looking into the future, most commentators envisioned a day when the “Indian” would attain full citizenship, complete with the franchise. Generally speaking, citizenship was to occur when the “Indians” became “doctors, nurses and teachers,” and “fill[ed] their places in labour, and the professions.”²⁸ In other words, full citizenship would be achieved when Aboriginal people were absorbed into the mainstream and ceased looking and behaving like “Indians.” This was honestly believed to be the best thing for all concerned: Aboriginal people, the government, and the taxpayer. To most Canadians, this was the reason for revamping the Indian Act because, “up to now Canadian Indian policy has done little beyond save the Indian from extinction. It has done little to open up the way for his assimilation into Canadian society.”²⁹ However, a vocal and articulate minority were willing to accept a different future for the First Nations, one that would not only allow, but encourage, Aboriginal communities to

maintain their cultural identity. This approach, heavily influenced by the policy reforms of the Indian New Deal in the United States, went against centuries of Indian policy, practice, and popular belief in Canada. Regardless of which side of this debate people came down on, the extensive public discussions of the “Indian” in the last months of the war amounted to a clarion call for a national reevaluation of the country’s Indian policy.

Whereas during the war’s early years, when Canadians had closely reexamined their notions of Aboriginal people in light of their support for the national crusade, in the latter years of the war the dominant society revealed an willingness to turn the scrutiny inward. This readiness to look within developed out of the nation’s desire to create a new order. The collective guilt, always latent in the “Public Indian” discourse, was finally acknowledged, and even embraced in these discussions. It was a remarkable change from the discourse of the 1930s that had served to suppress, divert, and defuse Canada’s culpability for the “plight of the Redman.”

A new image of the “Public Indian” emerged, the “Indian victim,” a positive, yet tragic, present-day figure, who, through no fault of his own, lived in wretched conditions he was powerless to change. Such a construction fostered pity and anger in Canadians and left the sensation that they, having suddenly accepted responsibility, were wallowing in their collective sense of shame. For those advocating reform, the “Indian victim” was the principle rhetorical weapon for mobilizing national attention and generating public pressure for change.

Of crucial significance in the public discussions surrounding the “Indian” during the later years of the Second World War was that the debate occurred among Canadians, arguing about what they believed the problem to be, and the kind of solutions they needed to pursue to correct it. Very little attention was paid to what Aboriginal people desired, or the reforms they believed necessary. This omission clearly demonstrates that while the content of the “Public Indian” discourse had evolved significantly since the 1930s, the power relations upon which it was founded had not. The dominant society still could define its ideas about the First Nations as it saw fit, to meet its own needs. Underpinning this power disparity was English-Canada’s continuing confidence in its cultural and social superiority over their “Indian.” The white man’s burden was dusted off and reinstated by Canadians as they once again renewed their commitment to raising the “Indian” up to the point where he disappeared within the body politic. Symptomatic of this revival was the very process of conceptualizing the issue under the complex rubric of the “Indian problem,” as if it belonged to the First Nations. At its base, though, the “Indian problem” was not the “Indians” problem, though it certainly had far-reaching consequences in their daily lives, it was the dominant society’s quandary. Canada’s problem with Aboriginal people was that they continued to exist as “Indians,” and as such, they remained a constant reminder to the country of their displacement and subjugation. Only with their disappearance as a distinct people would the dominant society be able to shed its guilt. The war and the desire to win the peace had therefore had a deep impact on the “Public Indian” discourse in Canada, but it had not fundamentally altered the nature of the relationship between the dominant society and its original inhabitants.

NOTES

- ¹ A note about terminology, the term “Indian,” in quotations, refers to the constructed image of Aboriginal people in use among English-Canadians during the period under investigation. The quotes are not used when referring to a particular title or thing, such as Indian Agent, Indian Affairs Branch, the Indian Act, or Canadian Indian policy, or when specifically discussing Status Indians under the Act. However, I will generally use either First Nations or Aboriginal when discussing indigenous peoples themselves.
- ² This discussion is based on an intensive examination of the daily newspapers in the months of October 1943, September 1944 and April-May 1945, as well as every issue of the weeklies from 1943 to May 1945.
- ³ Europeans struggled intellectually and spiritually to incorporate a new people into their essentially Mediterranean mind set. Euro-Canadians thus drew on a long tradition of conceptualizing about Aboriginal people from both the United States and Britain long before the nineteenth century. See Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region. 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Cohn U. Calloway, *Crown and Calumet: British-Indian Relations, 1783-1815* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987); R.G. Moyles and Doug Owrarn, *Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities: British Views of Canada, 1880-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988); Peter Hume, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1787* (London: Methuen, 1986).
- ⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), James W.St.G. Walker, “Race,” *Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies*, (Waterloo and Toronto: Wilfrid Laurier University Press and the Osgoode Society, 1997).
- ⁵ *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (1943), p. 748. This poll found 71% of Canadians preferred post-war reforms over a return to the pre-war status quo, much higher than the corresponding figures in either the United States or Great Britain where only 32% and 57% respectively felt the same.
- ⁶ Grant Dexter, “Liberals and the C.C.F. Challenge,” *Winnipeg Free Press* (8 October 1943), p. 11.
- ⁷ J.L. Granatstein, *Canada's War: The Policies of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 264-265.
- ⁸ G. Cairns, “What of New Order? Soldiers Want to Know,” *Globe and Mail* (7 October 1943), p. 6. Also appeared as “War Veterans and the New Order,” *Calgary Herald* (9 October 1943), p. 4, and curiously under the name of A. Riddell in the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* (9 October 1943), p. 10.
- ⁹ Reference Papers, Wartime Information Board, *Post-War Planning in Canada, No. 1*, 30 July 1943, National Archives of Canada (NAC), Record Group (RG) 38, Vol. 211, file 6468.
- ¹⁰ J.L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton, *A Nation Forged in Fire: Canadians and the Second World War 1939-1945* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989), p. 168.
- ¹¹ “Dangers of Prejudice Pointed Out by Drew,” *Globe and Mail* (15 October 1943), p. 15.
- ¹² In one poll in October, 49% of Canadians thought that the federal government should take the lead in promoting post-war employment, a further 16% favoured provincial and municipal governments taking the lead, and only 23% believed industry and business should fill that role, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (1944-1945), p. 601.
- ¹³ Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).
- ¹⁴ “The Canadian Indian,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* (25 September 1944), p. 9.

- ¹⁵ “Stonies at Ceremonial Sun Dance Pray For Victory For Britain,” *Calgary Herald* (20 June 1940), pp. 1-2. The *Herald* actually ran two stories about the Sun Dance that day: “Tom-Toms of Stonies Beat Time For Tribesmen’s Sun Dance Ritual,” *Calgary Herald* (20 June 1940), pp. 1,5.
- ¹⁶ “Indians Display Loyalty in Gift of Treaty Money,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* (17 June 1940), p. 4. An abbreviated version of the story appeared also in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, “Indian Aid: Give Treaty Money To Help Win War,” (17 June 1940), p. 10, and a few weeks later in the *Halifax Chronicle*, “Three Cheers For The Crees” (3 July 1940), p. 8, “Indian Children Assist Red Cross,” *Vancouver Sun* (6 July 1940), p. 16. “Indian Generous to War Causes,” *Saturday Night* (10 August 1940), p. 17. The piece opened claiming, “Assuredly to be counted among the most patriotic of Canada’s citizens are Saskatchewan Indians who have given generously of their money, and in one case have donated an ambulance, to help the Empire war cause.”
- ¹⁷ Jack Hambleton, “Their Braves Gone to War, Cape Croker’s Indian Women and Children Carry On,” photo collection, *Globe and Mail* (23 October 1943), p. 15, and “Bruce Peninsula Reserve Does Bit To Put Every Victory Loan Over Top,” *Globe and Mail* (23 October 1943), p. 15.
- ¹⁸ *Hansard* (17 July 1944), p. 4935. Quoted from James W.St.G. Walker, “Race,” *Rights and the Law*, p. 20.
- ¹⁹ “The Canadian Indian,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*.
- ²⁰ “Champions Native Indians,” *Kamloops Sentinel* (4 April 1945), p. 2.
- ²¹ “Where Rivers Run North,” *Winnipeg Free Press* (19 April 1945), p. 13. The report quoted in this story was by Dr. Andrew Moore “for the Canadian Social Science Research Council,” yet another indication of the growing interest of academics in the social conditions of the First Nations at the close of the Second World War.
- ²² Kathleen Coburn, “The Red Man’s Burden,” *Canadian Forum* (October 1944), pp. 153-155.
- ²³ Albert Millar, “Champions Native Indians,” *Kamloops Sentinel*; Kathleen Coburn, “The Red Man’s Burden,” *Canadian Forum*, p. 153. This was also clearly expressed by the socio-psychological analysis of John Honigmann, “Canada’s Human Resources,” *Canadian Forum* (July 1944), p. 84, “Bracken Club Gains Better Understanding of Indian Problem,” *Kamloops Sentinel* (4 April 1945), p. 1.
- ²⁴ Albert Millar, “Champions Native Indians,” *Kamloops Sentinel*.
- ²⁵ “Legislature Urges Dominion to Better Conditions for Indians,” *Kamloops Sentinel* (22 March 1944), p. 12; Miriam Chapin, “New Deal in Order for Indians of Canada,” *Saturday Night* (23 September 1944), p. 10; Kathleen Coburn, “The Red Man’s Burden,” *Canadian Forum*, p. 154; “Indians, West and East,” *Saturday Night* (11 November 1944), p. 2.
- ²⁶ “Survey of Indian Problems Asked,” *Globe and Mail* (14 April 1945), p. 4. This story reported on the decision of the United Church Board of Home Missions to request a Royal Commission to study the relations between Aboriginal people and the Dominion.
- ²⁷ Chapin, “New Deal in Order,” *Saturday Night*; Kathleen Coburn, “The Red Man’s Burden,” *Canadian Forum*, p. 154.
- ²⁸ “Legislature Urges Dominion,” *Kamloops Sentinel*; “Indians, West and East,” *Saturday Night* (11 November 1944), p. 2.
- ²⁹ “The Canadian Indian,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*; Chapin, “New Deal in Order,” *Saturday Night*.

POWS, Internees and Minorities

Prisonniers de guerres, internés et minorités

FROM ETHNIC CLEANSING TO APOLOGIES: THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH MINORITIES IN WARTIME

N.F. Dreisziger

Minorities can be mistreated in peacetime. There are plenty of examples of the persecution of religious, ethnic or racial groups, during times when there was neither international conflict nor civil strife. Nevertheless, the most likely occasions for the abuse of minorities throughout history have tended to be times of war. The Armenian massacres of the First World War and the Jewish Holocaust of the Second, are the most obvious illustrations of this generalization. Though both of these tragedies took place on the Eurasian continent, the Old World does not have a monopoly on the wartime mistreatment of minorities. Violations of the basic rights of racial, religious or cultural groups have also happened, perhaps with less frequency and limited severity, in North America during times of conflict. America's and Mexico's evolution provide numerous examples but Canadian history is not exempt either.

No adequate survey exists of the fate of peripheral ethnic groups in the wars that Canada had been involved in throughout history. This paper can only begin to fill this hiatus in Canadian historiography. First of all, a systematic examination of the subject would require a thorough analysis of events that happened in early colonial days and even a handful that took place in the nineteenth century. Few historians have the expertise to undertake the archival research necessary to accomplish such analysis. By necessity then, a part of this paper will rely on the work of others. Lack of adequate space, moreover, also forbids the exploration of these early historical themes in detail. The two world wars of the twentieth century however, will receive close attention, after all, it is the events of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 that have served as focal points of controversy in recent decades.

Besides trying to survey the fate of underprivileged linguistic or cultural groups in wartime, this paper will look for the existence of any peculiarities in the Canadian experience. In particular it will suggest that, at least as far as World War II, one of the most important of Canada's modern wars was concerned, the experience of peripheral groups was not entirely negative. Only by concentrating not only on the setbacks minorities suffered, but also on the advances they made, can we gain a balanced view on how minorities have fared in this country in times of war.

Minorities, groups of people who are seen as being different from the majority population on account of race, religion, nationality, or some other criteria, can be mistreated in many different ways. First of all, the source of the mistreatment can vary, but it is usually either the authorities, the state and its component forces, including the army, police, militia, etc., or another, more powerful ethnic group. In many cases it is a combination of the two, and in some instances it is difficult to decide whether the worst crimes against a minority group had been committed by the authorities or the citizenry.

There are of course differences in the degree to which minorities can be mistreated. Some forms of maltreatment might do no more than inconvenience temporarily the members of the target group. Other forms can inflict real suffering on them. One particularly vicious type of mistreatment is “ethnic cleansing” about which we have heard a great deal in recent years. At the apex of persecution stands genocide, the extermination of a group of people.

Fortunately for Canada, our history does not provide examples for this most disturbing kind of punishment inflicted on minorities.¹ The other severe type of mistreatment, ethnic cleansing, is however, relevant to the Canadian experience. The deportation of the Acadians during the Seven Years War fits most definitions of that term. The primary motive for the forcible deportation in 1755 of the French settlers of the Bay of Fundy region seems to have been strategic: to improve the position of the British command in Nova Scotia for the expected war with France. The continuation of the deportations during the first three years of the Seven Years War, especially in 1758 when it was the Acadian population of Île Saint-Jean that bore the brunt of British war policy, was conceivably similarly motivated. Why the deportations continued after the British had ousted all French forces from North America in 1760 is not easy to explain from the strategic perspective. The local British commanders might have feared the return of the French, or possibly, the abandonment by the British government of the conquered territories during the peace negotiations. The fate of Louisbourg in the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle must have weighed heavily on the minds of those responsible for the post-1760 deportations.²

Ethnic cleansing is accomplished not only by the rounding-up and forcible removal of people, but by the instilling of enough fear into members of a targeted population to prompt them to abandon their homes and seek refuge in distant but seemingly safer areas. In most cases, the deportation of some achieves this goal. This was indeed the case during the Acadian deportations when thousands fled to territory still controlled by the French. It was “ethnic cleansing” very much in the manner we have been acquainted with in the Balkans in recent years. The fact that the British commanders did not subject the French population of the St. Lawrence Valley to a similar fate during the last phase of the war or after its conclusion, reinforces the impression that the Acadian deportations were motivated more by strategic considerations than by mere cruelty or a desire for revenge.

The next two wars on Canadian soil: the War of American Revolution and the War of 1812, did not result in mistreatment of particular elements of the population on anything the scale that had been the case during the Seven Years War. Perhaps the weightiest explanation for this fact lies in the nature of the particular war experience. Unlike the last of the Anglo-French wars in North America, these two wars never developed into life-and-death struggles for total conquest. In their Canadian aspects, both of these conflicts were limited wars, circumscribed in their scope by the military weakness of both sides involved in them. Nevertheless, in the second of these wars

several hundred residents of Upper Canada left British North America, suggesting that what we have here is a faint historical echo of what happened between 1755 and 1763 to the Acadians. Recent historiography, however, suggests otherwise. In a book that deals mainly with the non-military aspects of the war, George Sheppard devotes a chapter to “Enemies at Home,” but the focus of this chapter is not so much the deeds of American settlers but those of war-profiteers and thieves.³ Anti-American sentiments persisted and even intensified after the war, a fact which is more clearly documented in the historical literature.⁴

The period from 1814 to 1914 was Canada’s “century of peace.” Though Canadians fought in wars abroad and even overseas during this time, British North America or, later, Canada as a whole was never on war footing. The lack of wholesale involvement in international conflict did not mean the absence of civil strife at home. In the category of civil strife, three occasions stand out as being significant enough to be described as insurrections. The first of these is the rebellions in the Canadas in the late 1830s, the second is the Red River rising of 1869, and the third is the North-West Rebellion of 1885. We shall briefly deal with each of these as events that gave rise to the mistreatment of minorities.

Of the two rebellions in 1837, the one in Lower Canada deserves attention. Unlike its counterpart in Upper Canada, it was a relatively large-scale event and, more importantly, it was not only a socio-political but also an ethnic conflict as well. Its crushing by British garrison forces and English-speaking militias resulted in physical losses and suffering for the communities where clashes took place, and the rebellion was followed by repression that was more severe than the occupation regime that had been imposed on the people of the St. Lawrence Valley after the British conquest three generations earlier.⁵

Of the two Riel Rebellions, only the second brought military action involving clashes with the rebels.⁶ Aside from crushing *métis* resistance, the North-West Rebellion had another casualty. In defeating the rebels an incipient movement by native tribes inhabiting the region, in particular the Plains Cree, for autonomy was crushed. Though the Cree had given only limited and reluctant support to the rebels, the local authorities used the rebellion to force them into submission. One long-term legacy of the rebellion was that not only the *métis* of the North-West, but the Plains Cree as well, became what some have described as “broken people.”⁷

In 1914 Canada became involved in a global conflict. Canadian society of the time was intolerant in general and was blatantly racist in particular. It is not surprising that, during this war some minorities became targets for mistreatment. Intolerance of minority groups was part of the political correctness of the times. Even such a usually careful individual as William Lyon Mackenzie King, an aspiring bureaucrat and an expert on Oriental immigration at the time, could declare only a few years before the war that Canada had to remain a “white man’s country,”⁸ a view that was no doubt shared by the vast majority of his Anglophone (and even Francophone) compatriots.

When war broke out in 1914, Canada was still part of the British Empire and, as a result, there were few Canadian legal precedents regarding the treatment of aliens in wartime. Accordingly, the Dominion government looked to Great Britain for legislation to regulate the great many immigrants to the country who were of enemy nationality. In the United Kingdom the Defence of the Realm Act and the hastily drafted Aliens Restriction Act empowered the government to pass orders-in-council regulating aliens.

The various orders promulgated subsequently reduced the rights of enemy aliens (mostly Germans) living in Britain by closing down their organizations and limiting their movements, employment opportunities, and their use of postal services. Later on during the war, such restrictions were applied to naturalized Germans living in the United Kingdom as well.⁹

In Canada a similar regime was instituted. Here, from August of 1914 on, the treatment of enemy aliens was governed by orders-in-council, passed under the authority of the War Measures Act. These Cabinet regulations imposed a regime of police rule on unnaturalized newcomers to the country. They had to register as aliens. Upon registration they were either released or were arrested. Those released had their movements restricted and were obliged to report to the police monthly. Grounds for interning the others varied from “looking suspicious” to being unemployed. Later more aliens were interned because some of them had failed to register or had violated their terms of parole. As anti-alien sentiments in the country grew, the curtailment of the rights of immigrants became more severe. Moreover, restrictions were increasingly applied not only to alien nationals but to naturalized immigrants to Canada who were formerly subjects of nations at war with the British Empire.¹⁰ Through the Wartime Elections Act of 1917, for example, many naturalized immigrants were disfranchised. The great irony of the regime imposed on the country’s enemy aliens was the fact that most of them were members of the subject nationalities of the Habsburg Empire whose sympathies were not with the governments of the Central Powers.

The Great War did little to dampen ethnic and racial intolerance in Canada. On the contrary, the years that followed the war saw the passing of legislation both at the federal and the provincial levels that had no respect for the civil rights of either individuals or minority groups. Some of these laws facilitated the deportation of people suspected of spreading radical ideologies, others curtailed the functioning of what today would be called “ethnic schools” for the children of immigrants. In public life, furthermore, the demonizing of racial groups continued throughout the inter-war period. Conservative MP George Black could declare in the House of Commons that Asiatics should be excluded from the country, and those that were already here, should be deprived of their property and deported.¹¹ Similar opinions were expressed by some of Canada’s most prominent newspaper editorialists. In June 1926, for example, the Toronto *Globe* warned against the evil of “race admixture” and argued that, in the American experience, Canadians had a “constant reminder of the evil that flows from unrestricted immigration.”¹² To these voices were added the similar judgements proclaimed by criminologists, demographers, and other experts, who warned against the admission to Canada of “inferior” stocks of people.¹³

It was in this climate of public opinion that, in the late 1930s, the Canadian government began preparing for the possible outbreak of a new war in which Canada would probably be involved. The question of the handling of enemy aliens in such eventuality was first discussed by an interdepartmental committee in the summer of 1938. The committee’s recommendations formed the basis of the Defence of Canada Regulations (DOCR).¹⁴ Sections 24 and 25 of these regulations created three kinds of enemy individuals depending on the severity with which they were to be treated: persons facing internment, those having to comply with the requirements of a parole system, and those who were spared these burdens, i.e. people granted “exemption certificates.” Regulation 26, as originally drafted, provided internees with an appeal mechanism, but

left the outcome of appeals to the discretion of the Minister of Justice. During the war, Regulation 26 was used to accommodate most of the changes that the government deemed necessary to control Canada's enemy ethnic population. As had been the case in World War I, the definition of an "enemy alien" hinged on an individual's place of birth.¹⁵ And, as had been the case during 1914-1918, this characterization of individuals gave rise to glaring inconsistencies and injustices.

The formulation of the DOCR during 1938-1939 had been filled with acrimonious debates. The authors of this emergency legislation gravitated toward two quite different solutions to the problem. Some members, especially people representing the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Department of National Defence, tended to argue for strict rules and their application to a large number of people, while the civilian officials who served on this drafting committee tended to counsel moderation.¹⁶ This debate over the nature of Canada's wartime regulations concerning immigrants from enemy lands only intensified after the outbreak of the war in September, 1939 and especially, after Hitler's invasion of Belgium and France in the following spring.¹⁷

In the summer of 1940, the regulations were extended not only to Italian enemy aliens (after Italy's entry into the war), but also to German and Italian "citizens" of Canada whose naturalization papers were less than two decades old. At the same time further measures were taken to close down "enemy alien" clubs, associations, as well as the ethnic press. The RCMP cast a wide net which included not only suspected Nazis and fascists, but also communists and other suspected Axis sympathizers, such as Ukrainian nationalists who were accused of being anti-Polish (therefore anti-Ally), as well as potentially pro-Axis as they were probably hoping that Germany would liberate their native land from Soviet rule.¹⁸

The regime imposed on "enemy aliens" during World War II had its ironies, not unlike its World War I predecessor. Under this regime the students of a rabbinical school, transferred from Great Britain to where these people had fled earlier, chafed in internment camp until the final phases of the war. In the meantime, recent Croatian and Slovak immigrants continued to live undisturbed by Canadian authorities even though the governments of their homelands had joined the Axis.

In December of 1941 the regime of the DOCR was extended to Finnish, Hungarian and Rumanian immigrants when Ottawa declared war on some of the minor Axis allies. Interestingly enough, the full force of the regulations affecting enemy aliens was not applied to these people, a circumstance which will be discussed in some detail later. Also in December 1941, the war in the Pacific escalated when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Canada declared war on Japan. Consequently, Japanese Canadian immigrants also became "enemy aliens." The months that followed constitute the darkest episode of Canadian mistreatment of a minority group in modern history.¹⁹

The outbreak of war in the Pacific served to heighten already strong anti-Japanese feelings in British Columbia. Fearing an invasion of mainland North America by the Empire of Japan, the province's public clamoured for the removal of the Japanese from coastal areas, in order to prevent them from becoming fifth columnists in the event of hostilities. The federal government tried to appease public sentiments. At first it embarked on the internment of some Japanese enemy aliens. When this move failed to calm public concerns, Ottawa offered to remove all Japanese-Canadian adult males. In the end, the evacuation order called for the removal of the entire Japanese-Canadian population of coastal British Columbia. The regulation was blatantly racist. Who was to

be affected was determined not on ground of legal status as citizen, not even on the basis of “country of birth;” all persons of the “Japanese race” were to be moved.²⁰

The sad episode of the Japanese Canadians’ “evacuation” was relatively short-lived, even though it would have a lasting impact on the people involved. No invasion of mainland North America by the Japanese came and fears of Armageddon subsided in British Columbia. By the end of 1942 the voices of moderation in Ottawa were no longer drowned out by the cries for harsh treatment, especially in regard to European enemy aliens. When some of the latter were given a reprieve from many of the DOCR’s more draconian provisions, the position of the Canadian-born and the naturalized Japanese Canadians also improved, at least on paper.²¹ Though most remained in internment camps or other forms of forced exile, and more indignities would be inflicted on many of them before the return of peace-time normalcy, for the Japanese-Canadian population as a whole, the worst was over by 1943. Furthermore, in the immediate post-war period it became increasingly clear to Canada’s leaders and public, that a war fought against intolerance could only be followed by an age of increased religious, ethnic and even racial tolerance everywhere.

While the history of Canada during times of war is full of examples of intolerance toward minority groups, it also displays varying degrees of moderation. Indeed, it can be said that proclivity towards the mistreatment of minorities always coexisted with societal forces that made for their fair treatment. Certain developments, such as the rise of concern for the safety of the general public, or of the state itself, often reinforced the tendencies toward harsh measures and intolerance. At the same time, there were always people with high moral principles who spoke up in favour of upholding the traditional Canadian, British, Christian, or whatever, values of moderation, tolerance and justice.

This has been the case from earliest times. These generalizations apply even to the eighteenth century. When British strategic supremacy did not seem threatened, as was the case of the St. Lawrence Valley in 1760, the treatment of the conquered French-Canadian population proved more moderate in nature. In the War of 1812 also, we find examples of the harshest treatment being avoided. At least one contemporary judge saw it useful to spare the lives of certain American immigrants to Upper Canada even though a strict interpretation of the law might have suggested otherwise.²² And, some leniency was almost shown in the turbulent aftermath of the 1837 Rebellion in Lower Canada.²³

Students of the enemy ethnic experience often find it difficult to find evidence of moderation when they examine the Canadian State’s treatment of enemy aliens in the First World War. But even in this case, there are some indications that modest attempts were made at imposing some fairness. Toward the end of the war, half-hearted efforts were made to exempt from harsh treatment at least some of the groups who fell into the category of “enemy aliens.” The most prominent of these were Czech immigrants many of whose co-nationals were, by war’s end, fighting for the Allies.²⁴

The most obvious examples of moderation being advocated and eventually being applied in the treatment of enemy alien populations date from the Second World War. I have outlined these elsewhere and for that reason I will only summarize them here.²⁵ An early move in this direction was made in December of 1941, at the time of Ottawa’s declaration of war on three of the minor Axis allies. The result was that immigrants from these countries were not treated with the same severity as Germans and Italians. The most important of such moves, however, was the decision of the Mackenzie King government a year later to revoke the changes made to the DOCR two-and-a-half years earlier which

had made enemy aliens of tens of thousands of naturalized immigrants from enemy lands. At the same time, Italian and Austrian enemy aliens in the country were given the preferential status that had been accorded a year earlier to Hungarians, Finns and Rumanians. Still another sign of moderation in Ottawa's policies was the setting up of the Nationalities Branch within the Department of National War Services. The Branch was to serve as an "extended hand" by the government to Canada's immigrant masses. The fact that it did little effective work was not so much the fault of its staff and their backers, but the tight-fistedness of Mackenzie King's government when it came to providing the Branch with ample staff and a reasonable budget.²⁶

Though limited in the scope of its activities, the NB, and the policies that accompanied its launching, was an important institution in Canadian history. It was the precursor to the state machinery (for a brief time an entire government department) that by the end of the century symbolized the emergence in Canada of official ethnic tolerance.²⁷ Such governmental apologies as had been offered to Japanese Canadians in the 1980s may have been in part motivated by political considerations. Nevertheless, they were also proof of the fact that the widespread intolerance that characterized Canadian life only two generations earlier was no longer acceptable in the public sphere.

A characteristic feature of the fate of peripheral groups in Canada, and apparently in other lands as well, is that they had often suffered maltreatment not only during wartime but also in the aftermath of war as well. Accordingly, any study of the influence of war on the handling of minorities in Canada should examine their treatment in post-war eras.²⁸ Such inquiry however, is beyond the scope of this short essay. Also beyond this inquiry's scope is an examination of the fundamental causes of mistreatment of minorities in wartime in Canada and elsewhere. Nevertheless I hope I can be permitted to share a few insights on this subject, insights that I have gleaned in my decades-long study of inter-ethnic relations.

How minorities are treated depends to a large extent on the state of public opinion that prevails in a country at a particular time, and this generalization is probably true of most pluralistic societies though not necessarily of dictatorships. In times of perceived, immediate danger to the nation, or any of its main institutions or components, the mistreatment of peripheral groups becomes a possibility. Another and possibly an even more important factor determining the fate of such groups in times of national or international crisis has to do with the type of individuals that are responsible for a nation's policies. Wars often result in the accession to power of persons who do not share the moral values of the majority of the population. To put in another way, crises often result in the surfacing to national leadership of groups of extremists, often led by outright fanatics or even psychopaths. Wars, furthermore, often bring about a worsening in the behaviour of men, especially that of the extremists whom such crises might catapult to positions of leadership.

Fortunately for Canada, for more than two centuries now, the country has not experienced conditions of total war, and fanatics have not been able to surface to national leadership, unlike in some countries of the Old World. If anything, the experience of Canada tended to be the opposite: war sometimes gave rise to debate about civil rights in which men with traditional morality on some occasions prevailed over those with extremist tendencies. When war came and became perceived to be a national crisis, who was at the helm of government mattered a great deal. One cannot imagine that without a Colonel Charles Lawrence in command in Nova Scotia during the mid- and late-1750s,

the scope and nature of the Acadian deportations would have been the same. Alternatively, it is hard to envisage that had the humane and rational Norman Robertson not been Mackenzie King's principal adviser after 1941, Canada's Central European immigrant masses would have received as fair a treatment as they did during the second half of World War II.²⁹

Though this paper was entitled "From Ethnic Cleansing to Apologies," it does not purport to suggest that the treatment of minorities in Canada is a linear development, an inevitable passage from the "deplorable" to the "good." The fact that minorities usually fared better in this land during the nineteenth century than the eighteenth, and that their treatment was, again with some exceptions, fairer in the Second World War than it had been in the First, is mainly the result of historical circumstances. More precisely, it is the result of the fact that no real life-and-death struggle had been fought on Canadian soil in the nineteenth century, and that even the Two World Wars of the twentieth were not quite total wars for Canada, as they had been for many nations of the Old World. War, especially total war, is the supreme test of democracy, morality, and human decency. We can only hope that in the 21st century Canada and Canadian society will not have to undergo this test. Only in the absence of major internal or international crisis is there a good chance that ethnic tolerance, or, at least, the official ethnic tolerance that has characterized the last decades of the 20th century, will survive throughout the 21st.

NOTES

- ¹ I am aware of the fact that some historians of the early relations of European newcomers and Canada's native peoples might argue otherwise. Nevertheless, the losses experienced by many native groups early during White settlement can hardly be ascribed to genocide, as that term is usually defined by historians of the Old World. On the interaction of Canada's aboriginal peoples and Europeans in the age of discoveries and early White settlement see Bruce G. Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered*. (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1985). On the gradual decline and eventual disappearance of the Beothuks see L.F.S. Upton, "The Extermination of the Beothuks of Newfoundland," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 58 (1977), pp. 133-153.
- ² For a succinct account of Acadian experience in war, as well as its historiographical treatments, see Naomi E.S. Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History, 1686-1784* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 1992).
- ³ George Sheppard, *Plunder, Profit, and Paroles: A Social History of the War of 1812 in Upper Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 1994), particularly Chapter 6.
- ⁴ Jane Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle, and Upper Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1987), part II, *in passim*. For a standard, older treatment of the subject, see Gerald M. Craig, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years, 1784-1841* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963), especially chapter 5. We should add that this anti-Americanism appears to have been rooted more in ideology than in ethnic prejudice.
- ⁵ Allan Greer, *The Patriots and the People: The Rebellion of 1937 in Rural Lower Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), chapter 11. The "government and the military command," according to Greer, wanted "to terrorize the population into submission," p. 353.
- ⁶ The expedition by British regulars under the command of Colonel Garnet J. Wolsley was not a punitive campaign as the Red River Rebellion had ended in a negotiated settlement before Wolsley's soldiers arrived. Nevertheless, the years following the rebellion brought distress for the *métis* population of the Red River Valley as many of them were gradually driven from their

- traditional lands. Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 1987), pp. 197-201.
- 7 Some of the Cree chiefs were arrested while others were deprived of their positions of leadership. All had their movements curtailed. Cree warriors had their horses and carts confiscated and the size of the police force in their region was increased to discourage any thoughts of resistance to these measures. John L. Tobias, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879-1885," in *Readings in Canadian History: Post-Confederation*, R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith, eds. (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1986; 2nd edition), pp. 103-127. On the fate of the *métis*, see Friesen, pp. 235-36.
- 8 W.L. Mackenzie King, *Report by W. L. Mackenzie King, C.M.G., Deputy Minister of Labour, on his Mission to England to Confer with British Authorities on the Subject of Immigration to Canada from the Orient, and Immigration from India in Particular*, 2 May 1908, p. 7. Printed as Sessional Paper No. 36A, in Canada, Parliament, *Sessional Papers*, Vol. XLII, No. 17, 1907-8 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1908). I have quoted this report in my lecture, "The Wartime Origins of Ethnic Tolerance in Canada," Robert F. Harney memorial lecture series, Robert F. Harney Professorship & Program in Ethnic, Immigration and Pluralism Studies, University of Toronto, 23 January 1998. Lectures and Papers in Ethnicity, No. 29, June 1999, pp. 2f.
- 9 David Sounders, "Aliens in Britain and the Empire During the First World War," in *Loyalties in Conflict: Ukrainians in Canada During the Great War*, Frances Swyripa and John H. Thompson eds. (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1983), pp. 99-124.
- 10 John H. Thompson, *Ethnic Minorities during Two World Wars* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1991), pp. 4-9; see also the same author's more detailed *The Harvests of War* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978), particularly the chapter dealing with enemy alien groups.
- 11 George Black, member for the Yukon, speaking in the House in 1922. Canada, Parliament, *Debates of the House of Commons* (hereafter *Commons Debates*), 1922, Vol. 2, p. 1521. Black later became Speaker of the House. Some British Columbia MPs threatened to take their province out of Canada should Ottawa not secure their country from the "Asiatic menace." See the *Commons Debates* for 1928, Vol. 1, p. 1195.
- 12 *The Globe*, 10 June 1926.
- 13 Thompson, *Ethnic Minorities*, pp. 10f. I have also explored this subject in my "Canada and her National Policy: Canadian Opinion on the National Policy of Immigration, 1920-1930," MA research paper, University of Toronto, 1965, pp. 41-50.
- 14 Thompson, *Ethnic Minorities*, pp. 11-12. Also, N.F. Dreisziger, "7 December 1941: A Turning Point in Wartime Policy Toward Enemy Ethnic Groups?," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Spring 1997), pp. 94-95.
- 15 Canada, Parliament, *Draft Defence of Canada Regulations* (Ottawa, 1939).
- 16 Daniel Robinson, "Planning for the 'Most Serious Contingency': Alien Internment, Arbitrary Detention, and the Canadian State 1938-39," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 28 (1993), pp. 5-20; and also, Dreisziger, "The Wartime Origins," pp. 6f.
- 17 N.F. Dreisziger, "The Rise of a Bureaucracy for Multiculturalism: The Origins of the Nationalities Branch, 1939-41," in *On Guard for Thee: War, Ethnicity, and the Canadian State, 1939-1945*, Norman Hillmer, Bohdan Kordan, and Lubomyr Luciuk, eds. (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War and the Canadian Government Publishing Centre, 1988), pp. 6-8.
- 18 The incarceration of Ukrainian (and Finnish and other) communists continued until well after the Nazi invasion of the USSR in June of 1941 and the signing of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of Alliance several months later. *Ibid.*, p. 3. For details see William Repka and Kathleen M. Repka, *Dangerous Patriots: Canada's Unknown Prisoners of War* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1982).
- 19 A useful introduction to the subject of Japanese-Canadian experience in the Second World War is W. Peter Ward, *The Japanese in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1982), pp. 13-14. Ken Adachi's *The Enemy that Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), is still useful. A recent monograph related to the subject is Patricia E. Roy, J.L. Granatstein, Masako Iino, and Hiroko Takamura, *Mutual*

Hostages: Canadians and Japanese during the Second World War (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

20 No exceptions were made, not even on compassionate grounds. The residents of a Japanese-Canadian orphanage were moved from Vancouver Island to the Prairies. I hope to write up this story one day, under the title "Orphan Toddlers as Enemies of the Canadian State."

21 Dreisziger, "7 December 1941," pp. 102-103.

22 Sheppard, pp. 167f.

23 Lord Durham did plan to be lenient; however, his efforts to this end were thwarted by the imperial authorities on the advice of his enemies. The outbreak of renewed fighting hard on the heels of Durham's resignation and departure, dashed any chances of lenient treatment for the rebellion's participants.

24 Mark Minenko, "Without Just Cause: Canada's First National Internment Operations," in *Canada's Ukrainians: Negotiating an Identity*. L. Luciuk and S. Hryniuk, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 298. It should also be mentioned in this connection that many immigrants from enemy lands did manage to share the prosperity that was created by the war economy of the times.

25 The following is based mainly on my "7 December 1941," pp. 100-102.

26 In contrast to the Nationalities Branch in Ottawa which had only a handful of employees (at one point only two), the wartime Foreign Nationalities Branch of the United States (a branch within the Office of Strategic Services), at the height of its existence, had 50. United States, War Department, Strategic Services Unit, History Project, *War Report of the OSS*, Kermit Roosevelt, ed. (New York: Walker & Co., 1976), pp. 198f.

27 Leslie A. Pal, "Identity, citizenship, and mobilization: the Nationalities Branch and World War Two," *Canadian Public Administration*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (fall 1989), pp. 407-26; also, Dreisziger, "The Rise of a Bureaucracy," *in passim*.

28 We should keep in mind that 1, the Acadians were persecuted even after the British-French struggle for Acadia had come to a nearly incontestable conclusion in 1758; 2, the "Alien Question" emerged in Upper Canada mainly after 1814; 3, the *métis* of Manitoba had suffered their most serious losses in the years after the First Riel Rebellion; 4, immigrants from Central Europe continued to be the subject of restrictive regulations after 1918; and 5, that plans for the deportation of Japanese Canadians to Japan surfaced with the most vigour in 1945.

29 This is one of the conclusions of my article "7 December 1941." Though a racist, Mackenzie King was also a rational and humane individual; and there were others in Ottawa at the time, both in the Cabinet and the top levels of the bureaucracy. Especially sympathetic to the plight of Central European immigrants were several influential Ottawa figures who hailed from the Canadian West. Dreisziger, "The Rise of a Bureaucracy," pp. 4-10 and 12-19.

**A PETTY PROBLEM OR A FOUL BLOT?:
SOME ASPECTS OF THE TREATMENT OF CANADIAN
PRISONERS OF WAR AND CIVILIAN INTERNEES
IN THE JAPANESE EMPIRE
1941-1945**

A. Hamish Ion

Taking up such a petty problem as the treatment of captives and internees, the British and American authorities and press are making a great fuss and are despising the Japanese as enemy of humanity and as a barbarous and cruel nation

Nippon Times, February 11, 1944

The Japanese conduct to prisoners in the field and in their prison camps will always remain a foul blot on their record, which those who fought against them will find it hard to forget.

Viscount Slim, *Defeat into Victory*

As the sixtieth anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong approaches, both Japanese and Canadians should not forget that Canadian prisoners of war (POWs) and civilian internees (CIs) suffered horribly at the hands of the Japanese during the Second World War in East Asia.¹ The question of the treatment of Canadian prisoners of war (POWs) and civilian internees (CIs) is an interesting example of a problem that has had a disproportionate impact on the two countries involved. What is a petty problem for Japan is a significant national issue in Canada. The post-war slowness of the Canadian government in making adequate provisions for the survivors of Japanese prison camps and their quest for compensation² created a domestic political issue that has only recently been resolved. In owning up to their responsibilities, the Canadian government has used the past sufferings of POWs to provide a political fillip to its image as a caring organization.³ Earlier, during the early 1950s, the horror endured by POWs was turned into a gambit for Canada to soothe a sometime enemy back into being a friend. As far as Japan was concerned, the dropping of the issue of the treatment of POWs was taken as a test for the victor powers to show their commitment to cordial relations with the new Japanese government following the treaty of San Francisco in 1952. In more recent years, as there are no major problems in Canadian-Japanese relations that cannot be swiftly resolved, the Japanese treatment of Canadian POWs has supplied Canadians with a ready-made issue through which to vent their occasional frustrations with the Japanese. This short paper is largely concerned with the Japanese side of the POW issue. It raises the question of whether or not the mistreatment of Canadian and Allied POWs was the result of deliberate policy or simply the product of the chaos of war. It leans toward the latter. The paper also analyses current trends in Japanese and Western writings. These

tend to reinforce the Japanese view that they were the victims in the war that broke out in 1941.

As well as having a domestic political implications within Canada, the Canadian POW and CI experience was an integral, albeit a small, part of a larger saga of suffering endured by all 300,000 Allied nationals in Japanese hands⁴ during the war. The significance of the Canadian experience lies, not in its scale, but in what can be garnered from it about the broader problem of POWs and CIs held by the Japanese including issues of humanity in warfare, just penalties for war crimes, and differing perceptions of war across cultural boundaries. The current vogue for war crimes trials stemming from widespread public outrage at the treatment of prisoners in camps in the Balkans and at the genocidal atrocities in central Africa has drawn attention to what happened in the Japanese Empire during the Second World War. Yet, if the Japanese example has anything to offer, it is that the window of opportunity to deal justice for war crimes is short before the kaleidoscopic shifts of diplomacy in search of a lasting peace snare a different array showing that victor's justice is loser's victimization.

While Canadian servicemen fought in Burma, Malaya and other campaigns against the Japanese, the vast majority of those captured surrendered at Hong Kong⁵ and were imprisoned there or later shipped to metropolitan Japan itself. In fact, Canada was lucky because of all the major Allies fighting against the Japanese, Canada and New Zealand had the fewest POWs and relatively few CIs. However, as prisoners Canadian troops captured in Hong Kong were at a marked disadvantage because they did not have reliable contacts outside the POW camps or knowledge of local customs, foods, geography and languages which many of the others captured there possessed. This was all the more unfortunate because Hong Kong was the only territory from which British POWs and CIs had, at least, in the first eighteen months a reasonable prospect of escape.⁶ Despite this, by the end of 1942, Hong Kong had become strategic and military backwater with the result that the Furyo Joho Kyoku (POW Information Bureau) could release nominal rolls of POWs held there. Thus, the Canadian government had a fairly accurate idea of its servicemen who were POWs,⁷ and was luckier than other Allies with large numbers captured in south-east Asia whose names were not released. Knowing the names of POWs, however, did not alleviate their appalling suffering.

Nevertheless, there was a great variety of different experiences that Canadian POWs and CIs endured in captivity and it is dangerous to generalize about them. The popular image of the POW is that of the horrific mistreatment of the ordinary young soldier for Canadian accounts are largely written by those who belonged to the other ranks.⁸ In general, the less heroic and less physically challenging experiences of officers who were not required like the other ranks to perform forced labour is overlooked.⁹ The breadth of captive experience becomes even more evident when Canadian CIs are considered. A significant number of Canadian missionaries who had been interned in Japan, Korea and China were brought to safety by the Swedish exchange ship Gripsholm in September 1942 before conditions in their places of internment became harsh.¹⁰ It was largely French-Canadian missionaries in Manchuria, Indo-China and Japan who found themselves interned for the full duration of the war.¹¹ Those missionaries who had served in Japan often had a good knowledge of Japanese language and customs and contacts outside the internment camps, and were invariably well-treated. The importance of local knowledge and contacts cannot be overestimated in helping internees to maintain their spirits and to survive. A few Canadian Protestant women missionaries, who chose to

remain in Japan rather than be exchanged, were able to stay on without being interned and they shared the trials and tribulations of ordinary Japanese civilians. As conditions for enemy civilians became increasingly difficult as the war progressed, internment came almost as a relief for some. This was the case for Peggy Pemberton-Carter who was interned in 1943 at the Lunghua camp outside of Shanghai. While life in Lunghua was grim and bitter, it was a more stable existence than living free in Shanghai under Japanese rule which brought with it certain unpleasant forms of harassment.¹²

Nevertheless, nothing can alter the fact that the treatment of Allied prisoners by the Japanese during the Second World War was very different from their fair handling of Russian and German captives during both the Russo-Japanese and First World Wars. Was the mistreatment of POWs in the Second World War a result of deliberate policy or simply the product of the chaos of war or perhaps some combination of both? After all, the Japanese army was a Western-style army, regimented in Western fashion and imbued with Western concepts of strategy and tactics and supported by Western-style ancillary organizations such as the Japanese Red Cross. The Army was Foch and von Clausewitz grafted on to the root of Japanese patriotism, valour and discipline. This combination made the Japanese soldier a very formidable foe who according to Edward Drea was "trained in the hardest school."¹³ Just as there was great similarity between the Japanese and Western militaries in terms of their organizations and formations, so, too, there was much parallelism between Japanese and Western military law.

At the end of January 1942, the Japanese Foreign Minister, Togo Shigenori, in answer to a query from the American government, clearly indicated that the Japanese government would strictly observe the Geneva Convention of July 27 1929 relative to the Red Cross but as Japan had not ratify the Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war it was not bound by it. However, the Japanese government would, at all times, apply *mutatis mutandis* the clauses of the Convention to American prisoners of war.¹⁴ While *mutatis mutandis* referred to the alteration of details in comparing cases, it was vague enough to cause difficulties as both the Allies and Japanese put different interpretations on its meaning. Yet, it is evident in regards to white soldiers,¹⁵ the Japanese were committed to following established international practice as they had in the past. The organizational mechanisms to deal with POWs and CIs were put into place without undue difficulty and with clear regulations, guidelines and bureaucratic structures.¹⁶ On December 23, 1941 the *Furyo Shuyojomei* (Prisoner of War Camp Order) was issued under Imperial Ordinance 1182 which established that POW camps would be under the control of the Army Ministry.¹⁷ This was almost immediately followed by the establishment of the *Furyo Joho Kyoku*, again under the control of the Army Ministry, created under Imperial Ordinance 1246, with the purpose of dispensing information concerning both Japanese and enemy troops that had been captured.¹⁸ In late December 1941 Lt. General Uemura Mikio was appointed its first director. Both these organizations had existed during the Russo-Japanese War and so it posed no problem to re-establish them. The ICRC in Geneva also made contact with its Japan delegation which was led by the aged Swiss medical doctor and long-time Japan resident F. Paravicini.¹⁹

While it is evident that the Japanese set out from the beginning of the war to respect the various provisions relating to POWs and CIs, the question remains why were Allied POWs so badly treated. It is convenient to blame Tojo Hideki, the War Minister and Prime Minister, and Lt. General Uemura Mikio for initiating a stern policy toward POWs

and exhibiting a callousness toward them on the basis of comments made in May and July 1942.²⁰ Moreover, they were not alone. In May 1942 Shinobe Jumpei, a specialist in international law, writing an article in the Foreign Ministry journal, *Gaiko Jiho*,²¹ also took a hard line in regards to POWs. Yet, Kita Yoshito of Nihon University has recently argued that Tojo's statements to Uemura were simply that and had no legal binding. Kita insists that there was no national policy to treat POWs unfairly.²² Indeed, this would seem to be the case. There was a structure and regulations in place to deal with POWs.

It was clearly not an efficient structure. A complicated poly-ministry administrative machine existed which proved unequal to the task of dealing with the hundreds of thousands of Allied nationals. One problem was that POWs, their camps and the POW Information Bureau were under the control of the Army, while the Protecting Powers (initially the Argentine but later the Swiss) as well as the Japan Delegation of the ICRC dealt primarily with the Foreign Ministry. Inter-ministerial coordination was difficult, if not non-existent. The Foreign Ministry had little power to influence the Army over the treatment of POWs. Civilian internees in Japan were under the control of the Welfare Ministry. The significant issue of messages and mail for prisoners and internees involved the Post Office and the Japanese Red Cross. All this was exacerbated by the strains of war.

The hardships endured by Canadians in Japanese prison camps and internment centres after the autumn of 1944 were set against a background of catastrophic blows that a seemingly remorseless enemy let fall upon the Japanese people. Allied airmen incinerated tens of thousands of Japanese civilians during the area bombings of Tokyo, Kawasaki and Yokohama between the beginning of March and the end of May 1945.²³ In comparing the bombing offensive against Japan with that against Germany, Japan suffered approximately 70 percent of the deaths and more than 50 percent of the total casualties during the nine and a half months of the Marianas-based B-29 attacks that Germany sustained in a much longer period of intense aerial warfare.²⁴ After the war, Radhabinod Pal, the Indian justice at the Tokyo war crimes tribunal, implied that "in the war in Asia the only act comparable to Nazi atrocities was perpetrated by the leaders of the United States."²⁵ The argument that the bombing offensive against Japan which culminated in the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki contravened the rules of war is certainly not unknown.²⁶

At the same time as Japan came under intense air attack, the country was already suffering from food shortages owing to its dependency on substantial imports²⁷ and the destruction of its merchant fleet and the mining of its ports. Adverse weather conditions in metropolitan Japan resulted in poor harvests in all wartime years save 1942, irrespective of shortages of fertilizer, farm tools and skilled labour that led to declining acreages under cultivation. The failure of the Japanese government control measures over the distribution of supplementary foods aided the growth of a black market. The collapse of the railway and transportation systems as a result of the air campaign, coupled with the factors mentioned above, all contributed to a desperate food situation by the summer of 1945. By the end of the war, it was estimated that up to twenty-five percent of the urban population were suffering from "subclinical nutritional deficiencies great enough to affect health and efficiency."²⁸ Food shortages were an important factor in determining Japan's decision to surrender even before the dropping of the atomic bombs and the entry of the Soviet Union into the war.²⁹ Canadian POWs had no alternative but to share in the

general suffering and desperate food shortages that the Japanese population as a whole endured.

In the economy of suffering, however, the balance of pain lies with the Japanese. The plight of Canadian and Allied POWs pales in light of the tragic end of so many of the approximately 6.5 million Japanese, including 3.5 million soldiers and sailors, left stranded in metropolitan Asia, Siberia and the Pacific islands when hostilities ended. The fate of these Japanese has been described by an American Japan specialist as “a neglected chapter among the countless epic tragedies of World War II.”³⁰ The issue of Canadian POWs becomes lost and forgotten submerged under the sheer enormity of the losses and suffering of the Japanese people inflicted on them by Allied military action. Just as Canadian POWs see themselves as victimized by the Japanese, the Japanese also see themselves as victims in this war. Therein lies the controversy and debate about POWs which increasingly seems to divide opinion among historians.

John Dower, an American Japanologist, has noted that the number of Japanese prisoners who died in Soviet hands was much larger than the number of American and British Commonwealth servicemen who died as prisoners of the Japanese.³¹ Moreover, he also pointed out that over nine hundred Japanese were executed by the Allies (excluding the Soviet Union and Chinese Communists) for war crimes, many of them for crimes against prisoners.³² Victor’s justice. An earlier argument was that an equal number of Japanese servicemen died in British hands after the end of the war as American and British Commonwealth servicemen in Japanese hands during the war.³³ The late Louis Allen who wrote so perceptively on the Burma campaign, worried that the deaths of Japanese servicemen held in Allied prisoner of war camps in south east Asia after the end of hostilities were being used to condone Japanese actions against Allied prisoners of war during the war itself. The debate over the fairness of the military tribunals held by the British in Malaya and elsewhere after the war ended, and accusations of mistreatment of Japanese military prisoners in British camps have brought forward defenders of British actions such as John Pritchard who has argued that undue haste and political expediency meant that the sentences handed out to Japanese war criminals failed in their purpose to enforce international respect for the laws and usages of war and did injustice to the victims of war crimes.³⁴

From a Japanese perspective, the issue of POWs means the Allied treatment of Japanese POWs and captured support personnel. In attempting to analyse the different cultural images of the treatment of Allied and Japanese prisoners of war in Burma and Thailand before and after the war, Hirakawa Sukehiro has recently argued that Japanese atrocities differed qualitatively from the organized atrocities of the German Nazis but Westerners because they have little knowledge of Japan interpret Japanese actions by analogy to Nazi Germany. Hirakawa notes that “superficial analogies and easy generalizations tend to give misleading ideas.”³⁵ The “riddle wrapped in an enigma” defence is not altogether unknown when it comes to explaining Japanese atrocities. Whether or not they were qualitatively different from those of the Nazis, war crimes on a massive scale were still committed by Japanese against Allied POWs, innocent Chinese civilians and the indigenous peoples living in Japanese occupied areas. It can be assumed that the activities of American POW groups as well as other organizations who are wanting financial compensation from the Japanese government and industry for their wartime misdeeds have sparked Hirakawa and other Japanese academics to look at Japanese POWs.

The growing interest in this topic as seen in the recent publication of a two volume study by Japan's preeminent military historian.³⁶ A story filled with episodes of high drama and suicidal bravura, such as the violent quelling of the mutiny at Featherston in New Zealand in 1943 or the bloody escape attempt at Cowra in Australia in 1944, as well as great suffering. It is these episodes that loom so large in the records of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Hata Ikuhiko does not restrict himself to bloody incidents in POW camps for incidents are also included that involved non-combatant groups such as the Japanese Red Cross nursing unit, Wakayama no. 490, which was decimated in Burma in the fighting in the last days of the war and through suicide in prison camp afterward.³⁷ The killing of nurses and wounded by Japanese troops (so much a part of the tragedy of the battle of Hong Kong as it was later at Singapore) was not restricted to the Japanese Army. This is a point that was surely not lost on Hata. In a tit for tat competition, the Japanese can bring up cases to match Allied ones. It was the desire to help American prisoners of war in Japanese hands that was instrumental, as Roger Dingman has pointed out in his superlative study of the sinking of the *Awa maru*, in setting into motion the chain of events leading to a maritime tragedy the memory of which continued to plague Japanese-American relations for many years after the war ended.³⁸

The Canadian government has long since forgiven the Japanese for any wrongdoing against Canadian POWs and CIs. A political decision was made that it was more important to win the goodwill of the Japanese government than to stand on principle and demand justice for Canadian servicemen and civilians. As was the case here with Japan, time and diplomacy will continue to allow the war criminal in Rwanda, Somalia and Yugoslavia to go scot-free unless brought to justice very swiftly. In meting out justice quickly, the danger exists that this can be turned into loser's victimization. For the Japanese government the POW issue was settled by the Treaty of San Francisco, it is required legally to do nothing more. This is not an important issue for Japan, simply a potentially embarrassing one when Japanese dignitaries make overseas visits. Yet goodwill between peoples is not won by standing on legal niceties.

Evidence indicates that there was no deliberate policy on the part of the Japanese government to mistreat POWs and civilian internees. However, the administrative provisions that it made for the handling of POWs were completely inadequate. Callousness, contempt, racial hatred and a false military credo further contributed to allowing camp guards and commandants to abuse POWs. The chaos of war only exacerbated the suffering. It was Japan (not Canada or Britain) that embarked on a war of aggression which they bloodily pursued until the catastrophe of the atomic bombings. Serendipity allowed Japan to have early success in this war that became grossly one-sided when Japanese luck ran out. The Japanese alone were responsible for bringing upon themselves the fiery wrath of their enemies. The Japanese people also bear responsibility (together with their political and military leaders) for the mistreatment of Canadian POWs.

As time since the end of the Second World War lengthens, this is a real danger that the Canadian and Allied POW experience will be forgotten in the reappraisal of Japanese history as the appalling details of the extent of the hardships endured by the Japanese people during and in the aftermath of the war become better known. To Field Marshal Slim who commanded the forces that destroyed the Japanese army in Burma, Japanese conduct toward POWs would always remain a foul blot on their record, and so it should. The endurance, resolve, and determination of those Canadian servicemen who heroically

tried to survive through the horror of being a POW reveals the flint at the core of the Canadian spirit. This is the stuff on which a strong nation is built. It is a weak country that allows the sacrifice of its young soldiers who died in captivity in far-off Japan to be forgotten. Which one is Canada?

NOTES

- ¹ The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Japanese Foreign Ministry in providing a grant to support research in Japan on this topic.
- ² See Maureen P. Brioux, "Lasting Honour or Lasting Horror: The Hong Kong Veterans Compensation," unpublished 39 page typescript for War Studies Program, Royal Military College of Canada. In possession of the author.
- ³ News Release: "Canada to pay Hong Kong Veterans nearly \$24,000," dated 11 December, 1998; "Japanese Embassy's comment on the Canadian Government's decision on the Hong Kong Veterans," dated 10 December 1998.
- ⁴ W. Wynne Mason, *Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939–1945: Prisoners of War* (Wellington, New Zealand: War History Branch Department of Internal Affairs, 1954), p. 350. Kent Fedorowich gives a higher estimate of 398,000 held in Japanese hands in April 1942. See Kent Fedorowich, "Doomed from the Outset: Internment and Civilian Exchange in the Far East: The British Failure over Hong Kong, 1941–1945," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 25, no. 1, January 1997, pp. 113–140, p. 118.
- ⁵ Canadians troops were part of the *Igirisu gun* (English Army) that surrendered at Hong Kong on Black Christmas 1941 after eighteen days of battle during which 1555 of their number were killed and 9495 remained to become prisoners. Japanese losses were measurably lighter being 683 killed and 1413 wounded. Important to note also was that some 4000 Chinese civilians were killed. See Kobayashi Hideo and Shibata Yoshimasa, *Nihon gunseika no Honkon* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyoronsha, 1996), p. 28–29. The Imperial Japanese Army designated the 23rd Army of the South China Area Army for the conquest of Hong Kong. It consisted of the 38th division plus one infantry regiment (a total of 23,000 infantry) and two heavy artillery regiments including eight 24cm howitzers). See Tohmatsu Haruo "Japan's Southward Advance and the Defence of the British Eastern Empire Summer 1940–Autumn 1941," unpublished 22 page typescript given as a paper at UK–Japan History Project Sheffield Workshop August 1998 Military Section, p. 13. Canadian troops (some 1,972 of the total strength of the garrison of 14,554 before the fighting began) lost 290 killed and 493 wounded during the battle. A further 267 died in captivity. See Takahashi Hisashi, "The Canadian Expeditionary Force and the Fall of Hong Kong," in John Schultz and Kimitada Miwa, eds., *Canada and Japan in the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 102–109, p. 109.
- ⁶ See Sibylla Jane Flower, "British Policy Makers and The Prisoner of War Issue: Perceptions and Responses," 21 page typescript given as a paper at the Anglo-Japanese Relations Project Conference, Hakone, Japan, September 1999 in the possession of the author, p. 3. Kent Fedorowich points out that some 2,000 people were freed from Japanese captivity in Hong Kong by the British Army Aid Group (BAAG), see Kent Fedorowich, "Doomed from the Outset," p. 117.
- ⁷ GS A 700-9-11-2-5, vol. 1. The list of POWs is dated 19 December 1943. The Japanese list takes into account most of those actually killed in the battle of Hong Kong but does not provide information about those already shipped by December 1943 to Japan or those who had earlier died in the POW camps in Hong Kong. See for comparison, *Royal Rifles of Canada in Hong Kong* (Sherbrooke: Hong Kong Veterans' Association of Canada, Quebec-Maritimes Branch, 1980), pp. 150–157. As they were held in camps from Manchukuo to the Philippines and Indo-

china, it was much more difficult to obtain the names of Canadian civilian internees. It was only in May 1945, for instance, that the names of 56 French Canadian Roman Catholic priests and two American ones held in Ssuningkai, the railway junction on the South Manchurian Railway in central Manchukuo, came to be known. See GS A 700 9-11-1-7 vol. 2, Swiss Legation to Foreign Ministry, 28 May 1945. In Indo-China, some 58 French-Canadian missionaries were confined in the major centers of their respective orders - Redemptorist and Carmelite- and were able to continue the exercise of religious life. See GS A 700 9-11-1-4 vol. 2, Intendant of Police to Consul General Rokuro Suzuki, Saigon, 19 January 1943.

⁸ See, for instance, the autobiographical accounts by William Allister, *Where Life and Death Hold Hands* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing, 1989); Kenneth Cambon, *Guest of Hirohito* (Vancouver: PW Press, 1990). The examples used by Daniel G. Dancock, *In Enemy Hands: Canadian Prisoners of War 1939-45* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1983) are almost exclusively accounts of other ranks. In his book Dave McIntosh does make use of the experiences of Leonard Birchall, an RCAF officer who is not shy about publicizing his courageous exploits as a POW, see Dave McIntosh, *Hell on Earth: Aging Faster, Dying Sooner Canadian Prisoners of the Japanese During World War II* (Whitby, Ontario: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1997).

⁹ The importance of officers in POW survival on the Burma-Thailand Railway is underlined in Sibylla Jane Flower, "Captors and Captives on the Burma-Thailand Railway," in Bob Moore and Kent Fedorowich, eds., *Prisoners of War and their Captors in World War II*, pp. 227-258. Officers received regular pay at Imperial Japanese Army rates, and this pay became very important in the financing of hospitals and in the buying of extra food. Canadian other ranks in work camps in Japan were generally without their officers. Other ranks were paid only if they worked, it was a mere pittance. Their daily pay in canteen money was insufficient to buy extra food. While there was a sliding scale for the other ranks, privates received approximately 20 sen. To put this in perspective, 1 *kan* [approximately a bushel] of potatoes cost ¥8 on the black market in Japan in October 1944. In May 1945, the British government was pressing the Swiss Legation to ensure that all British POWs in Japan were allocated ¥20 per person per month. See G[ai]ko S[hiryokan], [Ministry of Foreign Affairs Diplomatic Records Office], Azabudai, Tokyo, A700-9-11-4, Gorgé to Japanese Foreign Ministry, 23 Mai 1945. Without the means to supplement their diets in the last months of the war through the black market, Canadian soldiers in Japan (like many of their Japanese civilians counterparts) starved.

¹⁰ See A. Hamish Ion, *The Cross in the Dark Valley: The Canadian Protestant Missionary Movement in the Japanese Empire, 1931-1945* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1999), especially, pp. 312-315.

¹¹ It was bad luck at not being close to Tokyo or other ports from which the exchange ship sailed that caused the French Canadian missionaries to be left behind. There does not seem to have been any particular method by which those who were repatriated were chosen. See Patricia E. Roy, J. L. Granatstein, Masako Iino, Hiroko Takamura, *Mutual Hostages*, p. 207. Indeed, some had been brought to Japan from elsewhere in order to be repatriated like the 12 Canadian Fathers from Manchukuo whom H. C. Angst, a member of the Japan Delegation of the [International] C[ommittee] [of] [the] R[ed] C[ross], saw at the end of January 1944 during a visit to Kanagawa Prefectural Civil Internment Camp no. 1. See GS, A700-9-11-1-9 vol. 1, report of H. C. Angst on Kanagawa Prefectural Civil Internment Camp no. 1, visited 31 January 1944 in I. Maybarray to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 10 August 1944.

¹² See Peggy Abkhazi, *'Enemy Subject': Life in a Japanese Internment Camp 1943-1945*, edited by S. W. Jackman (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1995), p. 45.

¹³ Edward J. Drea, *In the Service of the Emperor: Essays on the Imperial Japanese Army* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998). See chapter six, p. 75 passim.

¹⁴ GS B10-11-0-7-1 vol. 5, Foreign Minister to Swiss Minister, 29 January 1942. For the British, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand government's notification that they were going to abide by the terms of the Geneva Convention. See GS A700 9-11-1vol. 2, Villa (Argentine Ambassador) to Togo Shigenori, 3 January 1942, 5 January 1942. The British government

indicated that it would also apply article 11 and 12 of the Convention that related to account being taken of the national and racial customs of prisoners in regards to food and clothing. [Article 11 importantly included the statement “the food ration of prisoners of war shall be equivalent in quantity and quality to that of the depôt troops.” See GS B 10-11-0-7-1 vol. 4.] In his reply of 29 January 1942, the Foreign Minister was prepared to consider the provision of food and clothing on the basis of reciprocity. The Allied powers also wanted to determine whether or not the Japanese government was willing to apply to CIs the same guarantees that were being applied to POWs. See A 700 9-11-1 vol. 1 Gorgé to Togo Shigenori, 27 December 1941; Intercroixrouge Telegram 2643 23 January 1942. Detailed regulations governing POW camps’ administrative practices, treatment of POWs, pay allowances, food rations, as well as Geneva Convention articles, and correspondence between the Swiss and Argentine Ministers (as representatives of the Protecting Powers) with the Japanese Foreign Ministry concerning reciprocal agreements relating to the treatment of prisoners under the Geneva Convention can be found in Furoyo Joho Kyoku, *Furoyo ni kansuru shoho kirui shu* (Tokyo: Furoyo Joho Kyoku, 1946 edition). These regulations were first published in 1943. Useful selections of documents taken largely from the Gaiko Shiryokan files and also proceedings of the war crimes trials in the Philippines, China and Japan can be found in Chaen Yoshio, ed., *Dainihon teikoku naichi horyon shuyujo* (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 1986); Chaen Yoshio, ed., *Dai toa senka gaichi horyo shuyujo* (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 1987); Utsumi Aiko, ed., *Furoyo toriatsukai ni kansuru shogaikoku kara no kogi shu* (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 1989).

¹⁵ A different set of criteria was employed in regards to Chinese POWs. See Hata Ikuhiko, *Nihonjin Horyo: Shiromuræ kara Shiberi Yokuryo* (Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 1998), 2 vols, vol. 1, pp. 100–103.

¹⁶ These are set out in Furoyo Joho Kyoku, *Furoyo ni kansuru shoho kirui shu*.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁸ See Hata Ikuhiko, ed., *Nihon Riku Kai Gun Sogo Jiten* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1996 edition), p. 727.

¹⁹ Shimazu Tadatsugu, *Jindo no hata no motoni* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1965), p. 78. The Japan delegation of the ICRC was made up of three Swiss citizens (and was not part of the Japanese Red Cross). The Japanese Red Cross served the needs of the Japanese troops, Japanese POWs, and undertook Red Cross message and tracing services as well as Red Cross relief packages.

²⁰ Hata Ikuhiko, *Nihonjin Horyo*, vol. 1, p. 138. In early 1942, Uemura argued that it had been important for Japan to maintain the goodwill of *bunmei koku* (civilized nations) during the Russo-Japanese War, but it was not so important to do so in the current war. Thus, it was not necessary to treat POWs as well as had been done in 1904–05. Tojo’s hard attitude toward POWs was revealed in a 22 July 1942 conversation with Uemura during which Tojo, having already rejected the British proposal to send from Australia medical and relief supplies to POWs in Hong Kong, turned down an American offer to send relief supplies to POWs in Bataan as well as Red Cross requests to send their delegates to areas that the Japanese had occupied in the south.

²¹ GS A 700-9-11-1, Shinobe Jumpei, “Dai Toa Senso to furoyo toriatsukai mondai,” *Gaiko Jiho* 15 May 1942, pp. 1–11, especially p. 3 where he states that POWs were not guests and should not be treated as such.

²² See Kita Yoshito, “Nihon gun no kokusai honinshiki to horyo no toriatsukai,” 10 page typescript given as a paper at the Anglo-Japanese Relations Project Conference, Hakone, Japan, September 1999 in the possession of the author.

²³ See the U[nited] S[tates] S[trategic] B[ombing] S[urvey], *Effects of Air Attack on Urban Complex Tokyo–Kawasaki–Yokohama* (Washington: Urban Areas Division, 1947), p. 1.

²⁴ USSBS, *The Japanese Wartime Standard of Living and Utilization of Manpower* (Washington: Manpower, Food and Civilian Supplies Division, 1947), p. 83.

²⁵ John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), pp. 473–474.

- ²⁶ The POW point of view was different. The British civil servant John Fletcher-Cooke, who was a prisoner in Kyushu, believed that the order had gone out to kill all prisoners at the Miyata camp where he was held were to be killed if the Allies made a landing in Kyushu. The dramatic end of the war meant that for POWs the real threat of having endured so much only to be executed at the last moment did not occur. See John Fletcher-Cooke, *The Emperor's Guest 1942-1945* (London: Hutchinson, 1971), pp. 263-264.
- ²⁷ This was estimated at 20 percent of her food on a calorific basis in 1941. USSBS, *The Japanese Wartime Standard of Living*, p. 2.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 102.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 109.
- ³⁰ John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, p. 50.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 472-473.
- ³² *Ibid.*, pp. 444-449.
- ³³ This accusation was made by Shinozaki Mamoru in the magazine *Shokun* in 1974. See Louis Allen, "Not so Piacular: A Footnote on Ienaga on Malaya," in John W. Chapman, ed., *Proceeding of the British Association for Japanese Studies*, Part One: History and International Relations, vol. 5, 1980, pp. 113-126, pp. 115-117.
- ³⁴ R. John Pritchard, "Changes in Perception: British Civil and Military Perspectives on War Crimes Trials and their Legal Context (1942-1956)," unpublished 47 page typescript given as a paper at the Anglo-Japanese Relations Project Conference, Hakone, Japan, September 1999 in the possession of the author," p. 32.
- ³⁵ Hirakawa Sukehiro, "Prisoners in Burma: The Anglo-Japanese Hostilities from a Cultural Perspective," *Japan Echo* (December 1999), pp. 43-50, p. 46.
- ³⁶ See Hata Ikuhiko, *Nihonjin Horyo: Shiromurae kara Shiberi Yokuryu* (Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 1998), 2 vols..
- ³⁷ Hata Ikuhiko, *Nihonjin Horyo*, vol. 2, pp. 359-380. See also *Wakayama Sekijuji Byoin Hachijunen Shi*, pp. 173-180 in the library of Japan Red Cross Society Headquarters, Shiba, Tokyo.
- ³⁸ See Roger Dingman, *Ghost of War: The Sinking of the Awa maru and Japanese-American Relations, 1945-1995* (Anapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1997), p. 29.

**JUSTIFYING ATROCITY:
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL MAURICE ANDREW AND THE
DEFENCE OF *BRIGADEFÜHRER* KURT MEYER**

Whitney Lackenbauer and Chris Madsen

The murder of Canadian prisoners of war in Normandy and the subsequent prosecution of SS General Kurt Meyer by a Canadian military court have generated considerable popular and academic interest. Although the facts are now fairly well-known, historical interpretations of the trial fall into three distinct waves. The first wave, that of explanation and personal reflection by the participants involved, took sides on the assumed guilt or innocence of Meyer and perpetuated the original controversies over his fate and eventual release. Memoirs and autobiographies presented one side to the story, sought to justify individual actions, and counterbalanced or dismissed conflicting perspectives. The resulting debate, as it emerged during and after the trial, became entrenched to the extent that an objective interpretation of events was not possible. The second wave, which could be called the ‘relativist’ or ‘revisionist’ school, was based upon the premise that both the Germans and Canadians condoned similar types of conduct on the battlefield and called into question the sense of fairness and justice behind the trial. Sensationalist accounts applied the sentiment that war was iniquitous and then juxtaposed winners and losers. The emerging third wave is generally less judgmental and places more emphasis on the perpetrators, the victims, and the legal process. Recent scholarship, following upon renewed international efforts to prosecute war crimes in the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, instead painstakingly dismantles any reasonable claim that the Allies and Germans were equally immoral and unlawful on the battlefields of Normandy on the basis of existing evidence. If Canadian soldiers committed individual acts of indiscretion, which they likely did, these were in no way comparable to the widespread and systematic atrocities by the 12th SS Panzer Division. Different perspectives and methodological approaches make the trial of Kurt Meyer a genuine debate in Canadian military history.¹

Even though the proliferation of research provides useful assessments on a controversial topic, the focus remains predominantly on Kurt Meyer’s prosecution. Historians who have examined the trial’s documentary record remain preoccupied by whether or not Macdonald made his case, not the tactics employed by the defence to raise reasonable doubt about the prosecution’s evidence and to justify Meyer’s actions. The defence of Kurt Meyer and the pivotal role of Lieutenant-Colonel Maurice Andrew, the small-town lawyer and militia officer from Stratford, Ontario appointed as his defence counsel have largely been ignored. There is no doubt that German troops committed atrocities against Canadian prisoners of war in Normandy. More than 150 Canadian soldiers were killed after capture, slaughtered during marches back to German rear-lines, and machine-gunned down in fields; eighteen of these men were executed after interrogation at Meyer’s headquarters at the Abbaye Ardenne. The trial and the defence were about the extent of Meyer’s personal responsibility and complicity as a commander

on the spot for these offences. Andrew faced the awkward task of justifying the actions of an enemy officer who most likely played some direct or indirect part in war crimes and whom many Canadians associated with the perfidy and ruthlessness of the Nazi cause.

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The appointment of defence counsel to represent Kurt Meyer was almost an afterthought in the prosecution's efforts to assemble an overwhelming legal case. After being captured by Belgian partisans in September 1944, Meyer resided anonymously among SS and Wehrmacht prisoners in an American collection camp until his true identity was discovered, whereupon he was transferred to London for interrogation. A SHAEF court of inquiry linked Meyer and other officers from the 12th SS Panzer Division with the murder of Canadian prisoners after capture in Normandy.² Lieutenant-Colonel Bruce Macdonald, a Canadian officer involved in these investigations, questioned Meyer over three days in March 1945 and became convinced of his guilt. When SHAEF handed over responsibility for the 12th SS murders to the Canadian Military Headquarters in London, Macdonald became head of the No. 1 Canadian War Crimes Investigation Unit, a formation tasked to investigate and collect evidence on war crimes committed against Canadian service personnel.³ More interviews and interrogations disclosed sufficient evidence of Meyer's personal complicity, and a *prima facie* case was filed with the United Nations War Crimes Commission. Although the Canadians planned to start prosecution sometime in Fall 1945, Macdonald only told Meyer about the intention to bring him to trial during an interrogation on 15 October.⁴

While Meyer expressed his preference for an English or German civilian lawyer, a Canadian officer with legal ability was detailed to act as defending counsel because German civilian lawyers approached in the local area refused to take the case on such short notice and Meyer had no money. Lieutenant-Colonel Maurice Andrew appeared on a submitted list of four names and confirmed that he was available and willing to defend Meyer during several telephone conversations between London and Germany.⁵ On 31 October, Meyer was flown by military aircraft to Aurich, where he was formally arraigned on five charges. Canadian military authorities appointed Andrew as Meyer's defence counsel after another detailed Canadian officer, Colonel Peter Wright, openly expressed his revulsion against the SS General to the press.

Maurice Andrew possessed a good working knowledge of the law from a decade in law and local politics, an appreciation of military matters from years in the militia, and a distinguished fighting record from the war. Born on 28 December 1904, he grew up in Kitchener and St. Thomas where his father was an archdeacon of the Anglican Church. Andrew graduated from the University of Toronto with a BA in 1929 and from Osgoode Law School in 1931.⁶ After being called to the bar, Andrew moved to Stratford, where he bought a half interest in a law firm that left him considerable time for extra-curricular activities. He was active in the Perth Regiment, the Stratford-located militia unit and became a company commander. The officers' mess in the armoury served as a social club for prominent men in Stratford's civic and business community during the Depression years. Andrew was president of the Perth County Progressive Conservative Association and sat on the city board of park management. He qualified for the rank of Captain through a Provisional School of Infantry in 1934 and was promoted to Major on 4 September 1939.⁷ Andrew helped recruit the battalion for active service and subsequently

commanded 'C' company during training in Canada and Great Britain. As second-in-command and later commanding officer, Andrew remained with the Perth Regiment from its first exposure to combat in Italy in mid-January 1944 to reduction of the Delfzijl pocket in north Holland at war's end.⁸ The modest, small town lawyer came to understand the war trade intimately and fashioned the Perth Regiment into a powerful offensive instrument. Andrew accepted the assignment to defend Meyer on the condition that he would go home with his regiment. His emotional attachment remained with the battle-hardened veterans that he had led through the war instead of the SS General he was now called upon to defend. For Andrew, Meyer was simply another client in a court of law who deserved professional legal representation and a fair trial.

Wartime experiences and loyalty to fallen comrades also remained Meyer's emotional focal-point, like most other quintessential front-line Waffen-SS officers. Meyer was born on 23 December 1910 in the city of Brunswick into a family of modest means. His father was a non-commissioned officer in the regular army who survived the slaughter of First World War trenches. Meyer wanted to join the armed forces from an early age, but the limited size of the *Reichswehr* during the Weimar Republic denied him an opportunity. Instead, he gravitated toward nationalistic parties that promised action and discipline, chiefly the Nazi Party. After several tries, Meyer was accepted into the state police in October 1929 and underwent basic and platoon-level training. Serious injuries sustained during a mock house-to-house fighting exercise almost ended his career, but after Hitler's rise to power, the SS subsumed the German police apparatus and established its own fighting force. Meyer joined the *Leibstandarte*, Hitler's personal SS bodyguard, in 1933 and went through a series of combined arms courses. He fought in Germany's blitzkrieg campaigns against Poland, the Low Countries, and France, rising to commanding officer of an SS reconnaissance battalion in October 1940. As commander of a task group, Meyer spearheaded Germany's invasion through the Balkans into Greece and later during the drive into the Soviet Union.

Desperate situations became Meyer's forte. After being encircled by Soviet forces on no less than three separate occasions, Meyer fought his way out with handfuls of survivors. The intensity and brutality of combat on the Eastern Front needs no introduction, and Meyer and his SS troops were associated with notorious events like the Kharkov massacre. Such behaviour was not censored but instead rewarded with decorations and accolades from the *Führer*. In October 1943, Meyer took command of the 25th SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment, a unit belonging to the newly-formed 12th SS Panzer Division.⁹ Through a crash programme of training and ideological indoctrination, Meyer tried to turn his mostly 16-18 year old Hitler Youth volunteers into an effective fighting force. They saw their first action during the counterattacks against the 3rd Canadian Division in the days after the Allied invasion at Normandy. Although Meyer assumed command of the overall division on 13 June, the position proved little more than nominal because he usually preferred to lead from the front.¹⁰ The 12th SS Panzer Division gradually disappeared as a fighting formation during operations against the Canadians. Meyer was completely reckless with his own life and likely thought that he would not survive the war. Much like the teenage boys he commanded in battle, Meyer possessed no fear of consequences and chased a fanatical hero's death in the name of Nazism. The irony was that Hitler was now dead and Meyer faced accountability for his actions and command decisions before a Canadian military court.

The expected standard of conduct, to which Meyer was held to account, was found in the established laws and customs governing land warfare. These rules had evolved over the centuries in response to a desire for predictability between armies and how they treated each other during and after fighting.¹¹ Attempts to codify various informal practices into formal written treaties resulted in the fourth Hague Convention of 1907 and the Geneva Convention of 1929. Both documents, ratified by Germany, Great Britain, and Commonwealth countries such as Canada, set out provisions for the protection and treatment of prisoners of war. Although the articles were extensive, the salient point was that prisoners were not to be killed, maltreated, or abused after capture by enemy forces. Chapter XIV in the Manual of Military Law 1929, issued by the War Office and used by the Canadian Army, gave guidance on the laws and customs of war, and was updated and revised by Amendment No. 12 in 1936 which incorporated the changes brought about by Great Britain's, and by extension Canada's, ratification of the Geneva Convention.¹² Sections 441 through 451 legally defined war crimes, described the various types of misconduct, allowed for trial by military court, and prescribed appropriate sanctions and punishments. Comparable wording was found in German military law manuals. At least officially, both Canada and Germany subscribed to the accepted laws and customs of war.

The total and ideological nature of the struggle, particularly in the East, severely tested observance of the existing laws of war. During interrogation, Meyer was reticent about questions on his treatment of prisoners of war in the Soviet Union and suggestions of atrocities.¹³ SS officers like Meyer commonly placed military necessity and racial preconceptions before legal niceties and respect for international law. Meyer firmly denied any deviation from the dictates of the Geneva Convention, but whether learned behaviour from the Eastern Front was carried over against the Canadians, in the heat of battle and under the extreme stress of combat, remained an unresolved question. Had Meyer fought by the same rules in Normandy as the Canadian enemy he faced? For most Canadians, Meyer's trial represented reassertion of the rule of law, on which the laws and customs of war were based, in the wake of extreme Nazi ruthlessness and tyranny.

To deal with the exceptional circumstances, the Canadian government drafted and enacted new legislation, in the form of War Crimes Regulations passed by Order-in-Council on 30 August 1945. The Canadians turned down an offer by the Attorney General in London to try Meyer and other 12th SS suspects under a British Royal Warrant dated 14 June 1945 and instead decided on a Canadian equivalent.¹⁴ Canada's War Crimes Regulations emulated Great Britain's Royal Warrant, but went farther in certain key areas. Although courts for war crimes followed the same form and procedures of the field general court martial as set out in the Army Act, special allowances were made for the admissibility and consideration of evidence, particularly in respect to witnesses who were dead, repatriated, or otherwise unavailable. Most significantly, the regulations treated evidence of war crimes committed by subordinates in a formation or unit, either under the leadership or in the presence of a single commander, as undeniable evidence of that commander's responsibility. The two articles, drafted expressly with the transgressions of the 12th SS in mind after the decision to try Meyer had already been made, were unprecedented at the time. More worrisome, the would-be prosecutor Macdonald directly influenced the tone and content of the regulations, particularly in the third and final draft. Although interpretation was left to the court, the War Crimes Regulations clearly favoured the prosecution and complicated the defence. The onus,

Andrew would later claim, fell on the accused to prove innocence instead of the prosecution to show guilt.

The active involvement of Brigadier Reginald Orde, Canada's Judge Advocate General, dashed any potential challenges to the War Crimes Regulations and the legal process. Adopting a hands-on approach to Meyer's trial, Orde met personally with Macdonald to discuss the case before reviewing the abstract of evidence and giving his consent to proceed with prosecution, as stipulated under the regulations.¹⁵ For reasons of speed and practicality, such authority had been given to Canada's highest ranking military lawyer rather than suitable civil legal authorities with less direct stake. When Andrew asked for further clarification on the jurisdiction of the War Crimes Regulations, lawyers in the Department of Justice and on Orde's own staff raised concerns about discrepancies with the War Measures Act, from which the regulations supposedly drew their force, and maximum allowable punishments. A volume of correspondence sent to Aurich was withheld from Andrew, at Orde's direction, at the last moment to avoid "the appearance of a conspiracy at high places to ensure Meyer's conviction, despite the admitted difference of opinion as to the validity of the Regulations."¹⁶ Macdonald worried that Andrew might use the documentation to question the trial's constitutionality, argue for more time, or embarrass the prosecution and the government. Even though the trial date was pushed back to 10 December, Andrew was left with little over a month to read into the nuances of the new regulations and prepare the defence's arguments.¹⁷ While Orde's careful handling kept the law on track, substantial political and public pressure propelled Kurt Meyer's trial forward.

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Canada's decision to prosecute war criminals, in particular Meyer, was political. A Canadian War Crimes Advisory Committee was established in Ottawa in 1943, but showed little interest in autonomous action since its mandate was limited to cases against Canadian servicemen and Canada's interests appeared only peripheral. Public and political interest was, however, perked as rumours of war crimes against Canadians began to swirl soon after D-Day. Mounting evidence of systematic atrocities against Canadian soldiers brought a promise from Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King in March 1944 to punish war criminals down from the level of mere platitudes into direct action at the governmental level.

On the other side of the Atlantic, lack of Allied cooperation in war crimes prosecutions, coupled with growing evidence against Meyer collected by Macdonald, convinced Canada's High Commissioner in London, Vincent Massey, that Canada would have to pursue the trial by itself. Massey requested and received delegated authority from the Prime Minister for submission of war crimes cases.¹⁸ Always a cautious pragmatist, Mackenzie King found that the case against Meyer solicited almost universal support. He had brought the issue of war crimes to the House of Commons floor in 1944 and found that his call for Canadian action resonated across partisan lines. The news that Canadians had been "wilfully murdered by the enemy's forces" evoked a shared sense of 'cold hatred' toward the German monsters of Normandy. King briefly described the effort to prosecute war criminals and assured elected members that "the accused will have full opportunity for defence, and the arrangements for constitution of the court and execution of sentence will follow recognized military practice."¹⁹ Meyer's trial at Aurich was a

reflection of Canada's new found international status, and on a more personal level a vindication of Bruce Macdonald's own tarnished performance on the battlefield.

Press coverage quickly turned Kurt Meyer into Canada's star war criminal in a showcase trial. Accounts of German atrocities against Canadian troops in Normandy inspired first disbelief and then outrage. The Canadian public wanted blood, and Meyer became the object of scorn and hatred. The arrogant and unrepentant SS General seemingly epitomised everything that Canadians had fought against during six long years of war. He was the Nazi superman fallen, the remnant of a defeated nation and a bankrupt ideology. Liberation of the main Nazi concentration camps at Belsen and Auschwitz gave a new connotation to the SS. Although the Waffen SS was a different branch, some readers could not draw the distinction and continued to believe that Meyer was somehow responsible. Pictures of Meyer on the front page of national newspapers alongside the likes of Wilhelm Grabner, a former Auschwitz commandant identified as the "Killer of 1,000,000 persons," hardly furnished greater clarity.²⁰ Media sentiments reflected massive public pressure to exact their pound of flesh from the Germans for the hellish experience of the war. Although journalists upheld the veneer of due process, most press coverage before and during the trial implied that Meyer was guilty.

Condemnation was strongest and most emotional in newspapers in the cities and towns where Meyer's alleged victims originated. The *Winnipeg Free Press* interspersed trial coverage with articles on Manitobans murdered at the hands of the 12th SS, like Lance Corporal Austin Fuller, or recollections by men like trooper L.W. Soroke of Grandview, Manitoba, a witness to the Authie killings.²¹ These stories personalized the atrocities, and at the same time stacked the deck against the defence's case. Readers were told that "the whole sordid creed of Nazi ruthlessness, militarism and blind, unthinking obedience to orders were laid bare to the gaze of the Canadian military court ... by brigade fuhrer Kurt Meyer" and the "impassioned recital of methods he used to infuse enthusiasm and lust to kill in his S.S. storm troopers."²² Journalists left little speculation as to Meyer's culpability even before the trial was over. An article sympathetic to Andrew's difficult task as defence attorney explained: "As a barrister, Andrew... has to present anything that can be said in favour of [the] accused to court, just like any barrister has to assist the case of a confessed murderer."²³ Meyer's guilt was assumed, and his conviction was framed as a necessary conduit to the just resolution of the damage done to Canadian families. Meyer, as commander of the dubbed 'murder' division and a living embodiment of Nazism, allowed for closure on a scale that the trial of lesser soldiers could never have provided.

The trial officially commenced on 10 December 1945. Meyer, dressed in plain clothes devoid of rank and decorations, stood before five judges: Major-General Harry Foster, Brigadier Ian Johnston, Brigadier H.S. Sparling, Brigadier Henry Bell-Irving, and Brigadier J.A. Roberts. Each of the Canadian officers possessed combat experience as commanding officers during the war. Andrew recognized at least one friendly face on the bench. Johnston, commanding officer of the 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade and a lawyer in civil life from Toronto, had been his superior officer in Italy and Holland. Meyer pleaded "Not Guilty" to each of the five charges read against him. A sense of theatre hung in the air as the trial began and the players assumed their parts.

Macdonald's opening address set the tenor for the proceedings. He tried ambitiously to assign command responsibility onto Meyer in broad terms: "If this trial is to serve its purpose as a deterrent for the future, ... then it must serve as an object lesson of

inexorable justice, effectively to restrain under battle conditions, all, no matter what their rank may be, who, even momentarily, consider the murder of prisoners of war.” During the prosecution’s address, it was as though Macdonald was outlining several trials at once - something pointed out by the defence, the president, and the judge advocate. Macdonald brashly defended the war crimes regulations he had drafted and was stopped on several occasions for his over-zealous interpretation of the law, propensity to cite precedents unacceptable to the court, and his assumptions of what constituted common knowledge. At one point, Foster found it prudent to remind him that the court was “not trying the whole German nation here.” Macdonald staked his reputation and the future of Canada’s entire war crimes prosecution effort on Meyer’s trial.

The prosecution’s case consisted of twenty-six witnesses, some appearing in person from POW camps in the United States and Canada and some appearing only on paper and read into the record. There were some sensational moments early in the trial, such as witness Alfred Helzel’s last minute change of heart, in which he reversed his earlier damning testimony against Meyer. The core of Macdonald’s case, however, rested on young Polish conscript, Jan Jesionek, who testified that he had heard Meyer proclaim: “my regiment takes no prisoners.” During more than three hours of tough cross-examination, “the tug of wills between the witness and Meyer’s counsel, Lt.-Col. M.W. Andrew,” described the *Globe and Mail*, “became so intense that the story Jesionek told this morning was almost forgotten and even Meyer, glaring across the courtroom at the most vehement accuser he has faced since the trial began, seemed a minor figure.”²⁴

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Although Macdonald’s arguments appeared plausible, Meyer’s personal complicity in the crimes with which he was charged was not firmly established. Only circumstantial and hearsay evidence supported the alleged orders not to take prisoners and Meyer’s direct knowledge of the Abbaye Ardenne executions. The lawyer in Andrew distinguished the contradictions in the oral testimony, while the soldier in him doubted the prosecution’s wild representations about commander’s intent in a military setting. Several witnesses and submitted affidavits, Andrew showed, easily misconstrued Meyer’s meaning in pep talks and speeches. The War Crimes Regulations posed an obvious handicap, but Andrew avoided “butting in, jumping up and down all the time...and my idea is to assist in any way possible in the expedition of this case.”²⁵ He treated the court with deference and limited his cross-examination of witnesses to simple clarification of details for the most part. The Pole Jesionek alone warranted extended questioning because this witness was the only one that actually connected Meyer with the killing of Canadians at the Abbaye. Andrew inquired into how the previous written statements had been extracted during captivity, went over Jesionek’s background and forced entry into the Waffen SS, revealed that Jesionek’s understanding of spoken German was limited, and tracked his exact whereabouts over the course of the fateful day. The line of questioning sought to undermine Jesionek’s credibility as an objective and believable witness, thereby sowing enough reasonable doubt among the judges. As Andrew knew, this part of the trial came down to Jesionek’s word against the statements and coming testimony of the accused.

The high-point of the trial was Meyer’s taking of the stand on the afternoon of 18 December as the defence’s first witness. Andrew appreciated that the strategy was a

calculated risk, but a refusal on the part of the accused to testify, on his own behalf, would have left an extremely bad impression. In response to Andrew's careful questions, Meyer described his troops as young but disciplined, explained the intended meaning behind his speeches and training in the handling of prisoners of war under the Geneva Convention, and suggested that Canadians killed German prisoners of war. The battle had been hard and chaotic after the counterattack against the Canadians. Meyer maintained control by riding around on a motorcycle to the various hot spots until it was shot out from underneath him. Coastal defence, flak, and Waffen SS troops became mixed together in the general area. Wearing camouflage pattern smocks, officers were not distinguishable from common soldiers, and Meyer categorically denied Jesionek's description of him wearing a rubber raincoat.²⁶ The SS field police at the headquarters retained responsibility for handling the large numbers of Canadians who had been overrun and surrendered. Meyer claimed that he knew nothing about the murder of Canadian soldiers at the Abbaye or elsewhere until an SS legal officer, now deceased, came to him with a report, whereupon he initiated an investigation and informed divisional headquarters. Andrew tried to keep the focus on the events in France and foiled several attempts by Macdonald during Meyer's cross-examination to bring up the Eastern Front. Foster upheld the defence's objections, while Meyer maintained his composure throughout the prolonged inquisition. When the prosecution asked who should be held responsible for the murders, Meyer replied: "I do not know today who really committed the deed and I have no idea of incriminating my Regiment without exact information."²⁷ Remaining German witnesses for the defence affirmed that no orders to kill prisoners were issued or relayed. Overall, Andrew depicted Meyer as a professional soldier forced to make difficult decisions in the midst of high-intensity combat with some sketchy knowledge that atrocities had likely occurred nearby.

The consideration of findings on 27 December represented a partial rather than a complete acceptance of the defence's arguments. Andrew's closing address opened: "the Prosecution has not proved the accused guilty upon the evidence adduced, beyond reasonable doubt, and it is now my intention to show this to the Court by briefly referring to a few points arising in evidence."²⁸ What Meyer actually told his troops was unclear and may have been interpreted by some to mean kill prisoners, but it was never the intent, Andrew argued. Indeed, he asserted "that once a Battalion Commander let alone a Brigade Commander submits his companies to the attack he has no control over the individual actions of the members of that Company." The presence of other units and troops besides the 12th SS Panzer Division made placing the blame on any one commander difficult, especially if that commander had been preoccupied with fighting the battle at hand. Numerous inconsistencies in Jesionek's testimony further called into question Meyer's supposed participation in the Abbaye murders. Andrew personally believed that Jesionek had heard rumours about the killings from other SS troops and fashioned the story after visiting the Abbaye Ardenne in September 1945 with war crimes investigators. The reasons were to repay the SS for the treatment of his family and to ingratiate himself with the victorious Allies. Andrew asked the judges to draw upon their own war experiences as combat commanders to scrutinize Meyer's actions. No concrete evidence showed who shot the Canadians, although the field police at the headquarters, as Meyer testified, were likely responsible. The judges returned after less than three hours in closed session with a finding of not guilty on the second and third charges. Enough evidence on the other charges indicated that Meyer had incited and counselled his troops to kill prisoners and he was to be held responsible for the murders at his headquarters.

The five Canadian officers found it too unbelievable that Meyer could not have heard the shots at his headquarters and remained ignorant of the murders.

Even though a verdict of guilty on the remaining charges now appeared certain, Andrew still hoped to sway the court with character witnesses the next day. General Heinrich Eberbach, former commander of *Panzer Gruppe West*, spoke highly of Meyer and his bond with the young troops he trained and commanded into battle. Unlike other officers in the 12th SS Panzer Division, Meyer was a good soldier who, Eberbach believed, could not have been so stupid to order the murder of Canadian prisoners of war. A tearful Kate Meyer, Kurt's wife, then described him as a good husband and caring father. In this last hour, Kurt Meyer became reacquainted with his family and was apprehensive about their future welfare. A former subordinate expounded upon Meyer's qualities as an inspirational leader, and finally a Canadian officer, a one-time prisoner of war, described his proper and humane treatment in Meyer's hands. In a final address to the court, Meyer refused to concede that his young troops played any part in the murders, denied giving any order to kill defenceless persons under his care, and stated that he was "treated as a soldier and that the law proceedings were fairly conducted."²⁹ The last statement was likely a desperate declaration, in front of his wife and Andrew, since Meyer later recanted any assertion that the trial against him was fair and impartial.³⁰ The court found Meyer guilty on the first, fourth, and fifth charges and sentenced him to death by shooting. The verdict and sentence were subject to confirmation by the convening authority.

The inconsistencies and lack of hard evidence brought out during the trial eventually saved Meyer's life. Andrew encouraged Meyer to file a petition for clemency and then immediately left to return home with the Perth Regiment. Despite what some writers may claim about Andrew's belief in Meyer's innocence, the defending lawyer openly told reporters during a stop-over in Montreal: "I was just as pleased as any man when the verdict of guilty was returned. I have no more use for this Nazi than I had when the war began."³¹ Notwithstanding, Meyer wrote the confirming authority, Major General Chris Vokes, "man to man and soldier to soldier," restating that "if atrocities did happen, they occurred during the first days of the battle when conditions were abnormal and chaotic and at a time when remnants of Coastal Units and of the 21st Division were still in my sector. That they took place at a time when I was only the Regimental Commander and not in a position of authority to control other troops but my own."³² Vokes, who had already made arrangements for a firing squad to execute Meyer, denied the petition, but after reviewing the proceedings and written evidence, he decided that the death sentence imposed by the court was too severe. Drawing upon his own combat experience in Italy, Vokes observed that Meyer neither "gave a direct order for the killing of prisoners, nor was it proved in evidence, to my satisfaction, that he knew that the executions recorded in the charges were taking place."³³ This contention was exactly what Andrew had argued at trial. A meeting in London attended by Vokes, Massey, and selected Canadian military officers concluded:

that the sentence which should be imposed on the commander of a formation for war crimes committed by his subordinates should be regulated as closely as possible to the degree of accountability in the sense that the extreme penalty of death would be justified in a case where the officer was conclusively shown to have resulted either from the direct act of the commander or by his omission to act when he knew that if he did not act a war crime would be committed.³⁴

Vokes was careful to point out the precedent this distinction might set for the responsibility of commanders in the future. Without any special regard for the man and the Nazi ideals he represented, Vokes commuted Meyer's death sentence to life imprisonment because the Canadian general did not want "to go to bed forever with his unwarranted death on my conscience."³⁵ Official announcement of Vokes' action evoked outrage and condemnation back in Canada. Angry Canadians and organizations like the Canadian Legion deluged editors and government officials with letters of protest. One such letter hoped "that the thousands of disapprovals from right-thinking citizens will force the authors of this awful blunder to ponder."³⁶ Controversy and public protest followed Meyer throughout his incarceration in Dorchester Penitentiary in New Brunswick and his ultimate release from the Allied National Prison at Werl, West Germany in 1954.³⁷ Whatever the military and justice rationales, average Canadians believed that Vokes valued Meyer's blood over the blood of the Canadian soldiers murdered in Normandy.

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The defence of Kurt Meyer highlighted the challenges of charging and prosecuting an enemy commander with war crimes arising from misconduct of subordinate troops on the battlefield. As an experienced lawyer and regimental commander with combat experience, Maurice Andrew believed that the SS General deserved the fairest trial possible under international and Canadian military law, despite the significant legal, political, and public opinion factors working against him. Under special war crimes legislation that modified normal rules of procedure and admissibility of evidence, Meyer was brought before a Canadian military court in occupied Germany on charges of transgressing the established laws and customs of war. An enraged Canadian public and press demanded revenge for the murders, while a government in Ottawa was eager to establish a reputation on the international scene with Canada's first official sortie into war crimes prosecutions. Given the prevailing climate, it would be easy to dismiss the trial as simply another example of 'victor's justice,' but Meyer mounted a reasonably good defence. During trial, Andrew presented compelling arguments to justify German conduct against the Canadians, questioned witness recollections under rigorous cross-examination, and raised delicate issues of command responsibility. The relationship between lawyer and client was strictly professional, not personal. Although convicted, Meyer engendered enough empathy to convince the Canadian general acting as confirming authority to commute a death sentence to life imprisonment. Vokes' last minute pang of conscience left few satisfied. The Canadian public vented its anger against elected officials, Macdonald decried interference with due process, and Meyer stewed in a prison cell on the injustice of it all. Ironically, Wilhelm Mohnke, another SS officer in the 12th SS Panzer Division who arguably killed (deliberately) far more Canadians than Meyer, remained free to live out his days as a car dealer in Barsbuttel, Germany.³⁸ That Meyer's case in 1945 would not stand up to evidentiary standards in an ordinary civil court today, in light of the Supreme Court's ruling in *Rex v. Finta*, is probably testimony to the fairness of the process back then. It would have been much tidier if Meyer had just been shot as scheduled in January 1946, but Meyer owed his life in no small part to Andrew's efforts. Unlike Meyer, the Canadian soldiers executed at the Abbaye Ardenne never received a second chance.

NOTES

- ¹ The ‘first wave’ include B.J.S. Macdonald, *The Trial of Kurt Meyer* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Co., 1954); Kurt Meyer (trans. Michael Mendé), *Grenadiers*, (Winnipeg, MB: J.J. Fedorowicz, 1994); and Chris Vokes (with John P. Maclean), *Vokes: My Story* (Ottawa: Gallery Books, 1985). The ‘second wave’ approach was broadly outlined by Carlo D’Este in *Decision in Normandy* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 507 and Max Hastings, *Overlord: D-Day and the Battle for Normandy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 211, but took specific form in Tony Foster, *Meeting of Generals* (Toronto: Methuen, 1986) and *The Valour and the Horror* film series by Brian and Terrence McKenna. Recent ‘third wave’ studies are Ian Campbell, *Murder at the Abbaye: The Story of Twenty Canadian Soldiers Murdered at the Abbaye d’Ardenne* (Ottawa: Golden Dog Press, 1996); Howard Margolian, *Conduct Unbecoming: The Story of the Murder of Canadian Prisoners of War in Normandy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); and Patrick Brode, *Casual Slaughters and Accidental Judgments: Canadian War Crimes Prosecutions, 1944-1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press; Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History, 1997).
- ² National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC), RG 24 Vol. 2881 File HQS 8959-9/1, “Supplementary Report of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces Court of Inquiry re Shooting of Allied Prisoners of War by 12 SS Panzer Division (Hitler-Jugend) Normandy France 7-21 June 1944.”
- ³ NAC, RG 24 Vol. 2906 HQS 8959-9-5, Lieutenant-Colonel B.J.S. Macdonald to Brigadier B. Matthews, “War Crimes,” 8 May 1945.
- ⁴ Windsor Public Library and Municipal Archives (hereafter WPLMA), Bruce J.S. Macdonald fonds, MS 43 III 3/14, Record of Evidence No. 1 Canadian War Crimes Investigation Unit, 15 sOctober 1945.
- ⁵ NAC, RG 24 Vol. 12839 File 10/Andrew, M.W./1, Lieutenant-Colonel B.J.S. Macdonald to ADAG(B), “War Crimes Trials - Brigadeführer Kurt Meyer,” 18 October 1945.
- ⁶ Stratford-Perth County Archives (hereafter SPCA), Clipping File “Andrew, Maurice.”
- ⁷ SPCA, Perth Regiment fonds, Ledger “Officers Records Perth Regiment.”
- ⁸ NAC, Personnel File M515723, Maurice William Andrew. Andrew won a distinguished service order for planning and conducting the Delfzijl operation. DHH, File 0009.(D82), DND(Army) Press Release, 20 September 1945.
- ⁹ NAC, RG 24 Vol. 20530 File 981.SS.(D1), “Roster of Higher Officers of all Waffen SS Formations (as of 31 July 1943).”
- ¹⁰ “Special Interrogation Report: Brigadeführer Kurt Meyer.” Meyer, *Grenadiers*.
- ¹¹ James M. Spaight, *War Rights on Land*, (London: Macmillan, 1911). J.H. Morgan, *The German War Book*, (London: John Murray, 1915).
- ¹² War Office, *Manual of Military Law*, (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1929).
- ¹³ WPLMA, MS43 III 3/3, “Oberführer Kurt Meyer – Interrogation for Lt. Col. B.J.S. Macdonald, E.D.”
- ¹⁴ Public Record Office/Kew (hereafter PRO), WO 32 /12199, “Minutes of Meeting in Attorney-General’s Room, Law Courts, on 8th June, 1945, at 10:30 a.m.”
- ¹⁵ NAC, RG 24 Vol. 2906 File HQS 8959-9-5/1, “Extraordinary Meeting of War Crimes Advisory Committee Held in Conference Room, Department of External Affairs, East Block, at 3:00 pm, Tuesday, July 3, 1945.”
- ¹⁶ NAC, RG 24 Vol. 12839 File 67/Kurt Meyer Case/1, Lieutenant Colonel B.J.S. Macdonald to Brigadier R.J. Orde, “Trial of Brigadeführer Kurt Meyer,” 29 November 1945.
- ¹⁷ NAC, RG 24 Vol. 12841 File 67/Procedure/1/2, Lieutenant-Colonel B.J.S. Macdonald to DAG, CMHQ, 16 November 1945.
- ¹⁸ NAC, RG 24 Vol. 2906 File HQ 8959-9-5/2, “Minutes of Extraordinary Meeting of War Crimes Advisory Committee held in Conference Room, Department of External Affairs, Room 123, East Block, at 3:00 pm on Wednesday, June 20, 1945.”

- ¹⁹ *Hansard* (13 September 1945), 135.
- ²⁰ Ralph Allen, "Meyer Ordered Killing Storm Trooper States," *Globe & Mail* (14 December 45), 1.
- ²¹ *Winnipeg Free Press* (15 December 1945), 2; (3 January 1946), 17.
- ²² *Winnipeg Free Press* (19 December 1945), 1.
- ²³ "North Nova Officers Testify: Murder of Canadians Described," *Halifax Herald* (12 December 1945), 1.
- ²⁴ Ralph Allen, "Lonely Walk of Canadians To Death Told," *Globe and Mail* (15 December 1945), 2.
- ²⁵ DHH, File 159.95023 (D7), "Record of Proceedings (Revised) of the Trial by Canadian Military Court of S.S. *Brigadeführer* (Major-General) Kurt Meyer held at Aurich, Germany 10-28 December, 1945," 61.
- ²⁶ *Ibid*, 594.
- ²⁷ *Ibid*, 696.
- ²⁸ *Ibid*, 794.
- ²⁹ *Ibid*, 856.
- ³⁰ Meyer, *Grenadiers*, 219-223. Ralph Allen, "Was Kurt Meyer Guilty?" *Maclean's* (1 Feb 1950), 9.
- ³¹ *The Montreal Daily Star* (16 January 1946), 2.
- ³² PRO, WO 235/600A, Petition for Clemency, Kurt Meyer to Major General Chris Vokes, 31 December 1945.
- ³³ DHH, File 159.95(D1), Major General Chris Vokes, "Cdn War Crimes Act - Trial of Brigadeführer Kurt Meyer: Remarks by the Confirming Officer," 21 January 1946.
- ³⁴ NAC, RG 24 Vol. 12839 File 67/Kurt Meyer Case/1, "Memorandum re Conference held at 10:30 hrs, 9 Jan 46, in the Office of the High Commissioner."
- ³⁵ Vokes, *My Story*, 205-8. DHH, File "Biography - Vokes, Christopher," Chris Vokes to I.J. Campbell, 15 May 1981.
- ³⁶ NAC, RG 24 Vol. 2053 File HQ 54-27-1-93, Laurette Vanasse to DND, 16 January 1946. *Winnipeg Free Press* (14-17 January 1946), 1; (19 January 1946), 14; (26 January 1946), 16.
- ³⁷ James Whalen, "The Face of the Enemy: Kurt Meyer: Normandy to Dorchester," *The Beaver* 74 (April/May 1994), 20-23. In 1949, Meyer solicited the help of a Halifax lawyer to plead for his release. WPLMA, MS 43 III-3/9, Meyer to H.P. MacKeen, 14 July 1949. Cabinet considered a petition in February 1951, but refused to grant Meyer clemency due "to the temper of public opinion generally." In October 1951, Meyer was transferred to Werl, where he remained until British and German pressure on the Canadian government gained Meyer's eventual release. PRO, WO 235/600A, Remission Board Order, Kurt Meyer, 13 August 1954.
- ³⁸ DHH, File 76/166, "Wilhelm Mohnke."

French Canadians and War

Les Canadiens français et la guerre

LES CANADIENS FRANÇAIS DANS LES ARMÉES AMÉRICAINES : AVENTURE ET LOYAUTÉ

Daniel Déry¹

Les explorateurs français avaient à peine pris souche sur les rives du Saint-Laurent que, déjà, ils eurent envie de partir à l'aventure plus au sud. Pendant longtemps, passer librement du Canada aux États-Unis a semblé somme toute assez facile pour les missionnaires, soldats, coureurs des bois et aventuriers de tout acabit. Ils créèrent, par leurs incessant mouvement, une tradition d'aller-retour par delà une frontière alors inexistante et qui demeura par la suite longtemps imprécise.

Bien des décennies d'enracinement sur le continent américain contribuèrent à forger une nouvelle identité à ces descendants de Français. Devenus des *Canayens*, ils conserveront longtemps les deux tendances qui les caractérisent, et qui les feront osciller tout à tour entre un repli sur le sol d'origine de la vieille province de Québec, et ce profond désir d'explorer l'immense Amérique. « Tous ensemble, ces Canadiens ont baptisé ce continent ; les uns avec l'eau du sacrement, les autres avec les noms de la géographie². » Pour s'en convaincre, l'on a qu'à penser au fondateur de Milwaukee, Salomon Juneau, à Prudent Beaudry, maire de Los Angeles en 1875, aux trois frères Beaubien, fondateurs de Chicago, ou encore à Julien Dubuque découvreur de l'Iowa³. « Even in the United States, some 3,000 French place names, from Maine and Vermont to Oregon, testify to the dynamism of the early French Canadians⁴. » C'est dire que la présence continue de l'élément de souche française sur le territoire qui allait devenir les États-Unis, remonte au tout début de l'histoire de ce pays.

Certains de ces militaires sont nés au Canada, d'autres aux États-Unis. Puis, il y a aussi tous ceux qui s'installent temporairement. Avec des individus d'une si grande mobilité, l'on se devait d'aborder un tel le sujet en termes d'ascendance ethnique plutôt que comme appartenance politique au Canada ou aux États-Unis. Quoi qu'il en soit, s'enrôler dans l'armée a souvent été pour plusieurs un bon moyen pour « voir du pays ». Et justement, au fil des ans, un grand nombre de Canadiens français manifestent leur présence sur le continent par leur participation à des actions militaires aux côtés des Américains. L'implication de Canadiens français, ou de personnes d'origine canadienne-française à ces différentes opérations militaires américaines remonterait au tout début de la formation même des États-Unis. Au cours de la guerre d'Indépendance, l'on peut concevoir que ce n'est pas la majorité des Canadiens français qui pousse la sympathie

jusqu'à désirer se joindre aux Treize Colonies en révolte. Toutefois, certains d'entre eux virent d'un œil favorable le projet d'émancipation des Treize Colonies, et joignirent les rangs des insurgés. Au moment de l'invasion du Canada par les Américains à la fin de 1775, il semble que l'on ait pu recruter assez de Canadiens français pour former deux régiments américains. D'ailleurs, après l'échec de l'invasion du Canada par les armées américaines, on estime que de 125 à 150 Canadiens français qui ont combattu comme soldats aux côtés des rebelles, s'exileront aux États-Unis en juin 1776⁵, ne pouvant bien sûr rentrer au Canada après s'être si ouvertement opposés à la Grande-Bretagne.

L'historienne américaine Virginia DeMarce a pu identifier plus de 1 800 Canadiens français qui luttèrent aux côtés des Américains. Mentionnons ici le nom de quelques officiers, dont les lieutenants-colonels Pierre Régnier et Jacob Bruyère, les capitaines Auguste Loiseau et Philippe Dubois. En échange de leurs services, le gouvernement américain octroie aux volontaires Canadiens français et Acadiens des terres dans le nord de l'État de New York, le long du lac Champlain, en vertu du *Refuges Tract*. En 1789, l'État concédera encore d'autres terres, qui sont à l'origine des villages de Corbeau (Coopersville) et de Rouse's Point, nommé ainsi en l'honneur de Jacques Roux, un vétéran de la guerre d'Indépendance. Beaucoup de Canadiens français, comme officiers ou soldats, dont plusieurs sous les ordres du colonel Hazen, ont combattu avec les leurs auprès de George Washington :

On cite le nom d'un Canadien de Québec, Nugent, qui fut promu colonel d'un régiment de Boston. D'autre part, des centaines de Canadiens français se joignirent à l'expédition Arnold-Montgomery contre Québec (1775-76), d'où ils se retirèrent vers le Sud après l'échec de cette tentative d'invasion. Léon Bossue dit Lyonnais affirme qu'il y avait un régiment formé de Canadiens. Une compagnie de ces défenseurs de l'Indépendance américaine se distingua tout particulièrement à la bataille de Yorktown. Leur chef, le Capitaine Clément Gosselin, Canadien français, lui aussi, reçut à cette occasion, des louanges très flatteuses de Washington et de Lafayette⁶.

Ce Clément Gosselin fut nommé membre de la prestigieuse *Society of the Cincinnati*, une amicale France-États-Unis fondée en 1783, regroupant les officiers de la guerre d'Indépendance et leurs descendants. Elle existe encore de nos jours.

Les religieux eux-mêmes attestent de leur présence dans l'armée des États-Unis, tel cet abbé Vallée qui fut chapelain des troupes américaines durant la révolution. Cependant, le tout premier aumônier nommé officiellement par le Congrès, sans égard à la confession religieuse est le R.P. François-Louis Chartier de Lotbinière, un récollet du diocèse de Québec. Il fut désigné par le général Benedict Arnold le 26 janvier 1776, le tout étant ratifié par le Congrès en août suivant. Le père Chartier de Lotbinière a servi comme premier aumônier du Premier Régiment du Congrès du colonel J. Livingston, incidemment composé surtout de Canadiens français. Il occupa ses fonctions jusqu'en 1781⁷.

Au cours de la guerre de Sécession, il semble y avoir une participation élevée de Canadiens français dans les armées américaines, malgré les échos sanglants en provenance d'outre frontière. Selon les différentes sources, entre 30 000 et 50 000 individus originaires du Québec ont été recrutés. Un certain abbé Beaudry, curé de Saint-Constant, déclarait en 1865, pendant une cérémonie funèbre, que 40 000 Canadiens français avaient fait partie des armées américaines et que 14 000 étaient morts en combattant⁸, dans une guerre où il y eut en fait plus d'un demi-million de morts.

Parmi ces hommes, quelques noms célèbres ont été retenus, dont Calixa Lavallée, compositeur de la musique du *Ô Canada*⁹, engagé comme cornettiste dans l'armée de l'Union. Musicien, Lavallée est sans doute le plus connu des Canadiens français de cette époque à avoir porté l'uniforme américain. D'autres, tels le journaliste Rémi Tremblay, ont fait de cette guerre le sujet de leur roman¹⁰. Cependant, le major Edmond Mallet (1842-1907) représente l'une des plus illustres figures de Canadiens français dans les armées américaines. Né à Montréal, il s'enrôla à vingt ans et participa à vingt-deux batailles. Laissé pour mort sur le terrain et sauvé in extremis, il deviendra pour le reste de sa vie le propagateur le plus zélé d'alors de la religion catholique et de la culture française en pays américain. Devenu fonctionnaire fédéral à Washington, il se mit à rassembler d'innombrables documents sur sa culture d'origine. Tous ces documents constituent aujourd'hui une bonne partie de la bibliothèque Mallet, située dans l'édifice de l'union Saint-Jean-Baptiste à Woonsocket au Rhode Island.

Mais tous ne s'enrôlèrent pas pour se couvrir de gloire ou de médailles. Malheureusement, et ce en dépit des lois, de jeunes Canadiens attirés par les primes ou les fausses promesses d'agents américains qui leur font croire à du travail sur des fermes de Nouvelle-Angleterre, se retrouvaient ainsi piégés. Tel fut le cas d'Augustin Viau, dit Janveau, né vers 1834 à l'île Jésus, et qui fut enrôlé à Troy (N.Y.) sous le nom de Joseph Labry dans la 6th *New-York Cavalry*.

Pendant cette guerre, le gouvernement canadien a fait emprisonner certains recruteurs de chair à canon, pour freiner des pratiques d'enrôlement douteuses. Les ruses employées pour recruter des soldats furent telles que le gouvernement britannique dût protester¹¹. Un grand nombre de jeunes gens en quête d'aventures ou tout simplement d'une solde vont malgré tout s'engager comme volontaires, et plusieurs d'entre eux y laisseront leur vie :

On raconte encore comment à la désastreuse bataille de Cold Harbor, en Virginie les 1, 2 et 3 juin 1864, le 81^{ème} régiment fut placé au premier rang de la mêlée.[...] Des centaines de jeunes Canadiens du 81^{ème} régiment d'Oswego, des 96^{ème} et 98^{ème} régiments de Malone, Whitehall, Champlain et autres localités de la région du Lac Champlain, furent tués au cours de cette sanglante campagne¹².

Il faut également noter que malgré la proximité géographique, les Canadiens français ne se joindront pas tous à l'armée du Nord. On en retrace quelques-uns dans l'armée des Sudistes. Un certain Napoléon Barbeau de Saint-Constant, ainsi que le lieutenant Isaïe Pigeon, qui prit part à la bataille de *Bull Run* sous les ordres du général Beauregard, ont fait partie de ces troupes sudistes¹³. L'on sait que plusieurs vétérans canadiens français de la guerre de Sécession demeurèrent aux États-Unis et qu'ils y moururent. Tous étant pensionnés de la République, leurs noms devraient en principe être inscrits dans les archives fédérales américaines.

On retrouve donc la trace de plusieurs Canadiens français tout au long du récit des conflits auxquels participèrent les Américains¹⁴. Pendant la guerre hispano-américaine de 1898, Georges Charette, habitant Lowell, au Massachusetts, était parmi ceux qui bloquèrent la flotte espagnole dans le port de Santiago de Cuba en coulant le navire *Merrimack*. Il passera 40 ans dans la marine américaine. D'autres ont participé à la guerre contre le Mexique et quelques-uns se sont joints à l'expédition française envoyée à Mexico par Napoléon III. On en retrouve d'autres dans le conflit contre l'Espagne, dont Olivar Asselin qui, avant d'être journaliste au Canada, apprit son métier à Woonsocket,

au Rhode Island, ainsi que Charles Gauvreau, né en 1878 à Saint-Jean au Québec, qui fit la campagne de Cuba et celle des Philippines¹⁵.

Il est maintenant reconnu que près d'un million de Canadiens français émigrèrent aux États-Unis pendant la période qui s'étend de 1840 à 1930¹⁶. À l'instar d'autres Canadiens, la plupart quittent le pays dans le but de chercher du travail. Ceux qui s'installeront à demeure aux États-Unis adopteront avec le temps le vocable de *Franco-Américains*¹⁷, et s'identifieront de plus en plus à la bannière étoilée. Il semble que durant la Première Guerre mondiale en 1917, à l'appel du président Wilson, près de 100 000 d'entre eux vinrent se mettre sous les drapeaux¹⁸. La Deuxième Guerre mondiale en impliquera au moins tout autant.

Justement, l'une des grandes figures mythiques de l'imaginaire militaire américain, est sans contredit le jeune soldat d'origine canadienne-française, né au New Hampshire, René-Arthur Gagnon (1924-1979). Engagé dans la marine à 18 ans, il participa à l'un des événements les plus significatifs de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. Son unité débarqua le 19 février 1945 dans une île située à 700 milles du Japon, Iwo Jima. Sa compagnie reçut l'ordre de prendre le Mont Suribachi, point stratégique de l'île tenu par les forces japonaises. Au matin du 23 février 1945, Gagnon faisait partie du groupe des six fusilliers-marins, les *marines*, qui hissèrent le drapeau des États-Unis sur le Mont Suribachi. Trois des six soldats survécurent au feu nourri des Japonais, dont le 1^{ière} classe René Gagnon¹⁹. L'île fut finalement conquise, mais après d'âpres combats, et au prix de plusieurs pertes de vies.

Le photographe de l'agence *Associated Press*, Roscoe (Jos) Rosenthal qui se trouvait sur place, croqua la scène sur le vif. Cette photo²⁰ fit le tour de la terre et devint le symbole de la victoire des Alliés sur le Japon. On en fit même un timbre-poste, et le sculpteur Félix Weldon immortalisa le groupe dans le bronze. Le statuaire sera par la suite proclamé monument officiel du *US Marine Corps* à Washington.

L'on ne saurait passer sous silence le nom d'un autre Canadien français qui, sans être militaire, contribua d'une façon remarquable à la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. Né à Saint-Rémi, près de Montréal, Jean Garand (1888-1974) est l'inventeur du *Garand Rifle*, le fameux fusil de l'armée américaine utilisé pendant le conflit. Après avoir émigré aux États-Unis avec ses parents, et possédant des aptitudes pour la mécanique, il travaille dans une firme de munitions et améliore dès avant la Première Guerre mondiale le vieux fusil de l'armée américaine, le *Springfield Rifle* fabriqué depuis 1903. Mais c'est surtout à partir de 1926 qu'il se met en tête de fabriquer un fusil qui serait la « mitrailleuse » du fantassin américain. Ce nouveau *Garand Rifle* est un fusil semi-automatique, mieux connu sous le nom de M-1. Fabriqué à l'arsenal de Springfield, Massachusetts, le fusil Garand tire de 80 à 100 cartouches de calibre 30 à la minute, avec une précision remarquable, à 400 mètres. On pourrait aisément le définir comme un revolver de cinq pieds de long. Il sera adopté officiellement par l'armée américaine en janvier 1936, et améliorera considérablement l'efficacité des combattants américains.

Enfin, parmi tous ces descendants de Canadiens français, certains se rendirent célèbres sans même l'avoir voulu ; tel ce Franco-Américain, le sergent d'État-major Georges R. Caron qui était parmi les dix membres de l'équipage du bombardier *Enola Gay*, lors du largage de la première bombe atomique sur Hiroshima le 6 août 1945²¹. Mentionnons enfin que le record absolu d'enrôlement d'individus d'une même famille dans l'armée américaine appartiendrait aux 16 frères Gauthier, de Forth Worth au Texas, qui portèrent tous l'uniforme en même temps²².

Pendant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale un certain nombre de Canadiens français du Québec se sont enrôlés dans l'armée américaine, dont le plus célèbre reste sans doute l'ex-premier ministre René Lévesque. Ses reportages en provenance du front contribueront à renseigner ses contemporains sur les événements importants qui se déroulaient en Europe. En 1943, il obtient un emploi paramilitaire en tant qu'officier de liaison, dans la section française du *Office of War Information* américain²³. Quant à ses motivations de s'enrôler dans l'armée américaine, il dira que c'est son instinct plus que sa raison qui l'ont fait choisir : « Si je voulais participer avant trop tard à ce conflit qui était la grande aventure de notre génération, c'est de ce côté là que je devais me tourner²⁴. »

S'il y eut des Canadiens dans l'armée américaine, le contraire est-il plausible ? A priori, ce qui peut sembler étonnant c'est que l'on retrouve tout près de 16 000 Américains dans l'armée canadienne pendant le second conflit mondial, dont 6 000 dans l'aviation et 10 000 dans l'infanterie. Mais, à y regarder de plus près, il faut savoir que le Canada est entré en guerre depuis septembre 1939, quelques jours après la Grande-Bretagne, alors que les États-Unis ne seront impliqués directement dans le conflit qu'en décembre 1941, soit plus de deux ans plus tard. Le Canada, servant alors d'intermédiaire entre les États-Unis (officiellement neutres jusqu'en 1941) et la Grande-Bretagne, et acceptant le mandat d'être le centre de formation des aviateurs du Commonwealth, l'on s'empresse d'aller chercher l'expertise en la matière aux États-Unis. « Tous les États de l'Union, le New York et la Californie surtout, ont contribué à recruter des aviateurs et des entraîneurs de pilotes. On compte au moins 600 Américains instructeurs de pilotes dans les écoles d'aviation du Canada²⁵. » À la fin de 1941, les Américains forment entre 10 et 15 pour cent du total de l'aviation militaire canadienne.

De nos jours, il existe encore aux États-Unis beaucoup d'hommes et de femmes qui portent des noms français en même temps qu'ils ont porté l'uniforme américain, tels ces vétérans de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale : Joseph Maltais, qui s'exprime dans un français impeccable, et Arthur Longchamps de Manchester. Désormais, beaucoup de descendants de Canadiens français, devenus Américains, vont servir sur les champs de bataille sans peut-être même se douter de tout le passé dont ils sont tributaires. Puis, qu'ils proviennent du Québec ou de la Nouvelle-Angleterre, ces deux rameaux d'une même souche ont combattu ensemble jusqu'au Vietnam, comme ce fut le cas pour le Canadien Gaston Forest et l'américain Charles « Charlie » Léveillé, du New Hampshire.

À la lumière de ce phénomène qui dure depuis des siècles, on est maintenant en droit de se demander si ce n'est pas ce fameux sentiment d'américanité qui poussa tant de Canadiens français à combattre dans les armées américaines, qu'ils aient ou non émigré aux États-Unis. La forte impression d'appartenir à un monde nouveau, différent de l'Europe à bien des points de vue serait un leitmotiv puissant, allant même au-delà du pacte de défense mutuelle signé le 18 août 1940 entre Washington et Ottawa. En définitive, durant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, l'isolationnisme des États-Unis serait-il si loin du refus des Canadiens français de se mêler alors des affaires de l'Europe ? Peut-être comprendrons-nous mieux les crises passées en les abordant avec un regard neuf.

Au fil de leur histoire, les Canadiens français se sont battus contre les Britanniques aux côtés des Français jusqu'en 1760. Sous le régime anglais, la majorité d'entre eux ont défendu le territoire à plusieurs reprises avec les Britanniques, leurs ennemis d'hier, contre l'envahisseur américain. Puis, lors des deux grandes guerres du vingtième siècle, ils ont participé à la victoire du monde libre aux côtés des Américains, contre les régimes totalitaires européens. Depuis la fin de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale et maintenant, bien

souvent aux côtés de ces mêmes Européens, ils agissent comme Casques bleus pour les Nations unies sur différents théâtres d'opérations.

NOTES

- ¹ Voir la maîtrise de l'auteur : « Les Franco-Américains et la Deuxième Guerre mondiale : Manchester, New Hampshire, 1939-1945 », Montréal, UQAM, 1999, 206 p.
- ² Gabriel Nadeau, « Chronique franco-américaine : histoire », *Culture*, Québec, Association de Recherches sur les Sciences Religieuses et Profanes au Canada, vol. III, 1942, p. 231.
- ³ Antoine Bernard, *Nos pionniers de l'Ouest*, Québec, Université Laval, 1949, p. 9. Plusieurs historiens ont fait l'apologie de cette page de l'histoire canadienne-française. Consulter Benoit Brouillette, (*La pénétration du continent américain par les Canadiens français*, publié en 1939). Edmond Mallet, Benjamin Sulte et Joseph Tassé ont aussi rédigé des ouvrages sur le sujet.
- ⁴ Elliot Robert Barkan, « French Canadians », *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, Cambridge, Stephen Thernstrom Editor, Harvard University Press, 1980, p. 390. Dans son ouvrage, Edouard Fecteau recense 5 000 noms. Voir Edward Fecteau, *The French contributions to America*, Société historique franco-américaine, Methuen (Mass.), 1945, 341 p.
- ⁵ Armand Chartier, *Histoire des Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre 1775-1990*, Québec, Septentrion, 1991, p. 14.
- ⁶ Alexandre Goulet, *Une Nouvelle-France en Nouvelle-Angleterre*, Librairie de jurisprudence ancienne et moderne, Paris, 1934, p. 7-8.
- ⁷ Gabriel Nadeau, « Chronique franco-américaine : histoire », *Culture*, Québec, Association de recherches sur les sciences religieuses et profanes au Canada, vol. VI, 1945, p. 85. Cette chronique est tirée de *Le premier aumônier militaire aux États-Unis fut un Canadien français*, article paru dans *Nouvelles Catholiques*, publié par la Commission de l'information en temps de guerre, Ottawa, n° 5, 1^{er} mai 1943, p. 4.
- ⁸ Le colonel Wilfrid Bovey de l'Université McGill croit que ces chiffres comprennent tous les soldats nés au Canada ou venus du Canada sans distinction d'origine, ce qui pourrait diminuer substantiellement le nombre de Canadiens français impliqués dans la guerre. E.Z. Massicotte, « Les Canadiens et la guerre de Sécession », *Bulletin des recherches historiques*, vol. 42, n° 10 (1936), p. 538.
- ⁹ Le Ô Canada fut joué pour la première fois le soir du 24 juin 1889 à un banquet au Pavillon des Patineurs à Québec, par des musiciens de la Fanfare de Fall River, Massachusetts, ainsi que celles de Beauport et du 9^e Bataillon. Adrien Verrette, *La Vie franco-américaine 1942*, Comité Permanent de la Survivance Française en Amérique, Manchester (N.H.), 1942, p. 328.
- ¹⁰ Pour la littérature sur la guerre de Sécession et les Canadiens français, voir Rémi Tremblay, *Un revenant*, 1884, où il est question de chevauchées militaires; Albéric Archambault, *Mill Village*, 1943 (dans ce roman, le général Lee, capturé par une recrue canadienne, regagne sa liberté en lui disant que son vrai nom est Lizotte); Maurice Poteet, dir., *Textes de l'exode*, Montréal, Guérin, 1987, p. 161.
- ¹¹ E.Z. Massicotte, « Les Canadiens et la guerre de Sécession », *Bulletin des recherches historiques*, vol. 42, n° 11, p. 684.
- ¹² Rosaire Dion-Lévesque, « Le major Edmond Mallet », *Silhouettes franco-américaines*, Manchester (N.H.), ACA, 1957, p. 605.
- ¹³ E.Z. Massicotte, « Les Canadiens et la guerre de Sécession », *Bulletin des recherches historiques*, vol. 42, n° 10, p. 538; vol. 43, n° 6, p. 222.
- ¹⁴ M. Poteet, dir., *Textes de l'exode*, p. 350.
- ¹⁵ Un grand nombre de Canadiens français prirent part à la Guerre d'Espagne, dont trois relatèrent leur expérience dans des récits. Charles Gauvreau publie en 1915 : *Reminiscences of*

the Spanish-American War in Cuba and the Philippines ; Philibert Poulin, né en Beauce, rédige en 1908 un opuscule de 48 pages : *Récit d'un jeune soldat à la guerre des Philippines raconté par P.P. Poulin de St-Elzéar* ; Joseph Legault, installé dans le Massachusetts, a raconté ses souvenirs de guerre dans « Soldier of Misfortune », un article paru dans le *Worcester Sunday Telegram* du 24 février 1935. Voir aussi Gabriel Nadeau, « Chronique franco-américaine », *Culture*, Québec, Association de Recherches sur les Sciences Religieuses et Profanes au Canada, vol. 3, 1942, p. 527.

¹⁶ Consulter Yolande Lavoie, « Les mouvements migratoires des Canadiens entre leur pays et les États-Unis au XIX^e et XX^e siècles : étude quantitative », dans Hubert Charbonneau, dir., *La population du Québec : études rétrospectives*, Montréal, Boréal Express, 1973, p. 78.

¹⁷ Nous employons ce terme générique utilisé depuis environ 1900, pour désigner les émigrés d'origine canadienne-française (surtout québécoise) et leurs descendants, principalement ceux qui se fixèrent en Nouvelle-Angleterre : « Français de cœur, Canadien par accident, Américain par nécessité, le Canadien français des États-Unis est orgueilleux de son origine, fidèle aux traditions, tout en étant attaché à sa patrie d'adoption. » Dans Hugo A. Dubuque, préface à *Histoire et statistiques des Américains-Canadiens du Connecticut, 1885-1898*, Worcester (Mass.), Imprimerie de *L'Opinion publique*, 1899, p. 14. Repris dans M. Poteet, dir., *Textes de l'Exode*, p. 25.

¹⁸ D'après Robert Rumilly « L'évaluation de cent mille volontaires, comme celle de quarante mille pendant la guerre civile ne repose sur aucune base précise », dans idem, *Histoire des Franco-Américains*, Montréal, s.n., 1958, p. 308.

¹⁹ Les deux autres sont Ira-Hamilton Hayes, 22 ans, de Bapchule (Arizona), membre de la nation amérindienne Pima, et le pharmacien 2^{ième} classe John H. Bradley, 22 ans, de Appleton au Wisconsin. Ils étaient tous membres de la Compagnie E, 2^{ième} Bataillon du 28^{ième} Régiment de Marines. Les trois morts sont le sergent Michael Strank, 24 ans, de Conemaugh, Pennsylvanie, le sergent Henry O. Hansen, 24 ans, de Somerville, Massachusetts, et le soldat 1^{ère} classe Franklin R. Soursley de Ewing, Kentucky. Voir A. Verrette, *La Vie franco-américaine*, 1945, p. 106.

²⁰ En fait, il s'agit d'une série de photos prises par Rosenthal, très rapidement les unes à la suite des autres. Voir *L'Avenir National*, 11 avril 1945, p. 3.

²¹ *L'Avenir National*, 12 septembre 1945, p. 1. On y voit la photo de l'équipage au complet.

²² Le cas est probablement unique dans les annales d'aucun pays. Chez ces seize frères, il y a quatre couples de jumeaux. Signalons que le cadet est encore trop jeune pour s'enrôler puisqu'il n'a que seize ans, alors que le dix-huitième garçon de la famille fut refusé à cause d'un problème à un pied. Voir A. Verrette, *La Vie franco-américaine*, 1943, p. 66.

²³ L'OWI, est le bureau de renseignements de l'armée américaine qui contrôle ABSIE, ou *American Broadcasting System in Europe*, organisme mis sur pied par les Américains pendant la guerre pour contrebalancer la BBC Britannique. On y sert des reportages radio dans plusieurs langues. Ajoutons que René Lévesque agira à titre de reporter pour la CBC quand le 22^{ième} Régiment ira se battre en Corée. Fait à souligner, il raconte avec humour que « jamais ne fut percé le secret des communications du 22 qui se déroulaient invariablement dans le jocal le plus pur ». René Lévesque, *Attendez que je me rappelle*, Éditions Québec/Amérique, Montréal, 1986, p. 151.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

²⁵ *L'Avenir National*, Manchester (N.H.), lundi 1^{er} décembre 1941, p. 1.

**AFIN DE MIEUX SERVIR :
LA CONCEPTION DE LA MILICE
CHEZ VASSAL DE MONVIEL,
ADJUDANT-GÉNÉRAL DE LA MILICE DU BAS-CANADA**

Roch Legault

Comme on le sait, la dernière guerre en sol canadien a débuté en 1812. La milice avait alors été levée pour défendre la patrie et son roi. Constituée d'à peu près tous les hommes en état de porter les armes, cette armée de citoyens avait été appelée à se rendre au front, à tuer et à se faire tuer, ainsi qu'à rendre des services moins spectaculaires, mais essentiels en temps de guerre, comme assister au transport des troupes et de l'approvisionnement, loger les soldats, garder les prisonniers de guerre, aider à appréhender des déserteurs. Bref, une expérience marquante pour une grande partie du peuple et ses élites, pour la milice et ses chefs, et pour François Vassal de Monviel en particulier, puisqu'il administrait alors la milice bas-canadienne au titre d'adjudant-général.

L'adjudant-général de la milice du Bas-Canada est la plus haute autorité canadienne dans le domaine de la défense pendant la première moitié du XIX^e siècle et Vassal de Monviel occupe la fonction de 1811 à 1841. Bien que sa position ne soit pas toujours adéquatement définie en ce qui le démarque de son homologue de l'armée régulière¹ britannique, il est le relais de la volonté du gouverneur et du commandant en chef des troupes britanniques au Canada. Il est aussi la courroie de transmission des doléances de tous les commandants bas-canadiens des unités de milice. Monviel sert donc d'intermédiaire entre l'armée régulière britannique et les soldats citoyens canadiens organisés en milice, entre la société militaire et la société civile.

L'idée moderne de milice est souvent attribuée à Niccolò Machiavelli (Machiavel). Le Florentin, cherchant à donner l'avantage militaire à sa Cité-État sur ses ennemis de longue date, avait innové en affirmant qu'une force populaire pourrait appuyer les mercenaires employés jusque-là pour faire la guerre. Il avait pu mettre en œuvre le modèle qu'il avait imaginé par la suite. Il serait bien injuste de comparer Machiavel à Monviel. Le second n'atteint à aucun moment la profondeur d'analyse du premier. Les écrits de Monviel cherchent à attirer l'attention sur une question pratique et sa préention à l'universalité se résume à ceci : « [...] elle [la milice] est chère [à] tous les peuples civilisés, d'un temps immémorial ; et qu'elle a toujours été considérée partout, comme étant un corps qui doit, avec les troupes régulières, coopérer à la défense de ses propriétés et au soutien de son gouvernement². » Une opinion qu'il répétera ailleurs³.

Il n'en demeure pas moins que la pensée de Monviel sur les questions militaires est d'une grande importance puisque qu'elle survient à un moment clé de l'histoire du Canada et du Québec, au lendemain d'une dure guerre, et elle émane d'un homme qui possède une riche carrière militaire. Par ailleurs, les esprits canadiens qui se sont penchés sur les problèmes de défense du Canada depuis ses origines sont très peu nombreux

hormis les gouverneurs, pour la plupart étrangers, dont le devoir consistait précisément à informer les autorités métropolitaines de la situation stratégique de la colonie. Sans être une exception, Monviel est un cas rare. Pour toutes ces raisons, ses écrits valent la peine d'être visités afin d'établir sa vision de la milice du Bas-Canada au lendemain de la guerre de 1812. Vassal de Monviel est-il porteur d'une conception qui ferait de la milice l'émanation du pouvoir du peuple, ou qui placerait franchement et sans ambiguïté la milice au service du prince ? Que cache, sous la plume de Monviel, l'expression, consacrée à l'époque, de service pour « la patrie et pour le roi ? »

Avant de donner une réponse à cette question centrale, il faut tracer un portrait de l'homme, présenter les sources qu'il faut interpréter, esquisser rapidement le contexte historique, et, en dernier lieu, relever le but, les principaux thèmes ainsi que les passages significatifs des interventions de Monviel.

C'est ainsi que nous mettrons notre hypothèse à l'épreuve, celle que l'adjudant-général du Bas-Canada, soldat de métier avant tout et héritier de l'idéologie de son groupe social et du système politique de sa colonie soutient l'idée d'une milice au service du prince et laisse la conception de la milice au service du peuple à ses voisins et ennemis : les Américains⁴.

Qui est Vassal de Monviel?

Qui est donc cet homme qui a mérité le poste de confiance d'adjudant-général des milices ? François-Xavier Vassal de Monviel est issu d'une famille de l'ancienne élite militaire de la Nouvelle-France. Né le 4 novembre 1759⁵, il perd son père, officier français dans l'armée de terre au régiment de Royal Roussillon, mort à la bataille de Sainte-Foy, six mois à peine après sa naissance. Sa mère, Charlotte Boucher de La Perrière, convole en secondes noces avec Pierre-René Boucher de La Bruère. Cela permet à Monviel de demeurer dans le milieu de la petite noblesse canadienne qui continue à encourager le métier des armes en dépit d'un contexte difficile⁶. Monviel persiste et gagne une précieuse expérience militaire dans l'organisation de défense britannique : volontaire durant la guerre d'Indépendance américaine, lieutenant dans le 7^e régiment de ligne britannique, puis capitaine dans le régiment de volontaires canadiens de 1797 à 1802. Ces expériences militaires, la loyauté qu'il démontre envers l'autorité et les liens sociaux qu'il tisse, aideront Vassal de Monviel à décrocher le poste d'assistant adjudant-général en 1807, sous l'administration militariste du gouvernement de James Craig. En octobre 1811, par souci de rendre plus efficace la milice bas-canadienne, il est nommé adjudant-général en remplacement de François Baby, qui avait célébré une semaine auparavant son 78^e anniversaire de naissance. Il succédait alors à un homme totalement voué au service de la Couronne et qui se méfiait déjà de certaines idées débattues à la Chambre d'Assemblée du Bas-Canada⁷.

Quant aux autres activités de Monviel, nous en connaissons relativement peu de chose, sinon qu'il a été candidat déçu à l'Assemblée législative en 1810. Ce qui ne signifie pas pour autant qu'il ne jouissait pas d'une certaine popularité puisqu'il peut compter sur l'appui financier des citoyens de la ville de Québec au moment où un incendie ravage sa maison en décembre 1824.

Monviel semble avoir été l'archétype de l'homme voué à la tâche. Fonctionnaire, il maintient sa liberté d'action en navigant à travers les écueils produits par l'activité des politiciens qui l'entourent. Il laisse transparaître très rarement, dans ses fonctions officielles, ses idées et ses préjugés encore moins ses prises de positions. Il exerce

honnêtement son métier. Il sera récompensé par le régime en place et, à notre connaissance, ne fut jamais attaqué par l'opposition qui en a pourtant l'occasion lors des vifs échanges qui opposeront la Chambre d'Assemblée aux gouverneurs.

La nature des sources

Or Monviel a eu quelques « moments de faiblesse ». C'est-à-dire qu'à quelques reprises, il a délaissé l'administration de la milice au jour le jour, à la petite semaine, et s'est permis quelques digressions du domaine professionnel qui nous donne l'occasion de rendre sa conception de la milice et du service militaire. Ces digressions sont des observations sur la milice dont il fait part à la Chambre ou au gouverneur, des commentaires supplémentaires aux rapports annuels de la milice qu'il transmet aux gouverneurs, enfin, des commentaires sur les projets de loi de la Chambre d'Assemblée. Ils sont écrits entre 1818 et 1823 à l'exception d'un seul document non daté mais que nous présumons être de la même période. Les avis de l'adjutant-général n'ont pas été sollicités, c'est de sa propre initiative que Monviel se fait entendre ou plutôt tente de se faire entendre par les autorités.

Contexte historique

La milice a déjà une très longue tradition au Canada et en Amérique du Nord au moment où Monviel s'installe au pupitre d'adjutant-général du Bas-Canada en 1811. Elle est établie en Nouvelle-France pour organiser la défense des colons qui ne peuvent compter sur un nombre suffisant de troupes de la métropole. L'institution que dirige Monviel est issue des lois de la Chambre d'Assemblée du Bas-Canada. Cette milice a grandi régulièrement⁸ jusqu'au moment où elle subit son premier test en 1812. Comparativement à sa voisine du Haut-Canada et à celles de certains États américains, la milice bas-canadienne n'est pas si mal en point au début des hostilités. Le Haut-Canada ne compte, à ce moment dramatique, pour tout effectif administratif qu'une seule personne, l'adjutant-général lui-même : le major-général Aenas Shaw. Quatre mois après le début des hostilités, on avait enfin jugé bon de procéder à une expansion ; aussi un commis, et un seul, avait été nommé⁹ ! Du côté américain, plusieurs états en 1812 doivent organiser depuis A jusqu'à Z leur milice. Les négligences administratives du passé, l'apathie de certaines élites sociales et une forme d'animosité populaire avaient nui aux développements de leur milice avant la guerre¹⁰.

Au Bas-Canada, l'organisation de la milice reste très déficiente comme s'en plaignent quelques officiers à la mobilisation¹¹. Mais des nominations d'officiers d'expérience à des postes clés, comme ce fut le cas de Monviel, révèle une préparation supérieure. Même la milice qui est incorporée, c'est-à-dire mobilisée, des rangs de la milice sédentaire compte près de 11% d'officiers ayant une expérience militaire¹².

Comme la fin de la guerre est en fait un *statu quo ante bellum*, des inquiétudes persistent pour ce qui est de la durée de la paix après 1815. Le président américain John Quincy Adams considérait même la période comme une trêve et non une véritable paix¹³. Toutefois, cette menace ne semble pas ébranler la Chambre d'Assemblée du Bas-Canada au point de l'inciter à travailler harmonieusement avec le pouvoir exécutif en matière de défense. Sans en être encore au stade de l'affrontement ouvert, qui débutera au milieu de la décennie, les discussions s'enveniment entre les différentes composantes du pouvoir au Bas-Canada. Les questions de défense semblent loin des préoccupations de la Chambre, dominée de plus en plus par la petite bourgeoisie canadienne-française.

Jouissant sans doute d'une qualité d'organisation supérieure à la veille de la guerre de 1812, forte de l'expérience de plus de deux années de combat, la milice bas-canadienne qui s'offre aux yeux de son adjudant-général dans la période où il émet ses opinions souffre pourtant d'un problème important.

But des interventions publiques

Le devoir prioritaire que l'adjudant-général s'est fixé est donc le suivant : travailler à rendre l'institution plus efficace dans une période de grand laisser-aller. Afin de pouvoir mieux servir, la milice doit changer. En effet, en 1818, soit trois ans à peine après la fin de la guerre, les choses allaient déjà mal puisqu'il écrit que la loi de milice « a été presque foulée aux pieds dans toutes les parties de la Province, et l'ordre général [de milice] avili et méprisé¹⁴ » avant de renchérir en 1821 que « l'état actuel de la milice de cette province [...] faute d'une loi propre à son organisation, se trouve dans un [tel] état d'insubordination et dans un tel chaos, qu'il serait impossible d'en tirer aucun service si les circonstances l'exigeaient¹⁵ ».

La situation du Bas-Canada ne diffère fondamentalement pas de celle des autres colonies britanniques d'Amérique, de celle des États-Unis ou bien même de celle de la Grande-Bretagne. À tous ces endroits, l'organisation de la milice recule nettement et la négligence s'installe après 1815. Au Nouveau-Brunswick, la nomination d'un adjudant-général particulièrement dynamique et une situation stratégique assez périlleuse permettent à la milice de renaître de ses cendres à partir de 1821, mais non sans avoir connu une période critique où elle avait été laissée sans adjudant-général depuis 1815 et sans aucune direction à partir de 1819¹⁶. Aux États-Unis, la preuve de la supériorité des soldats de métier sur la milice avait été établie pendant la guerre. Militairement, les marques de confiance dans la milice n'étaient plus que verbaux après 1815¹⁷. Dans la métropole, la milice, en accord avec les avis exprimés par les décideurs militaires et par les politiciens, devait perdre son indépendance et être inféodée à l'armée régulière¹⁸.

Vassal de Monviel veut redresser la situation qui prévaut au Bas-Canada en soumettant des plans et en émettant des commentaires pour réorganiser la milice. Des avis qui vont dans le menu détail : date des exercices, montant de l'avance nécessaire aux miliciens pour se rendre aux lieux de rassemblement, aux livres que devraient tenir les adjudants des bataillons ou des divisions, etc. En somme, Monviel travaille avant tout sur les détails de l'organisation. Une question demeure toutefois : si le but premier de Monviel est bel et bien de rendre plus efficace l'institution qu'il dirige, dans quelle direction, consciemment ou non, le gestionnaire amène-t-il la milice ?

Quelques thèmes

Une réponse claire à cette dernière question est difficile à donner parce que les thèmes sur lesquels Monviel insiste dans ses écrits tendent à varier. Il les adapte selon les lecteurs. Une milice mal rodée aurait des répercussions sur l'image de la Chambre¹⁹ de prétendre l'adjudant-général. Pour y remédier, il ne suffirait que d'imposer les riches et de mettre en place un système de formation militaire qui ne nuirait nullement à l'agriculture et qui, de plus, amuserait les jeunes gens. Il n'en coûterait que peu de chose et les activités économiques de la majorité de la population n'en seraient pas affectées. Voilà un discours qui ne manquerait pas d'intéresser certains députés canadiens-français. D'un autre côté, une milice non disciplinée grâce à une bonne législation ne pourrait pas rendre les devoirs qu'elle doit au roi. Selon Monviel, « [...] il faut comme partout ailleurs

tenir ce peuple [les Canadiens français] dans [...] la docilité et [la] subordination²⁰ ». Un discours différent du premier qui est de nature à intéresser cet autre interlocuteur de l'adjudant-général qu'est le gouverneur.

Si Monviel est un habile bureaucrate qui est prudent avec la forme des messages qu'il véhicule, il est aussi un militaire de carrière et c'est avec les yeux d'un professionnel qu'il se prononce au sujet de la situation de son service. Il dénonce ainsi l'incapacité des officiers de punir les délinquants parce que la loi ne leur fournit aucun moyen de le faire. Il suggère que les hommes soupçonnés d'infractions sérieuses soient jugés par une cour martiale générale. Son professionnalisme ne va pas jusqu'à accepter les châtiments corporels, la flagellation²¹ étant une pratique encore répandue dans l'armée régulière britannique à l'époque. Il sait trop bien l'opposition de l'opinion publique bascanadienne à ces mesures disciplinaires jugées draconiennes. Il souligne l'importance du poste d'adjudant de bataillon pour administrer les unités de milice (qu'elles soient bataillon ou division), de même que celui d'officier. À cet égard, il ne met pas de l'avant une distinction de classe trop évidente qui favoriserait la noblesse seigneuriale. Il se contente de réitérer l'importance de choisir le corps d'officiers de milice parmi les gens les plus instruits, une pratique qui date de 1791²².

Le professionnalisme militaire de Monviel l'amène à entreprendre des luttes qui ne manquent pas d'actualité. Le souci de rendre plus efficace la milice l'incite à avertir ses concitoyens qu'il n'y a pas de moment plus propice qu'en période de paix pour travailler sérieusement à corriger les défauts de la loi de milice. Il ne faut pas attendre les débuts des prochaines hostilités, il serait alors trop tard pour réagir, souligne-t-il²³. À son avis, il ne faudrait pas négliger les questions de défense et ne plus considérer que les questions de développement économique aussitôt la paix établie, comme certains de ses compatriotes souhaiteraient le faire. Il est en désaccord avec les sommes attribuées au développement des communications aux dépens de celles consenties à la défense (£60 000 livres contre à peine plus de £1 000). Son commentaire, en bon politique, débute en soulignant l'importance du développement du transport, essentiellement, à cette époque, la construction de canaux, mais se termine par l'expression de ses convictions profondes :

[J]e suis vraiment porté à ce qu'on s'occupe avec vigilance et persévérance des communications intérieures, mais en même temps que j'envisage d'un regard satisfait les sommes énormes qui ont été votées pour cet objet, je vois d'un autre côté, avec étonnement et chagrin qu'une économie mal entendue et une imprudente sécurité paralysent entièrement l'organisation et la meilleure discipline de la milice... [qui] est dans son principe, n'en déplaît à ceux qui pourraient être d'une opinion contraire, un Établissement d'aussi grande importance, et qui le deviendra de plus en plus²⁴ [.]

En effet, croyant que l'amélioration des communications intérieures serait un avantage considérable pour un envahisseur éventuel, Monviel demande que l'on développe la milice, parallèlement aux canaux, qui mettrait un frein à l'élan des assaillants. Ce faisant, Vassal de Monviel apprécie en stratégie les développements les plus récents dans lesquels s'engageait la colonie.

Le contenu stratégique des écrits de Monviel ne va pas très loin puisque l'adjutant-général fait porter ses efforts sur l'organisation, comme nous l'avons vu. Il n'y a donc rien dans les documents consultés qui fait référence à l'emploi tactique ou opérationnel des troupes canadiennes organisées en milice, ni à la tradition canadienne de guerre. Mais Monviel possède sans doute la capacité de répondre à une demande de mettre en branle la milice pour le combat, puisqu'il a fait état de ces sujets dans un rapport remis à ses supérieurs britanniques durant la guerre en 1813. Il avait alors manifesté quelques réserves sur l'utilisation de la milice au combat et avait fait remarquer les limites opérationnelles de la milice, en particulier sur un champ de bataille traditionnel, vu ses faibles connaissances des manoeuvres²⁵. La petite guerre devrait être la façon la plus efficace d'employer la milice, soutient Monviel.

Monviel donne aussi la priorité aux développements militaires de la milice de la ville sur celle de la campagne. En cela, il défavorise nettement ses compatriotes canadiens-français qui habitent en plus grand nombre la campagne. Dans un projet de 1823, il propose que les bataillons de la milice urbaine, sous prétexte qu'ils seraient en service actif pendant une certaine période de l'année, reçoivent chacun six fois plus d'armes et d'uniformes qu'un bataillon rural moyen pour accomplir leur devoir militaire²⁶. Toutefois, cette prise de position s'accorde avec l'évolution de la pratique du métier des armes de l'époque, des compagnies de volontaires formées à la ville se constituant un peu partout dans l'Empire.

Enfin, l'adjutant-général trahit également, sur un autre sujet, ses préjugés militaires. La milice ne sera, dans tous les moments où elle opérera à l'avenir, que le soutien d'une armée britannique composée de soldats de métier. On ne peut soupçonner nulle part dans les écrits de Monviel que la milice, dans son ensemble, pourra se développer, au point de devenir une force professionnelle. Mais la structure de gouvernement étant ce qu'elle était à l'époque, c'est-à-dire que le gouverneur, également général, était au sommet de la pyramide du pouvoir, aurait-il pu encourager ce développement professionnel sans paraître séditieux ? On ne voit pas non plus chez l'adjutant-général la manifestation d'une crainte politique de l'armée qui, en Grande-Bretagne et surtout aux États-Unis, attire à la milice tant de sympathisants.

Il est ainsi difficile de cerner à quelle enseigne loge Vassal de Monviel. D'autant que le diagnostic qui tombe sur le mal qui accable la milice bas-canadienne, au fil des rapports et des commentaires, n'incrimine personne. Les officiers de milice, les miliciens eux-mêmes, ne sont pas responsables de la situation. Seules les mauvaises lois de milice sont à mettre au banc des accusés.

La réponse claire à notre question est à rechercher dans l'appréciation de la milice que produit Monviel à partir de l'expérience de la dernière guerre contre les Américains. C'est dans l'épreuve de la guerre que l'on juge les institutions militaires. C'est dans une pareille épreuve que les hommes de guerre fondent leurs réflexions. Monviel demande à ses lecteurs à quoi on doit la victoire sur les Américains lors de la guerre de 1812 ? Il formule ensuite sa réponse en procédant par élimination. Ce n'est pas, débute-t-il, grâce à l'armée régulière britannique. Elle était bien trop peu nombreuse pour porter tout le poids de la défense. Il poursuit en soulignant que les ressources financières de la Législature et celles de la caisse militaire n'avaient pas permis de gagner la guerre non plus, en fait, sans le système des billets de l'armée, le pays allait à la catastrophe. La milice ne peut non plus être la raison profonde du succès de la colonie britannique. C'est Georges Prevost qui « est le sauveur de cette Province²⁷ », clame l'adjutant-général. La milice a

contribué certes à la victoire, avoue-t-il, mais ce n'est qu'en démontrant son zèle, sa bonne disposition et sa loyauté envers un chef talentueux, le commandant militaire, le gouverneur, le représentant du roi, en d'autres mots, le prince²⁸. Cette opinion de Monviel contraste fortement avec celles qui sont exprimées aux États-Unis, où plusieurs membres de l'élite sociale défendent ardemment la milice qui a joué, selon eux, un rôle clé dans l'obtention des victoires à Plattsburg et à la Nouvelle-Orléans en 1815.

Lorsque François Vassal de Monviel demande à ce que tous les miliciens du Bas-Canada de 16 à 30 ans soient armés par le gouvernement, comme au temps du régime français, il ne reconnaît pas là un signe d'égalité politique à toute la population, il ne désire pas un peuple en armes. Le peuple en armes au moyen de la milice, constituant de l'État, pierre angulaire d'une république, était le projet dessiné par Machiavel et qu'avaient repris des Anglo-Saxons d'Amérique qui avait rompu avec l'attachement à l'Empire britannique.

Ce sont les origines sociales, les convictions politiques et, en particulier, la carrière militaire de Monviel qui dictent à l'homme sa conception de la milice :

Ayant servi mon Roi et mon Pays depuis plus de 42 ans, écrit-il, et n'ayant rien tant à coeur que de lui témoigner mon attachement et mon zèle, j'ose espérer que votre Excellence voudra bien pardonner la liberté que j'ai prise de lui faire toutes ces observations [sur la milice]. L'unique désir de voir la milice capable de rendre service à son prince m'a guidé dans cette circonstance²⁹.

Monviel n'était décidément pas l'homme pour engager la milice bas-canadienne sur la voie de la cause patriote et sur celle d'un plus grand pouvoir pour le peuple.

NOTES

- ¹ Luc Lépine, *La participation des Canadiens français à la guerre de 1812*, mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Montréal, Département d'histoire, 1986, p. 17-18.
- ² Archives nationales du Canada, RG 9, IA1, vol. 79, *Préambule, Observations sur la milice*, p. 1.
- ³ ANC, RG 9, IA1, vol. 79, 15 novembre 1821.
- ⁴ Bernard Wicht, *L'idée de milice et le modèle suisse dans la pensée de Machiavel*, Lausanne, L'Âge d'Homme, 1995, p. 208-210.
- ⁵ Les renseignements biographiques sont tirés de Roch Legault et de Luc Lépine, « François Vassal de Monviel », *Dictionnaire biographique du Canada, volume VII (1836 à 1850)*, Québec, Presses de l'Université Laval, 1988, p. 957 à 959.
- ⁶ Voir Roch Legault, « Le rôle militaire assigné à la gentilhommerie canadienne sous le régime britannique, 1775-1815 », *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, vol. 45, n° 2 (automne 1991), p. 229 à 249.
- ⁷ John Clarke, « François Baby », *Dictionnaire biographique du Canada, volume V (1801 à 1820)*, Québec, Presses de l'Université Laval, 1983, p. 51.
- ⁸ Roch Legault et Dominique Dion, « L'organisation de la milice de la région montréalaise de 1792 à 1837 : de la paroisse au comté », *Bulletin d'histoire politique*, vol. 8, n°s 2-3 (hiver 2000), p. 108-118.
- ⁹ William Gray, *Soldiers of the King, The Upper Canadian Militia 1812-1815, A Reference Guide*, Erin (Ontario), Boston Mills Press Book, 1995, p. 47.

- ¹⁰ C. Edward Skeen, *Citizen Soldiers in the War of 1812*, Lexington, The University Press of Kentucky, 1999, p. 2.
- ¹¹ Luc Lépine, *La participation des Canadiens français à la guerre de 1812*, p. 112-113.
- ¹² Michelle Guitard, *Histoire sociale des miliciens de la bataille de Châteauguay*, Ottawa, Parcs Canada, 1983, p. 17. L'auteure estime que ce n'est pas là une proportion élevée. Toutefois, il faut relativiser ce jugement en tenant compte du fait que la colonie n'a pas connu de guerre depuis la révolution américaine, c'est-à-dire depuis 1777, soit trente-cinq ans auparavant !
- ¹³ Kenneth Bourne, *Britain and the Balance of Power in North America, 1815-1908*, Berkeley et Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1967, p. 9.
- ¹⁴ ANC, RG 9, IA1, vol. 79, 30 septembre 1818.
- ¹⁵ ANC, RG 9, IA1, vol. 79, 15 novembre 1821.
- ¹⁶ David Facey-Crowther, *The New Brunswick Militia 1787-1867*, [Saint John, N.B. et Fredericton, N.B.], New Brunswick Historical Society et New Ireland Press, 1990, p. 36-37.
- ¹⁷ « [...] a genuine reliance on the militia in the pre-War of 1812 era was giving way to a verbal reliance in the postwar era ». C. Edward Skeen, *Citizen Soldiers in the War of 1812*, p. 179.
- ¹⁸ Ian Beckett, « The Militia and the King's Enemies, 1793-1815 », dans Alan J. Guy, *The Road to Waterloo. The British Army and the Struggle against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, 1793-1815*, Londres, National Army Museum, 1990, p. 39.
- ¹⁹ « [...] vaut-il pas cent fois mieux qu'il n'y ait pas de Milice du tout que d'en avoir une qui fait tout ce qu'elle veut, et qui foule aux pieds les autorités qui l'ont obligé à remplir certains devoirs, la Législature dans cette circonstance ne se trouve-t-elle pas elle-même avilie et méprisée » (ANC, RG 9, IA1, vol. 79, *Préambule, Observations sur la milice*, p. 35).
- ²⁰ ANC, RG 9, IA1, vol. 79, 30 septembre 1818.
- ²¹ ANC, RG 9, IA1, vol. 79, *Clauses essentielles qui doivent faire partie d'un Bill de milice, si on veut le rendre respectable et en tirer partie dans l'occasion*, 8^e clause, 25 avril 1820.
- ²² Essentiellement « des personnes éduquées et de bonnes moeurs », ANC, RG 9, IA1, vol. 61, 10 octobre 1791, Baby au colonel Sévestre.
- ²³ ANC, RG 9, IA1, vol. 79, *Préambule, Observations sur la milice*, p. 40.
- ²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 43.
- ²⁵ « Il faut s'en servir [la milice] comme on faisait autrefois du temps des Français, l'envoyer par détachement, plus ou moins nombreux, à la recherche de l'ennemi. Elle sera bonne qu'à le morceler et à le déconcentrer : elle doit être constamment employée à faire ce qu'on appelle la petite guerre et se tenir toujours embusqué dans les bois. Je ne voudrais pas l'exposer en rase campagne à moins qu'elle ne fut soutenue par une force de troupes régulières supérieure à elle; autrement elle mettrait le désordre et la confusion dans l'armée n'étant pas habituée et ne connaissant aucun mouvement des exercices militaires [...] » dans RG9, IA1, vol. 72, p. 101, 5 juin 1813.
- ²⁶ ANC, RG 9, IA1, vol. 79, *Clauses nouvelles pour la meilleure organisation de la milice de cette province...*, 2^e et 3^e clauses, 22 octobre 1823.
- ²⁷ ANC, RG 9, IA1, vol. 79, *Préambule, Observations sur la milice*, p. 39.
- ²⁸ *Ibid*.
- ²⁹ ANC, RG 9, IA1, vol. 79, Monviel, sans date, probablement en 1819.

FRENCH-CANADIAN VIEWS OF COLLECTIVE SECURITY 1945-1950

J. MacFarlane

During the inter-war years French Canadians had been very hesitant to accept collective security commitments. From 1945 to 1950 they accepted, with very little opposition, participation in the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) - commitments that would have been unthinkable a decade earlier. Times had changed as the fear of British control of the Canadian forces was passing, the fear of American domination was not great and fears of communism were rising.¹ Defence policy that had divided anglophones and francophones for most of the first half of the 20th Century now seemed to be uniting Canadians.² But to what extent were French Canadians accepting collective security? Key questions such as when would Canadian forces be used and who would decide received little attention, as suggested by opinion polls, the press and statements of politicians. The debate over whether to participate in the UN force to Korea highlighted the confusion but it also helped clarify the situation.

The question of control over national forces had been an important reason for growing French-Canadian opposition to participation in the South African War (1899-1902) and the First World War (1914-1918). Mackenzie King, listening to the advice of his Quebec lieutenant Ernest Lapointe, ruled during most of the inter-war period and sought to minimize Canadian commitments to international collective security. In this period anglophones were more willing to support any policy of Great Britain – even through the League of Nations – than francophones who, despite some sympathy for certain issues involving France, generally saw the League as a tool of British imperialism. The Second World War changed many things as Canadians, particularly after the fall of France in 1940, began to see the benefits of collective action.

The Creation of the United Nations

That appeasement had not worked against a determined aggressor seeking world domination was one lesson that many had learned. Canada was vulnerable - particularly in the event of a conflict between the US and the USSR. As Desmond Morton has noted, instead of avoiding external commitments as it had done when it considered itself a provider of security, most Canadians in 1945, as major consumers of collective security, sought them.³ But there were limits. Some French Canadians had drawn different lessons from the war, seeing only the confirmation of their fears that they did not sufficiently control their own armed forces, and Prime Minister King paid attention to these views - perhaps overestimating their importance in Quebec. Thus while accepting membership in the UN (and collective security) King consistently sought to limit automatic commitments to provide troops. Despite occasional statements to the contrary,⁴ the lesson King would retain from the Second World War, as he would tell cabinet, was that his policy of caution (limiting debate on defence policy) and no commitments until

parliament decides had succeeded in maintaining unity in the pre-war years and must be continued, even if it meant leaving the UN.⁵

King led the Canadian delegation to the San Francisco Conference in April 1945, seeking a functional role to avoid domination by the big three powers (the US, the USSR and Great Britain), and the Canadians were successful in limiting the commitment of members not taking part in key decisions.⁶ King's Quebec lieutenant since 1941, Louis St. Laurent, strongly supported the policy of collective security, probably more strongly than King,⁷ but he was equally emphatic that Canada's parliament play a greater role in the formulation of UN policy, particularly policy concerning the use of military force.⁸

During the parliamentary debate on whether to send a delegation to San Francisco, 202 MPs voted in favour and five, all French Canadians, opposed. The five feared primarily the control of Canadian forces by the big three (the USSR in particular, then Britain, with only one MP concerned about the US). One MP protested that "our air, naval and land forces would be requisitioned at any time by the future League of Nations to serve anywhere in the world."⁹ Ten other French Canadians spoke in favour of the UN but very few members mentioned the possibility of Canadian forces being placed under UN orders or limitations to Canadian sovereignty. One exception was L. Picard, who noted that 'no sacrifice of sovereign rights is too high, no expense is too extravagant, if it should have as a reward the maintenance of peace and security in the world.' The benefits of collective security were accepted but what sacrifice would be required was not clear.¹⁰

The French-Canadian press was unanimously in favour of joining the United Nations. The only paper to have reservations was *Le Devoir*, which was concerned about the control by the big three – although it was glad to see Canadian autonomy advanced on the world stage.¹¹ Support for the UN did not mean support for collective security as editorialists complained that Canadian policy was dominated by anglophones working for the interests of Great Britain, and that many borders were unfair and should not be protected.¹² *La Presse* and others supported collective security but never mentioned sending Canadian troops or loss of sovereignty, except to repeat that Canada had no advanced commitments.¹³ The English-Canadian newspapers mentioned the importance of standing with Britain more often and the number of articles and editorials mentioning commitments was slightly higher, particularly in the *Globe and Mail* which criticized King for not acknowledging "that in making commitments there is a point at which the participating nations must be willing to surrender their sovereignty."¹⁴

The results of the federal election of June 11, 1945, two months after the debate in parliament, provide some indication of public opinion but there was neither the overwhelming rejection of St. Laurent and Liberal supporters of the UN (predicted by the five opponents) nor the overwhelming rejection of the five who ran as independents (that had been predicted by King and other Liberals).¹⁵ Opinion polls suggested strong support in Quebec for the UN but weaker support for specific commitment of forces, particularly if Canada's parliament did not decide.¹⁶

The Creation of NATO

Almost immediately after the signing of the UN Charter problems applying the collective security provisions became increasingly apparent as the dominance of the US and USSR was confirmed. Canadians, more concerned than others that the USSR sought world domination and somewhat less concerned about US domination,¹⁷ were among the most supportive of a Western collective security alliance that eventually became

NATO.¹⁸ But the details of Canada's commitment remained vague. From 1945 to the signing of NATO in 1949 there existed a certain tension in Canadian foreign policy between the traditional policies of King and the increasingly important, and apparently more internationalist, voice of Louis St. Laurent.

In 1947 St. Laurent reaffirmed the policy of making contributions to collective security conditional on having a voice in the decision-making process as he explained angrily why Canadian forces had been withdrawn from Europe, and he accepted King's decision to not send men or equipment to participate in the Berlin airlift in 1948.¹⁹ But he did confront King's desire to avoid international commitments by threatening to resign if the prime minister withdrew Canada's acceptance to sit as a member on a UN temporary commission to supervise elections in Korea in 1948. King backed down but the effect of this confrontation is unclear; King's secretary J.W. Pickersgill believed that after this point St. Laurent was no longer deterred by King's isolationism while Lester Pearson at the Department of External Affairs believed that the incident made St. Laurent more "anxious to meet Mr. King as far as possible on the general question of caution and conservatism in regard to our UN commitments."²⁰ St. Laurent gave a high priority to international commitments and campaigned hard to promote the NATO pact, repeating that isolationism was impossible and communism was a threat;²¹ but his appeals clearly focussed on the benefits to Canada as consumers of security with very little references to Canadian obligations. Certainly there was no radical shift in policy when St. Laurent replaced King as Prime Minister in 1948.²²

In parliament the motion to sign the NATO pact passed by a vote of 149 to two.²³ For the MPs who spoke, control by Britain was less of a concern than during the UN debate in 1945, committing Canadian troops was mentioned by several but the way they would be committed remained unclear and references rare. The lone French-Canadian MP accepting limits declared: "I have no hesitation in asserting that each and every Canadian, whether of English or French or other racial descent ... in the whole province of Quebec is anxious and willing to sacrifice to international sovereignty that portion of the national sovereignty [necessary to ensure peace]." M. Raymond, one of the two opponents, both from the Bloc Populaire, insisted that they were not isolationist but concerned about the loss of sovereignty. One French-Canadian Liberal, J-F. Pouliot also expressed reservations and did not vote because the question of who decides on questions of manpower was unclear.²⁴

In Quebec the French-language press favoured the pact, emphasizing anti-communist arguments, but of 13 papers four expressed reservations based on the question of control over Canadian troops.²⁵ One, *Le Devoir*, opposed, insisting that a clause refuting automatic commitments to send troops in case of war was needed.²⁶ *La Presse* was less opposed to automatic commitments and in one editorial specifically favoured committing Canadian troops to deter communist aggression, adding that troops would only be sent with parliament's approval. The protection provided by the forces of the United States was considered to be a major benefit.²⁷ The anglophone press was more willing to commit Canadian forces to NATO control and to acknowledge the loss of sovereignty, although it was not a central focus.²⁸

During the federal election campaign of June 1949 collective security remained a minor issue and the election results of those who opposed the pact and those who strongly favoured it do not indicate a strong polarization of Quebec voters on the question. The strong showing of St. Laurent and the Liberals in Quebec is however

interesting. He had campaigned in Quebec in the 1948 provincial election and was greatly disappointed with the results and mood of the campaign - *Le Devoir* referred to him as a half-French Canadian and an imperialist.²⁹ Opinion polls suggest that French Canadians supported the idea of NATO (perhaps influenced by Ottawa's attempts to add non-military aspects to the pact)³⁰ but with little debate on the commitments involved, what they accepted was perhaps not as clear as it should have been.

Sending a UN Force to Korea

Many of the questions about Canadian commitments to collective security would be answered shortly after the ratification of the NATO pact in August 1949.³¹ News of the nuclear capability of the USSR in September and of the Chinese communist victory in October had made Western countries nervous and when North Korean communists invaded South Korea on 25 June 1950 many favoured defending the South. With the USSR boycotting, the UN passed a Security Council resolution recommending that "the members of the UN furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security."³² Canada sent three destroyers - without committing them to the UN. When asked for troops St. Laurent replied that the UN could have the destroyers. When asked again for troops he offered a transport squadron and two weeks later, on August 7, finally agreed to raise a special force of volunteers subject to parliament's approval, that began arriving in mid-December - six months after the invasion. The special force has been raised, St. Laurent said "to carry out our UN obligation for collective security."³³

St. Laurent had expressed his support for the UN intervention from the start but hesitated to involve Canadians. The minister of External Affairs Lester Pearson blamed Canadian hesitation to send troops on the lack of a permanent UN force, which Canada had favoured, adding that he supported action taken by other individual members of the security council "because it represents collective action through the UN for peace." Conservative G. Graydon asked what did Canadian support mean in practical terms to which Pearson replied that Ottawa would study the situation.³⁴ This did not satisfy several Conservatives who criticized the slow reaction of Ottawa and the confusion: was Canada committed by the UN resolution or could parliament decide not to send help? Could the government send troops without parliament? Many Conservatives argued that such questions were academic as the cuts to the defence budget since 1945 made any rapid and effective contribution impossible.³⁵

Although there was no recorded vote on the question in parliament, four French Canadians spoke against sending Canadian forces. The most outspoken was J-F. Pouliot who argued that "the yellow press has magnified the incident," and that "we are not bound by the decisions of the US [and UK]."³⁶ Seven francophones supported the motion, including M. Boisvert who noted that if Canada did not send troops "if ever Russia decided to attack us, other nations, bound by the charter, could observe the same neutrality and show the same unconcern."³⁷

The press in Quebec supported the sending of Canadians to Korea; eight papers were clearly in favour, two had reservations and two opposed. *Le Devoir* opposed principally on the grounds that Canada should not support "American imperialism."³⁸ *La Presse* and other papers that would support sending Canadian troops in August, after St. Laurent's announcement, were initially cold to the idea. On 26 June the headline of *La Presse* quoted St. Laurent saying that Canada was not directly concerned. As Ottawa's

position evolved the paper followed, but usually minimizing references to military commitments.³⁹ The English-speaking press was also influenced by the prime minister's lead. Although the *Globe and Mail* was clearly supportive of the UN and critical of Canadian hesitation right from the start, *The Gazette* did not come out early for military commitment, presenting the intervention as a US action against the USSR. Only on 10 July did the paper begin to talk of the need for a UN reply and only after St. Laurent committed troops did it support the idea.⁴⁰

French Canadians, according to one opinion poll, seem to have been more opposed to sending forces to Korea than were their political leaders and journalists. However, this poll was conducted the week before St. Laurent announced Canadian troops.⁴¹ Any opposition was not intense. The election results of MPs supporting and opposing the Canadian policy are less relevant on this question because the election was three years after the decision to participate; however, there was certainly no intense public reaction against Ottawa's position.⁴² None of the three decision-makers involved (St. Laurent, Pearson and Claxton), according to their biographers, were influenced by opinion in Quebec and this they could permit only when opinion was divided or apathetic.⁴³ Among the volunteers a proportionate number were from Quebec (25%), conscription was not seriously considered and linguistic tensions were reduced somewhat with attempts to increase the number of French-speaking officers.⁴⁴

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Herbert Farlie Wood wrote that "the most significant feature of the Canadian participation in the UN operation in Korea was the establishment of a precedent; when subsequent international crises arose there was no question of standing aside. The isolationist sentiment that had dominated Canadian foreign policy in peacetime was abandoned in 1950."⁴⁵ French Canadians had accepted collective security through the UN in 1945 and NATO in 1949. They had accepted collective security because the benefits (protection from the communist threat of the USSR and an increasingly close alliance with the US which accelerated the movement away from the UK) seemed to outweigh the risks. But the risks remained unclear until the UN intervention in Korea, a precedent that answered many questions of what these commitments involved. Because St. Laurent had not been eager to commit Canadian forces, had insisted the Canadian parliament decide on sending professionally trained volunteers (which would have a proportionate number of francophones) and had ruled out any consideration of conscription, the fears of some who had suspected the costs of collective security might be worse were calmed. Questions of control over Canadian forces would be much less divisive in the second half of the 20th Century, once the details of the Canadian commitments had been clarified.

Tables

TABLE I The Creation of the United Nations: Should Canada participate?	House of Commons Debate (19 – 28 March 1945)		The Canadian Press (15 March – 30 April 1945)			
	French Canadians	English Canadians	Le Devoir	La Presse	The Gazette	Globe & Mail
-Interventions: articles (and editorials)						
-favouring	10	42	3(2)	9(10)	10(5)	6(10)
-opposing	5	0	3(5)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
-neutral	0	1	12(1)	8(0)	5(0)	6(1)
-Reasons mentioned to support position:						
-victims of aggression must be defended	6	20	2(1)	5(6)	5(1)	5(9)
-Canada's voice in international affairs	5	21	1(2)	5(7)	5(1)	2(3)
-more cooperation with Britain needed	0	7	0(0)	0(0)	3(2)	1(5)
-less cooperation with Britain needed	2	2	2(3)	3(2)	3(0)	0(0)
-more cooperation with the US needed	1	4	1(1)	1(0)	1(1)	1(2)
-less cooperation with the US needed	1	0	1(2)	1(0)	0(0)	0(0)
-communist aggression	5	3	2(0)	0(0)	0(0)	2(2)
-position of religious leaders	5	0	2(3)	1(0)	1(0)	0(0)
-Extent of commitment, shown by mention:						
-that Canadian troops should be made available	3	14	0(0)	1(0)	2(0)	1(4)
-that limits to sovereignty should be accepted	1	4	1(0)	0(0)	1(2)	0(3)

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TABLE 2 The Creation of NATO: Should Canada join?	House of Commons Debate (28 March – 29 April 1949)		The Canadian Press (15 March – 30 April 1949)			
	French Canadians	English Canadians	Le Devoir	La Presse	The Gazette	Globe & Mail
-Interventions: articles (and editorials)						
-favouring	3	5	7(0)	27(10)	15(10)	10(8)
-opposing	1	0	2(9)	0(0)	1(0)	0(0)
-neutral	1	0	6(3)	6(0)	18(0)	5(0)
-Reasons mentioned to support position:						
-victims of aggression must be defended	2	5	3(3)	21(8)	7(5)	6(4)
-Canada's voice in international affairs	1	2	1(0)	1(0)	1(0)	1(0)
-more cooperation with Britain needed	0	0	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
-less cooperation with Britain needed	0	0	0(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
-more cooperation with the US needed	1	2	1(0)	4(2)	5(3)	4(4)
-less cooperation with the US needed	1	0	0(2)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
-communist aggression	4	5	5(6)	14(6)	11(8)	7(5)
-position of religious leaders	1	0	2(2)	1(0)	1(0)	1(0)
-Extent of commitment, shown by mention:						
-that Canadian troops should be made available	1	4	2(0)	5(1)	3(3)	1(4)
-that limits to sovereignty should be accepted	1	1	1(0)	3(0)	1(3)	1(2)

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TABLE 3 Sending a United Nations Force to Korea: Should Canada participate?	House of Commons Debate (26-30 June, 31 Aug. – 5 Sept. 1950)		The Canadian Press (26 June – 8 Aug. 1950)			
	French Canadians	English Canadians	Le Devoir	La Presse	The Gazette	Globe & Mail
-Interventions: articles (and editorials)						
-favouring	7	29	24(0)	30(6)	32(9)	31(24)
-opposing	4	1	16(24)	1(0)	1(0)	0(0)
-neutral	0	7	76(8)	165(4)	158(21)	108(8)
-Reasons mentioned to support position:						
-victims of aggression must be defended	7	26	51(0)	106(5)	120(29)	66(31)
-Canada's voice in international affairs	3	7	2(0)	4(2)	5(4)	2(7)
-more cooperation with Britain needed	0	5	1(0)	1(0)	1(0)	6(2)
-less cooperation with Britain needed	2	0	1(13)	1(1)	0(0)	0(0)
-more cooperation with the US needed	3	11	3(0)	7(4)	8(12)	9(10)
-less cooperation with the US needed	2	0	5(19)	2(1)	2(0)	2(0)
-communist aggression	9	25	67(5)	157(7)	148(30)	74(17)
-position of religious leaders	2	1	5(6)	2(1)	0(0)	0(0)
-Extent of commitment, shown by mention:						
-that Canadian troops should be made available	6	26	5(0)	7(5)	10(4)	8(21)
-that limits to sovereignty should be accepted	1	8	1(0)	1(0)	1(0)	1(10)

NOTES

- ¹ J. Gow, "Les Québécois, la guerre et la paix, 1945-60," in Jean-Yves Gravel ed., *Le Québec et la guerre*, (Montreal: Boréal, 1974), pp. 133-67. B.S. Kierstead, *Canada in World Affairs, 1951-3*, (Toronto: 1956), p. 33; F.H. Soward and E. McInnis, *Canada and the United Nations*, (New York: 1956), p. 73; G. Bergeron, "Le Canada Français: du provincialisme," in Keenleyside et. al., *The Growth of Canadian Foreign Policy*, (1960).
- ² G. Rothney, *Canadian Forum*, June 1951, pp. 55-7. Rothney, "Quebec, Canada and the World, 1945-60," *Culture*, March 1965. John Holmes, *The Shaping of Peace: Canada and the Search for World Order, 1943-57*, (Toronto: 1979). R.A. Mackay, *Canadian Foreign Policy, 1945-1954, Selected Speeches and Documents*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), p. xxix. For other views see F. Underhill, *Canadian Forum*, Oct. 1950, p. 150. John A. Stevenson, *Foreign Affairs*, April 1951, pp. 456-67. A.R.M. Lower, "Canada and the Second World War and the Future," *International Journal*, vol. 1, 1946; Lower, "Canada in the New Non-British World," *International Journal*, vol. 3, 1948, p. 221.
- ³ D. Morton, "Providing and Consuming Security in Canada's Century," *CHR*, vol. 81, #1, Mar. 2000.
- ⁴ King diary, April 1945. *CHCD*, 30 Jan. 1947, p. 11, Canadian submission on the German peace settlement.
- ⁵ NA, Privy Council papers, RG2, Cabinet Minutes, 30 Dec. 1947.
- ⁶ DEA, Conference Series, 1945, No. 2, Report on the UN Conference on International Organization, p. 12. King at the San Francisco Conference (25 April to 26 June 1945), 27 April. See Article 44.
- ⁷ Pearson to N. Robertson, 15 Mar. 1945, in Pearson, *Memoirs, vol. 1*, (Toronto: UTP, 1973), p. 276. D. Thomson, *Louis St. Laurent, Canadian*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1967), p. 162. St. Laurent to General Assembly of the UN, 29 Oct. 1945, in Mackay, p. 94.
- ⁸ *CHCD*, 16 Oct. 1945, pp. 1195, 1202. Canada ratified the charter on 19 Oct. without a recorded vote.
- ⁹ *Canadian House of Commons Debates (CHCD)*, L. Lacombe, 20 Mar. 1945, pp.58-60; W. LaCroix, 21 Mar. 1945, p. 101; F. Dorion, 22 Mar. 1945, p. 125; P. d'Anjou, 22 Mar. 1945, p. 146; J.S. Roy, 27 Mar. 1945, p. 278. The vote was held on 28 Mar. 1945, p. 313.
- ¹⁰ *CHCD*, J. Lapointe, 19 Mar. 1945, p. 10; G. Fauteux, 20 Mar. 1945, p. 53; L. Picard, 21 Mar. 1945, p. 70; J.F. Pouliot, 21 Mar. 1945, p. 90; E. Bertrand, 23 Mar. 1945, p. 156; M. Lalonde, 23 Mar. 1945, p. 182; R. Jutras, 23 Mar. 1945, p. 186; J. Blanchette, 26 Mar. 1945, p. 215; M. Raymond, 27 Mar. 1945, p. 267; A. Choquette, 27 Mar. 1945, p. 283. Picard, 21 Mar. 1945, p. 76.
- ¹¹ *Le Devoir*, 27 Mar. 1945. Daily circulation numbers for the papers referred to, in 1947, were: *La Presse* 237,800, *Le Devoir* 17,800, *Le Soleil* 98,400, *Le Droit*, 24,500: Gow, pp. 139-42. *Le Devoir*, "...San Francisco," 28 Mar. 1945, p. 1 edit. *Le Devoir*, "San Francisco," Mar., p. 1 edit, was also concerned that only 3 of 14 delegates were French Canadians while *Le Soleil*, 21 Mar. 1945, p. 1, was not.
- ¹² *Le Devoir*, "Il faut en finir," 18 April, 1945. *Ibid.*, "Politique..." 30 April, p. 1 edit. *Ibid.*, "UN," 24 April, p. 1.
- ¹³ *La Presse*, "Intérêt du Canada..." 21 Mar. 1945, p. 1. *Ibid.*, "Pour assurer la paix internationale." 23 Mar. p. 6, edit. *Ibid.*, "Le Canada conciliant," 25 April, p. 1. D. Beaudoin, "Le Canada, la guerre et la paix," *L'Action Nationale*, 1945, p. 206. "Manifeste de la ligue d'Action Nationale," *L'Action Nationale*, 1946, p. 51.
- ¹⁴ *Globe and Mail*, "Words Without Actions," 22 Mar. 1945, p. 6, edit. *Gazette*, 23 Mar. p. 1. *Ibid.*, "Isolationists do not Learn," 26 Mar., p. 6 edit. *Saturday Night*, 28 April, 17 Mar., 16, 30 June 1945, p. 8.

- ¹⁵ King diary, 28 Mar., 11 April 1945, and *CHCD* debates, Mar.-April 1945. J.W. Pickersgill, *My Years with Louis St. Laurent*, (Toronto: UTP, 1975), p. 27. Of the five opponents of joining the UN, three won with reduced minorities while St. Laurent and Picard won easily: F. Feigert, *Canada Votes*, (Durham: Duke, 1989) pp. 78-83, H. Scarrow, *Canada Votes*, (New Orleans: Hauser, 1962), pp. 173-9.
- ¹⁶ *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1945, p. 106; 1946, p. 414: 90% of Canadians (79% of Quebecers) supported the UN to keep peace but only 76% (51% in Quebec) approved of using Canadian troops.
- ¹⁷ *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 18 Mar. 1946, p. 114: percentage who agree The USSR wants to dominate the world (the US wants to dominate): Canada 50% (3%), US 25% (1%), Australia 33% (5%), France 26% (25%). King diary, 30 June 1948. Pearson, *Memoirs*, pp. 25, 42-49.
- ¹⁸ NATO sought "the preservation of peace and security in the North Atlantic area," DEA, *Annual Report*, 1949, pp. 40, 63. The pact was signed in Washington, 4 April 1949.
- ¹⁹ *CHCD*, 30 Jan. 1947. Britain, the US, France, and Australia sent flyers and ground crews to Berlin: Granatstein and Bercuson, *War and Peacekeeping*, (Toronto: Key Porter, 1991), p. 100.
- ²⁰ King diary, 30 Dec. 1947 - 7 Jan. 1948; Pickersgill, *St. Laurent*, p. 45; Pearson, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 159.
- ²¹ St. Laurent, 12, 18 Sept., 30 June 1947 in Mackay, p. 36. *CHCD*, Feb. 1947, p. 229; 28 Mar., 1949, p. 2063; 28 April 1948, p. 3448. Statement by St. Laurent, DEA, Conference Series, No. 1, *Canada and the UN*, 1947, p. 180; Also 18 Oct. 1947, pp. 213-14. On communism, St. Laurent to Canadian International Trade Fair, 11 June 1948, DEA Bulletin, July 1948, p. 7. *CHCD*, 11 Mar. 1949, p.2088. Also Mackay, p. 97, 26 April, 1948. *The Globe and Mail*, "St. Laurent quotes the Bible in Support of Atlantic Pact," 21 Mar. p. 2.
- ²² For St. Laurent the search for world peace and security should be Ottawa's top priority (Mackay, p. 187) but only 1% of the Canadian population agreed: *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 10 Oct. 1945.
- ²³ *CHCD*, 28 Mar. 1949, p. 2104. The pact was ratified in parliament on 29 April by a vote of 185-0.
- ²⁴ *CHCD*, G. Heon, 11 Mar. 1949, p. 2088. M. Raymond, 28 Mar. 1949, p. 2686. J-F. Pouliot, 28 Mar., p. 3100; 29 April, p. 2795-7. Also Pouliot, *CHCD*, 17 Nov. 1949, p. 1901.
- ²⁵ Gow, p. 143.
- ²⁶ *Le Devoir*, 18 Mar., edit. *Ibid.*, 21 Mar., p. 1. *Ibid.*, 30 Mar., p. 1 edit. Also *L'Action Catholique*, 18 Jan. 1949. F.A. Angers, *L'Action Nationale*, Jan., 1949, pp. 372-413.
- ²⁷ *La Presse*, "Garantie de securité," 19 Mar., p. 6 edit. *Ibid.*, "Le débat est amorcé," 18 Mar., p. 1. *Ibid.*, "La part de notre pays..." 4 avril, p. 1. *Ibid.*, "Le plus sur moyen de protection," 9 April, p. 6, edit.
- ²⁸ *The Gazette*, 15 Mar. 1949. *Ibid.*, 30 Mar., edit. *Ibid.*, "Democracy in Action," 13 April, p. 4 edit. *The Globe and Mail*, "The Architects of Disunity," 15 Mar., p., 4 edit. *Ibid.*, "Re-education the only way," 16 Mar., edit. *Ibid.*, "Toward True Unity," 30 Mar., p. 4, edit. K. Butler, *Saturday Night*, 26 April 1949.
- ²⁹ *CHCD*, St. Laurent, 29 April 1948. Soward, p. 72, Also *Le Devoir*, 29 Mar. 1949. Thomson, pp. 233-5 describes the provincial election of 28 July 1948. In 1949 St. Laurent won 73% of the vote.
- ³⁰ Escott Reid, "The Creation of the North Atlantic Alliance, 1948-9" in Granatstein, ed. *Canadian Foreign Policy*, (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1986), p. 172. Pickersgill, *King Record*, vol. 4, p. 192. On Quebec support for NATO: Schwartz, p. 82, Gow, pp. 143, 154, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 12, 1949, p. 353.
- ³¹ Canadian troops for NATO arrived in Europe 21 Nov. 1951: Sean M. Maloney, *War Without Battles: Canada's NATO Brigade in Germany, 1951-93*, (Whitby: McGraw-Hill, 1996), pp. 14-19.
- ³² See Mackay, p. 298. Pearson, *CHCD*, 26 June, p. 4116. On 27 June there was a 2nd resolution.

- ³³ *CHCD*, 31 Aug., pp. 89-94. Claxton wanted to give the destroyers (*Cayuga, Athabaska, Sioux*) to UN command: NA, RG1 PCO Records. D.J. Bercuson, *Blood on the Hills: The Canadian Army in the Korean War*, (Toronto: UTP, 1999), p. 28. Herbert Fairley Wood, *The Official History of the Canadian Army in Korea: Strange Battleground* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1966), pp. 13-14, 20. St. Laurent announced 5,000 Canadians all ranks and 2,000 reinforcements: Granatstein and Bercuson, pp. 100-4.
- ³⁴ *CHCD*, 28 June, pp. 4251-2. Chairman of the Canadian delegation to the General Assembly, 11 Oct. 1950, DEA press release. Bercuson, p. 27. *CHCD*, 30 June, p. 4459
- ³⁵ Diefenbaker, *CHCD*, 29 June, 1950, pp. 90-2. Cannon and Bennett, *CHCD*, 31 Aug., 1950 pp. 85-8. Claxton, 26 June, pp. 4119-27. M.J. Coldwell, 1 Sept., pp. 119-22. Bercuson, p. 15.
- ³⁶ *CHCD*, 29 June 1950, pp. 4386-8. Others who opposed: R. Poulin, 2 Sept., pp. 177-9; P. Gagnon, 4 Sept., p. 198; H. Courtemanche, 4 Sept. p., 248.
- ³⁷ *CHCD*, 4 Sept., p. 293, (also 29 June, p. 4392). J. Langlois: 2 Sept., p. 188.
- ³⁸ *Le Devoir*, "La guerre c'est la catastrophe," 28 June 1950, p. 4 edit. *Ibid.*, "Notre exitation bellicose," 29 June, p. 4 edit. *Ibid.*, "Les horreurs de l'an deux mille," 29 June 1950, p. 4 edit. *Ibid.*, "Staline n'est pas Hitler," 7 July, p. 4 edit. Also F.A. Angers, *L'Action Nationale*, 1950, p. 53. Gow, p. 142.
- ³⁹ *La Presse*, 26 June 1950. *Ibid.*, "Le Canada n'est pas directement concerne," 27 June, p. 1. *Le Devoir*, "Un brigade pour la Corée," 8 Aug., p. 4 edit.
- ⁴⁰ *The Globe and Mail*, "War in Korea," 27 June, 1950, p. 6 edit., *Ibid.*, "US defends Korea," 28 June, p. 6 edit. *Ibid.*, "Parliament's Job," 29 June, p. 1 edit. *Ibid.*, "True Blue Isolationists," 8 July, p. 6 edit. *Ibid.*, "Is this Leadership?" 5 Aug. 1950. p. 6 edit. Denis Stairs, *The Diplomacy of Constraint*, (Toronto: UTP, 1974), p. 95. *The Montreal Gazette*, "Reds Invade South Korea," 26 June, p. 6 edit. *Ibid.*, "Sundays Back Again," 27 June, p. 6 edit. *Ibid.*, "Deeply and Directly Affected," 29 June, p. 6 edit. *Ibid.*, "Parliament will Decide," 10 July, p. 6 edit. *Ibid.*, "Canada Caught Short by Crisis," 8 Aug., p. 6 edit.
- ⁴¹ A 3 Aug. 1950 poll suggested that 21% of Quebecers (41% of Canadians) favoured sending Canadian troops to Korea: Schwartz, table 20; Gow, p. 152.
- ⁴² St. Laurent won with 78% of the vote, while three of the four opponents also won with support varying from 57.3% to 65.6%: Feigert, pp. 78-83. Scarrow, pp. 173-9.
- ⁴³ J. English, *The Life of Lester Pearson, The Worldly Years*, (Toronto: Knopf, 1992), p. 49. D.J. Bercuson, *True Patriot: The Life of Brooke Claxton*, (Toronto: UTP, 1993), p. 211. Pickersgill, *St. Laurent*, p. 130.
- ⁴⁴ 3,134 of 10,587 volunteers were from Quebec: D. Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992), p. 234. On the opening of the College St. Jean in 1952: Morton, *Military History*, p. 238, Gravel, "College," pp. 112-9. On conscription, Simmonds to Claxton 9 May 1951, Claxton papers, vol. 100. Brigadier J.P.E. Bernatchez, Asst. Adj. Gen. at Army HQ, report of Feb. 1951 (see Claxton papers, vol. 94, B). J. Pariseau, S. Bernier, *French Canadians and Bilingualism in the Canadian Armed Forces, vol. 1, 1763-1969: The Fear of a Parallel Army* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1986, pp. 145-53).
- ⁴⁵ Wood, p. 258.

